

Annual Complaint Report for Housing Services and Adult Services for 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016

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Purpose of the report

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members Enquiries received between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 for Housing and Adult Services and satisfies the requirements to publish annual information about complaints.

OPTIONS OPEN TO THE COMMITTEE

For members of the Committee to:

- 1. note the contents of the annual complaint report; and**
- 2. discuss any concerns with the relevant Cabinet member.**

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

- a. HOUSING SERVICE** (See annex 1 – pages 6 to 20)

Informal complaints

- 32% more complaints were dealt with informal when comparing the 2014/15 figure of 497 to the 2015/16 figure of 656.

Stage 1 complaints

- 18% fewer Stage 1 complaints registered when comparing the figure for 2014/15 of 144 with the figure for 2015/16 of 118. The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint is 9.48 working days against a target of 10 working days. 74% (87 out of 118) complaints were responded to within the 10 working days target.

Stage 2 complaints

- 39% more Stage 2 complaints from 18 in 2014/15 to 25 in 2015/16. The average time taken to conclude a Stage 2 complaint is 7.86 working days against a target of 10 working days. 88% (22 out of 25) complaints were responded to within 10 working days.

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Stage 3 complaints

- 43% fewer Stage 3 complaints from 23 in 2014/15 to 13 in 2015/16. The average time to conclude a Stage 3 complaint is 10.57 working days against a target of 15 working days. 12 out of 13 Stage 3 complaints were responded to within 15 working days.

Investigation by the Housing or Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

- 18 referrals were concluded by the Ombudsman during this period. Of the 18 referrals, 1 was upheld, 2 partially upheld, 11 not upheld and 4 referrals were not investigated by the Ombudsman

Compliments

- The number of compliments recorded is down from 40 for 2014/15 to 23 for 2015/16.

b. ADULT SERVICE (See annex 2 – pages 21 to 27)

Informal complaints

- 26% more complaints were dealt with informally when comparing the 2014/15 figure of 104 with the figure for 2015/16 of 131.

Stage 1 complaints

- 26% fewer Stage 1 complaints registered when comparing the 2014/15 of 31 against the 2015/16 of 39.
- The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint is 7.97 working days against a target of 20 working days. 100% of complaints were responded to within our published target of 20 working days.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

- Seven referrals were concluded by the Ombudsman. Of these, 2 were upheld, 4 not upheld and 1 complaint was considered premature.

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Compliments

- The number of compliments recorded is down from 61 for 2014/15 to 49 for 2015/16.

c. MEMBERS ENQUIRIES (See annex 3 – pages 28 to 29)

- Housing Services received 1,285 enquiries from Elected Members for 2015/16 which is a 6% (73) increase in enquiries when comparing the 2015/16 figure of 1,285 with the 2014/15 of 1,212.
- Adult Services received 199 enquiries from Elected Members which is a 9% (17) increase when comparing the 2015/16 figure of 199 with the 2014/15 of 182.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The Council's Vision

The Council's vision is about 'putting our residents first'. Feedback in the form of complaints and compliments is seen as a very important source of information from residents about the quality of services and care provided by the Council. In cases where something has gone wrong, we are committed to putting it right and ensure that it does not happen again.

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. Remedies for redress

The purpose of redress is to remedy the injustice or hardship suffered and where possible to return a complainant to the position they would have been before the situation went wrong. Types of redress include:

- an apology;
- providing the service that should have been received at first;
- taking action or making a decision that the Council should have done before;
- reconsidering an incorrect decision;
- improving procedures so that similar problems do not happen again; and
- if after an investigation by council staff or the Ombudsman, it is concluded that as a result of maladministration there is no practical action that would provide a full and appropriate remedy or if the complainant has sustained loss or suffering, financial compensation may be the most appropriate approach.

5. Mediation

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For some complaints it will not be appropriate, or possible, to resolve a complaint 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 Team Manager will consider whether mediation is an option that should be considered. If both parties are agreeable, mediation by an independent mediator allows both parties to come together to see if they can reach a solution through dialogue.

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PART I – MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Annex 1 – Complaints about Housing Services

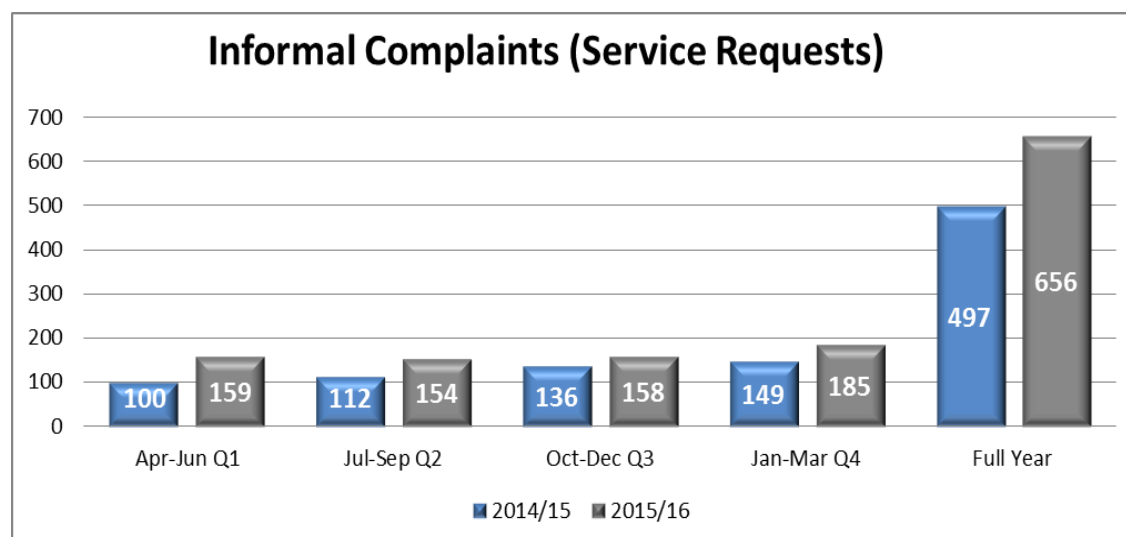
Housing complaints are managed in line with the Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

- Stage 1 – response from a Deputy Director or Head of Service.
- 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
- Local Government or Housing 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.

1. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

Housing staff focus is on resolving complaints informally. This emphasis to resolve issues and concerns quickly and avert the need to escalate these to a formal complaint is working and has helped to reduce the number of formal complaints.

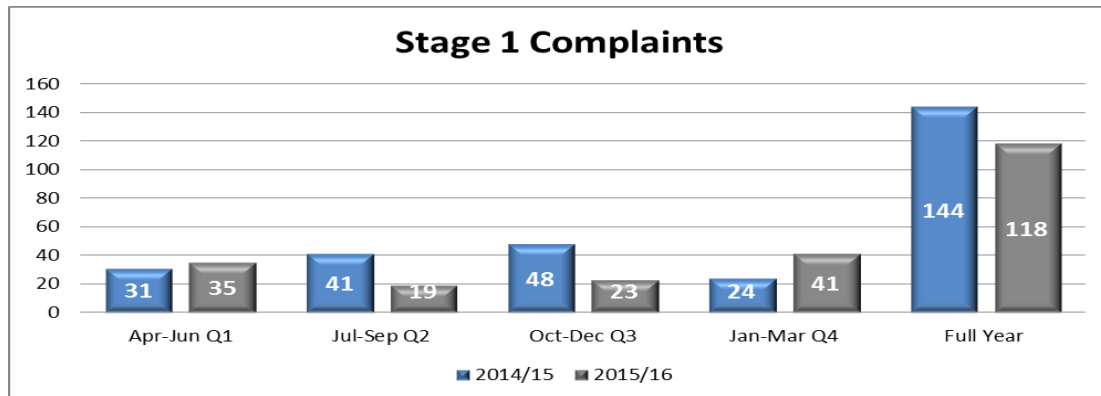


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- 32% increase in complaints dealt with informally when comparing 2014/15 figure of 497 with the same period in 2015/16 of 656.

2. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

A Deputy Director or Head of Service will aim to respond within 10 working days.



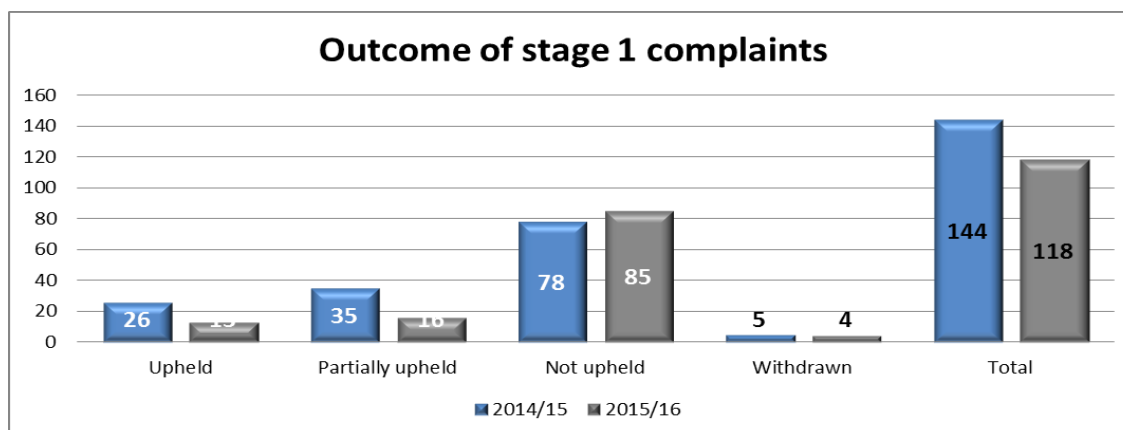
- 18% decrease in Stage 1 complaints when comparing 2014/15 figure of 144 with the same period in 2015/16 of 118.
- The number of complaints is low in comparison to the number of council tenants (over 10k) and the number of repairs carried out each week (approximately 400).

The two main service areas that residents complained about were:

Housing Need accounted for 40% (47) of all Stage 1 complaints. Of the 47 complaints, 45 complaints related to residents dissatisfaction that they were not eligible to join the Housing Register or be provided with social housing.

Repairs accounted for 31% (36) of all Stage 1 complaints. The main causes of complaint for this period were about disrepair, mould/damp/condensation, fencing and roofing repairs.

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- 72% of Stage 1 complaints were not upheld, which is a significant rise when compared with the same period in 2014/15 of 54%.
- The high number of not upheld Stage 1 complaints (45 of the 85) is as a result of residents challenging the application of the Social Housing Allocation Policy i.e. why the eligibility criteria did not apply to them.

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

	2014/15	2015/16
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	10:11	9.48
Target	10	10
Variance	+ 0.11	- 0.52

- The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint is 9.48 working days against the target of 10 working days.

Table 2 - Number and % of complaints dealt with within 10 working days

Period	Total number of complaints	Number dealt with within 10 working days	% dealt with within 10 working days
2014/15	144	93	65 %
2015/16	118	87	74 %

- 74% (87 out of 118 Stage 1 complaints) were responded to within the 10 working day target. A small improvement from previous years but this is an area that we will need to focus on in the year ahead.

7. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

Three main themes identified:

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- poor communication or incorrect/inaccurate information given;
- delays in attending or arranging appointments or not responding to enquiries; and
- poor workmanship.

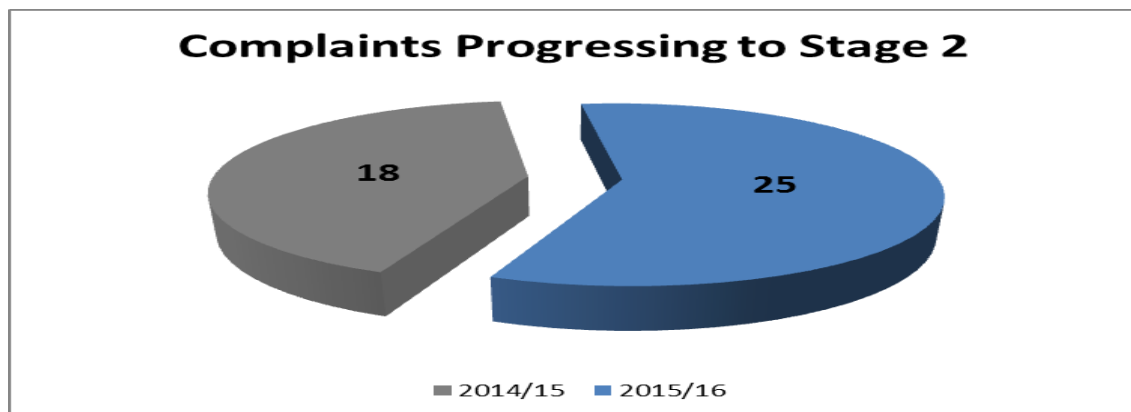
We apologised in all cases.

As a result of these complaints:

- managers have spoken to officers individually and collectively to remind them of the need to adhere to customer service standards;
- reviewed procedures;
- workshops for managers and relevant staff are being run in investigating and responding to complaints; and
- the complaints web page is updated with advice and guidance for staff on handling customer dissatisfaction proactively.

3. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

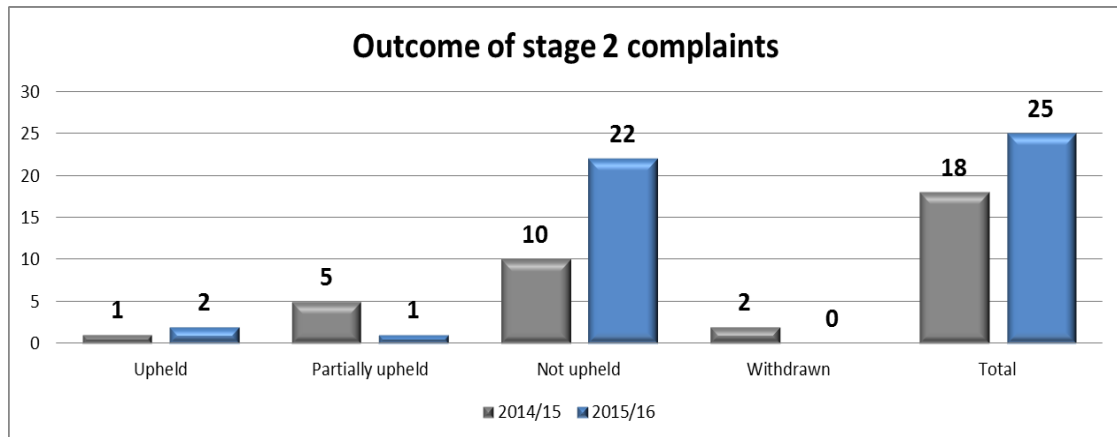


- 39% rise in Stage 2 complaints when comparing 2014/15 figure of 18 with the same period in 2015/16 of 25.
- Of the 25 Stage 2 complaints, 10 related to complaints about the application of the Social Housing Allocation Policy. None of these complaints were upheld as the decision could not be overturned through the complaint process.

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- Please note that the number of Stage 2 and 3 complaints will, in future, start to decrease as we have begun to apply the revised Corporate complaints procedure since November 2015 i.e.

- Officers are using discretion to escalate a complaint direct from Stages 1 and/or 2 to the Housing or Local Government Ombudsman where it is felt that the decision cannot be overturned through the complaint process, e.g. on policy matters.



- of the 25 Stage 2 complaints, 10 related to complaints about the application of the Social Housing Allocation policy. None of these complaints were upheld as the decision could not be overturned through the complaint process.

Table 3 below provides a summary of 17 Stage 2 complaints. The remaining 8 Stage 2 complaints (4441594, 4488622, 4522455, 4529608, 4559338, 4423162, 4624737 and 4664048) progressed to Stage 3 and their outcome is shown in table 5 - pages 13 to 16.

Table 3 – Outcome of complaints progressing to Stage 2

Complaint details	Decision at Stage 2
<p>Complaint ref: 4344958 Mr X complained that there was no requirement for an applicant to provide medical documentation to support their housing application.</p>	<p>Upheld Mr X was told that based on what he said at interview we believed that he was not homeless but being accommodated by a relative. However, we accepted that we should have begun enquiries to establish whether we owed a housing duty to him.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4489999 Ms X complained that the property she accepted was not in a condition for her to move</p>	<p>Upheld The Council acknowledged that whilst its own plasterers finished their work, the void contractor needed to return and carry out</p>

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into as it required substantial plastering work before she could move in.	further plastering in the hallway. Ms X was given a rent rebate.
Complaint ref: 4520956 Ms X complained that many appointments had been cancelled at short notice and this had caused her inconvenience. She also wanted the Council to plaster the cracks on her ceiling.	Partially Upheld We apologised to Ms X that the appointment had to be cancelled because the supplier did not have the shower door in stock. We re-booked the appointment and fitted the shower door. Ms X was informed that the cracking in the ceiling was cosmetic and occurred as a result of normal property movement.
Complaint ref: 4741814 Mr X complained about a rat problem in his loft. He complained that not enough was being done to address his problem.	Partially Upheld We apologised to Mr X for the time it took to resolve his concerns about rats entering his loft. We advised him that in order to find the entry point for rats we would have to gain entry into his neighbour's property to address this issue and this is what we would be doing.
Complaint ref: 4436187 Mrs X complained that her housing application was suspended on the basis that she had £30,000 in her savings account. She said the money belonged to her brother in law.	Not Upheld Mrs X was informed that an applicant for social housing with savings of more than £30,000 is not eligible for social housing. We had evidence she had over £30,000 in her bank account. We asked for evidence that this money had been transferred into her brother in law's account - no evidence was provided.
Complaint ref: 4632597 Ms X said she was advised to look for properties in the private rented sector. She rented a property in the postcode area she said was covered by this Council but it later came to light that the property was out of Borough and she was not allowed to re-join the Housing Register.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that part of properties in the UB5 postcode also fell within the London Borough of Ealing. The document she was given related to Local Housing Allowance rates and not an indication of the geographical area this Council covers. Ms X was informed that there are no grounds to allow her to join the Housing Register.
Complaint ref: 4655551 Mr and Mrs X complained about the handling of their homelessness application	Not Upheld Mr and Mrs X were advised that they were not eligible for social housing as they did not meet the eligibility criteria as set out in the Social Housing Allocation Policy.
Complaint ref: 4601124 Ms X alleged that officers did not give her the correct support in relation to her	Not Upheld Ms X was advised that it was not appropriate to provide her with a Housing Support Worker given that she was already engaging with a

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mental health needs and as a result she did not pay her rent and is now in debt.	specialist support provider. She was informed that it is her responsibility to meet her rental obligations and pay her rent.
Complaint ref: 4509887 Ms X stated that the drain engineer had told her that a CCTV survey is required. This was denied in the Stage 1 response and she felt she had been accused of lying.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that it was difficult to surmise what had been said and the context of the discussion. From her account of the conversation it appears that the engineer was trying to answer a hypothetical question about possible future actions if the flies persisted.
Complaint ref: 4662921 Ms X said that if her circumstances were properly taken into account, she would be eligible to join the Housing Register.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that as she had not lived continuously in this Borough for the past 10 years, she was not eligible to join the Housing Register.
Complaint ref: 4676209 Ms X complained that a leak from a private property next door to her resulted in mould in her bedroom. She said her house was inhabitable.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that it was only a small part of the bedroom wall that was affected and we believed the property to be habitable. To aid with the drying out process a dehumidifier was provided. The damaged plaster was then removed and the bedroom wall re-plastered.
Complaint ref: 4664048 Mr X complained that the repairs he reported were never carried out during his tenancy including an allegation of damp in the property that was not treated.	Not Upheld Mr X was informed that on average 1.5 inspections or repairs were carried out per month. When the Council became aware that he wished to downsize, an operational decision was made to carry out any outstanding repairs when he left the property.
Complaint ref: 4739208 Ms X complained about the poor workmanship of the heating contractor and the damage they caused.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that her claim for damages is currently being considered by the insurers for the contractor. It would not be appropriate for us to comment on the claim.
Complaint ref: 4539011 Ms X complained that it was the Council's responsibility to provide pest controllers to deal with bed bugs.	Not Upheld Ms X was informed that the Council's pest treatment policy does not include bed bugs. She would need to seek assistance from a pest controller or use a chemical.
Complaint ref: 4768770 Mr X complained about the length of time it took for the lift to be repaired and his desire to move.	Not Upheld Mr X was informed that although one of the lifts had been shut down the second lift had been serving all the floors and reliably. He was advised of the procedure to follow if he wished to downsize.

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<p>Complaint ref: 4920395 Ms X complained that as one of the lifts in her block was not working it was putting a strain on the other lift. She asked why the lifts had not been refurbished?</p>	<p>Not Upheld Ms X was informed that the second lift was working effectively and serving all the floors reliably and that a decision had been made not to proceed with the lift refurbishment, at this point in time, as we had decided to try and maintain the lift.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4716798 Mrs X complained that the Council did not do enough to address damp and mould issues in her property and that it had caused damage to bedding, clothes and blinds.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mrs X was informed that she should approach her household contents insurer to make a claim or if she did not wish to make such a claim, she could make a liability claim to the Council's own insurers.</p>

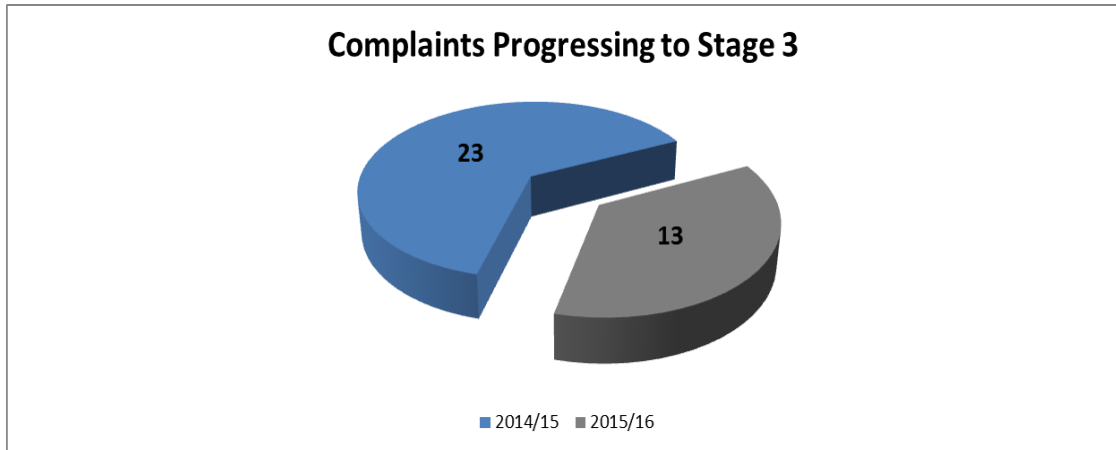
Table 4 – Time taken to conclude a complaint at Stage 2 (working days)

	2014/15	2015/16
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	8.6	7.86
Target	10	10
Variance	-1.40	- 2.14

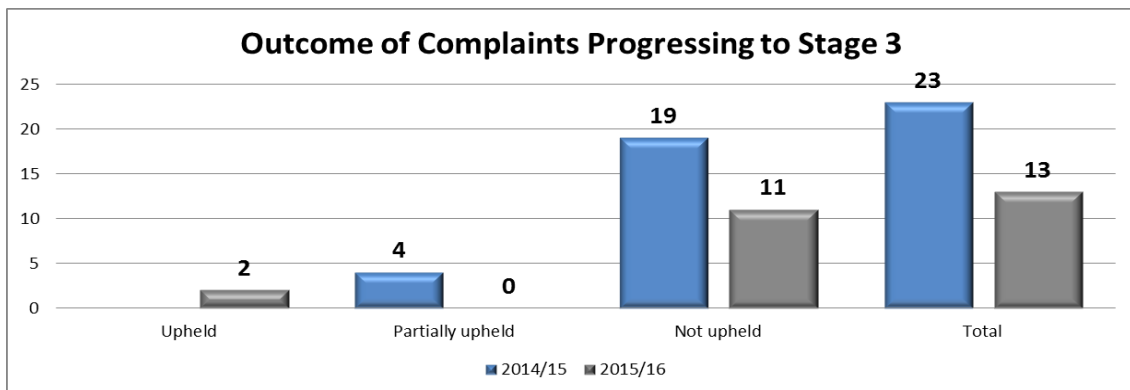
- The average time taken to conclude a Stage 2 complaint is 7.86 working days against the target of 10 working days.
- 22 (88%) of the Stage 2 complaints were dealt with within the 10 working day target - only 3 complaints (4344958, 4664048 and 4716798) were not dealt with within target.

4. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

At Stage 3, the Chief Executive commissions an investigation by an officer in Democratic Services and the aim is to respond within 15 working days.



- 43% fewer Stage 3 complaints when comparing 2014/15 figure of 23 with the same period in 2015/16 of 13.



- Table 5 below provides a summary of the 13 Stage 3 complaints and the outcome of each complaint.
- 12 out of 13 Stage 3 complaints were responded to within 15 working days (complaint ref 4559338 took 18 working days to respond).

Table 5 – Outcome of complaints progressing to Stage 3

Complaint details	Decision
<p>Complaint ref: 4065232</p> <p>Mrs X complained that the adaptation that was supposed to make family life easier had made their situation more difficult (an exterior ramp had been built in an incorrect position utilising part of the driveway shared with Ms X's neighbour).</p>	<p>Upheld</p> <p>We apologised to Mrs X and acknowledge that a ramp in the shared driveway was not permissible without the agreement of her neighbour. The Council agreed to move the ramp from the shared driveway to the rear of Mrs X's house (at no cost to her) and pay for patio slabs for her and her neighbour's garden.</p>

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<p>Complaint ref: 4006686 Mr X complained that locks had been changed by the Council without his permission. Due to the Council's mistake his mother had been imposed on the family and would not leave the property.</p>	<p>Upheld The Council accepted that an error had been made in assuming that the complainant's mother was the tenant. More thorough checks should have been made to validate this fact. We apologised for our mistake.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4275736 Mrs X complained that she called the Council on 24 December 2013 to report a water leak at her property. She said that she was told that as it was Christmas Eve there was no one available to come out until the New Year. She then paid for work to be undertaken to control the leak and requested that the Council reimburse her.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mrs X was informed that it is impossible now to establish what resources would have been available between Christmas Eve and 1 January 2014. However, she was advised that the Council's normal out-of-hours rota would have been in place comprising an electrician, a carpenter and two plumbers along with sub-contractor assistance. There would have been no need for Mrs X to commission her own repairs. Her claim for reimbursement was refused.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4234978 Mrs X complained that her Right to Buy application had been withdrawn by the Council without informing her.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mrs X was informed that the Council had told her the reason for the withdrawal of the Right to Buy application. The onus is on Mrs X's solicitor, to have been aware that the 56 day deadline was coming to a close.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4529608 Mr X complained about the Council's refusal to transfer the tenancy of his property into his sister's name and that the Council allow his sister and brother to move into the three bedroom property he occupied.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the view of the Council's Medical Adviser is that he was suffering from mild depression (a symptom of bereavement) and it is likely that his health will improve. He will not be eligible to proceed with his request to transfer into a 3 bedroom property.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4488622 Mr X complained about the Council's decision to only erect a low chain link fence on the boundary fence between his and the adjoining Council owned property. Mr X felt that such a fence would be unsatisfactory and would not provide a safe and</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that there was no legal requirement for a land owner to mark or enclose their land but that the Council was offering to erect a low chain link fence, as a good will gesture. If Mr X believed that there were significant risks to safety and security, he could erect a more substantial fence at his own cost.</p>

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<p>secure garden for his family.</p>	
<p>Complaint ref: 4522455 Miss X complained that an error made by Council officers had resulted in her deciding to withdraw her original application. She requested that a revised offer price based on the valuation at the time of her original application should be made by the Council.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Council accepted that it had made an error in the calculation of the discount on the original application. However, Miss X did not submit a formal challenge to that calculation and chose, of her own volition, to withdraw that application.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4441594 Mr X had evicted his son from the parental home as a result of his behaviour. His son's application to be re-housed was refused. Mr X complained that the officer interviewing his son had not called his care coordinator to come and collect his son. As a result his son was left to wander around Uxbridge alone and in an emotional state. His son left his bag on the train - Mr X requested that the Council compensate him for this.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was advised that there is no record of any messages being left requesting that the officer interviewing his son call the care coordinator to collect him. He was also informed that officers in the Housing Options Team provide advice on housing rights and options for homeless people or people who face becoming homeless. They do not assess the vulnerability of an individual and are not health professionals. Mr X was advised that the Council is not responsible for the loss of his son's bag and rejected his claim for compensation.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4423162 The Advocate for Mr X complained that when Mr X was placed in temporary accommodation he was told that he would be given a Council property within a few weeks. The Advocate also complained that a reasonable adjustment was not made as Mr X was taking medication for depression.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Advocate was advised that Mr X was placed in temporary accommodation pending further investigation as to whether he was in priority need or not. As the investigation had not concluded it would not have been possible for Mr X to be offered permanent accommodation. The Advocate was informed that an adjustment was made by reading out the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement to Mr X.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4559338 Mr X was unhappy that his Right to Buy application was cancelled. He felt that he was not served with due notice of the cancellation.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the Council had followed due process in considering his Right to Buy application. It was his responsibility as applicant to progress the</p>

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	application once he had formally accepted the Council's offer.
Complaint ref: 4624737 Ms X complained about the way her homelessness application was processed by the Council.	Not Upheld Ms P was informed that the Chief Executive could find no evidence of maladministration and reiterated that as Ms P does not meet the 10 year residency rule she is not eligible to join the Housing Register.
Complaint ref: 4258873 Mr X complained that the Council had not informed him that, as the leaseholder of a property, he would be liable for payments towards major works.	Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the Chief Executive could find no evidence of maladministration or fault. It is not possible to provide Mr X with a full explanation of what happened when he bought the property. The assignment of a lease is a matter between the existing leaseholder and the prospective purchaser.
Complaint ref: 4628079 Mr and Mrs X complained that the property offered to them did not meet their requirements and, in particular, those of their son.	Not Upheld Mr and Mrs X were informed that there was no evidence of maladministration. The recommendation of the Council's Medical Advisor was that the property offered by way of a direct allocation was suitable. However, they were advised that once they had moved into the property they could ask for a Suitability Review.
Complaint ref: 4664048 Mr X complained that the repairs he had requested had not been carried out whilst he lived at the address, namely that his sink was in disrepair, build up of water underneath his bath and no drainage system fitted to the repair downpipe.	Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the Chief Executive found no evidence of maladministration in relation to Mr X's period of occupancy at the premises. Officers had spent a great deal of time and effort in responding to his numerous requests for repairs to be submitted and by doing so had adhered to the Repairs Standard Manual.

5. INVESTIGATION BY THE COUNCIL'S DESIGNATED PERSON

If a complaint is about a tenancy, leasehold, or other housing management issue, a complainant can request that the Council's 'Designated Person' for assistance in resolving his/her dispute with the Council. Alternatively, a complainant can wait 8 weeks from the date of the Stage 3 response and then escalate their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman.

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Table 6 - Total number of Designated Person Investigations

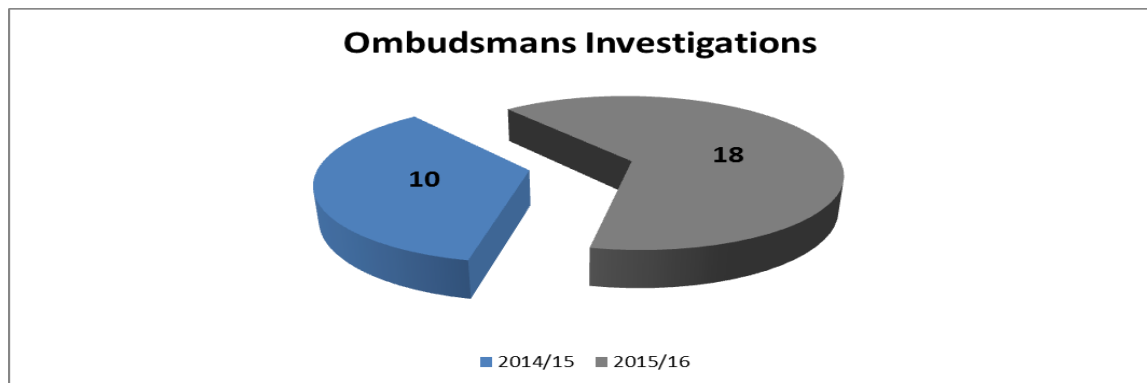
Period	Total number
2014/15	2
2015/16	0

No complaints were referred to the Council's Designated Person during 2015/16.

6. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE OMBUDSMAN

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations has 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 complainant back to the Council if a complaint has not first been fully considered by the Council.

Depending on the nature of the complaint referrals can be made to the Housing Ombudsman or the Local Government Ombudsman.



- 80% increase in complaints investigated by the Ombudsman when comparing the figure of 10 for 2014/15 against the figure of 18 for 2015/16.
- The outcome and findings of the Ombudsman's investigations are set out in table 7 below.

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Table 7 – Referrals to the Ombudsman

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p>Complaint ref: 4522455 Ms X complained that the Council failed to deal with her Right to Buy application correctly.</p>	<p>Upheld The Ombudsman found that the Council failed to properly assess the discount entitlement on Ms X's 'Right to Buy' application. However, the fault did not lead to the loss of her opportunity to purchase her home.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4402385 Mr X complained that the Council was at fault in its decision not to award any medical priority to his housing application. He said that the Council had failed to take into account medical information supplied by him which explains why his current accommodation is not suitable for his wife's needs.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld The Ombudsman found some evidence of fault in the way the Council assessed Mr X's medical information. The Council agreed to reassess Mr X's application. The Ombudsman considered that this suitably addressed the fault she identified.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3639933 Ms X complained that the Council delayed in accepting her homeless application and in providing her with temporary accommodation. Miss X also complained about the suitability of the accommodation provided.</p>	<p>Partially Upheld The Ombudsman decision was that the Council failed to forward documentation to relevant officers and the delay in determining Miss X's homeless application amounted to fault. However, this fault did not cause Ms X a significant injustice.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4604358 Miss X complained direct to the LGO that the Council had failed to properly assess her partner's medical needs and award their family the correct priority on the Housing Register.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no evidence of fault in the way the Council had assessed Miss X's family's housing needs or awarded priority on the Housing Register.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4234978 Ms X complained of the Council's handling of her Right to Buy application.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault by the Council in cancelling a Right to Buy application that was not completed within the required timescale.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4502356 Mr X complained that the Council refused to provide temporary accommodation after he was evicted in September 2015. He is now homeless and sleeping rough.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault in the way the Council decided not to provide Mr X with accommodation while it considered his request for a review of its decision to discharge homelessness duty.</p>

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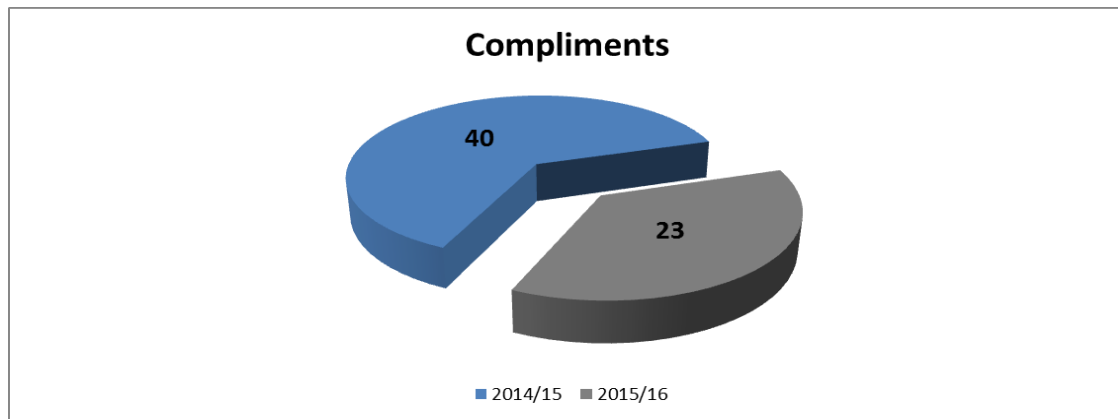
<p>Complaint ref: 4624737 Ms X complained that she was wrongly removed from the housing list two years after the Council's policy changed.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found that the Council's removal of Ms X from the Housing Register was without fault, as all those who had not lived in the Borough for 10 years were not entitled to remain on the Housing Register.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4559338 Mr X complained that the Council did not send him required notices when he attempted to buy his home under the Right to Buy scheme with the consequence that he missed out on the property purchase at a lower price.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman was satisfied that the Council did send the complainant required notices when he attempted to buy his home under the Right to Buy scheme.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3860773 Mr X complained about the Council's handling of a leak from his airing cupboard causing damage to his property and the Council's decision not to install a new water tank in his home.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no maladministration in the way the Council dealt with Mr X's leak from the airing cupboard and its decision not to install a new water tank in his home.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3423841 Mr X complained about the Council's handling of works to a newly built extension.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault and advised Mr X that the Council acted reasonably in carrying out extension works.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3931161 Mr X complained about the Council's decision not to replace his windows.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault in the Council's decision not to replace the window's in Mr X's property.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3972134 Mr and Mrs X complained that the Council delayed unreasonably in moving them to a suitable adapted property despite their urgent need to move.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman did not find fault in the way the Council dealt with their application.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4852411 Mr & Mrs X complained that the Council offered them an unsuitable property without taking note of the Occupational Therapist's recommendations from 2014.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault in the way the Council offered Mr and Mrs X their current property or in the way it considered its suitability for their needs, including their disabled son.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 5012393 Mr X complained about the Council's handling of his request for a review of its decision not to place him on its Housing Register.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault by the Council in the way it reviewed its decision not to put Mr X on its Housing Register.</p>

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<p>Complaint ref: 4561379 Mrs X complained about the Council’s decision not to provide her with social housing.</p>	<p>Did not investigate The Ombudsman told Mrs X that she could not investigate a complaint about the Council’s decision that it had no duty to house a homeless applicant as Mrs X can use her statutory review and appeal rights to challenge the decision.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4422027 Mr X complained about the way the Council dealt with his housing application, that it had failed in its duty to take or decide a formal homelessness application when he applied as homeless in 2013 and decided that he was ineligible to join its Housing Register.</p>	<p>Did not investigate The Ombudsman informed Mr X that she cannot investigate his complaint about the way the Council dealt with his homelessness and Housing Register applications because he had taken legal action against the Council. The law precludes the Ombudsman from investigating such complaints.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4488622 Mr X disagreed with the Council’s decision to repair a gap in the fence with a low rise chain fence. He wanted the Council to replace the whole fence with wooden panels.</p>	<p>Did not investigate The Ombudsman's decision was that she could not investigate this complaint about a fence which separates a private home from a council owned home. This is because she has no power to investigate a Council when it is acting as a social landlord.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4664048 Mr X complained about the outstanding repairs at his home and that the Council will not move him to a smaller property.</p>	<p>Did not investigate Mr X was informed that the Ombudsman cannot investigate complaints about housing repairs and his transfer request as these matters are outside her legal remit.</p>

7. COMPLIMENTS

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- 43% (17) fewer compliments received in 2015/16.

Here's what some residents have said:

"Oh I'm so happy..... I'm still pinching myself. You have helped me so much X. Like an angel sent from heaven. You've put up with my moans and groans over the time and always put me straight back on the road again. Your vibes are so positive and always happy. I can't thank you enough as nothing like this has ever happened to me. I shall never forget you X you have turned my whole life around. I'm going to do my utmost to get as well as I can be. One day at a time. You have worked so hard and put yourself right out. You'll sure be remembered".

"I am writing to say a big thank you on behalf of my motherfor installing the care alarm, smoke detector and panic button in her home last Saturday. Everyone was so polite and helpful and X arrived on Saturday on time to install the equipment and went over everything with my mother. As you can imagine, it brings peace of mind to my 91 year old mother and also to myself as I live 30 miles away in Reading. I consider the service outstanding and all at no charge!"

Mrs X called to thank Y for the "very professional and efficient service provided by Y without malice or favour and that Y was clearly an excellent asset to the London Borough of Hillingdon".

Mrs X called to say thank you personally to Y - She said Y was her guardian angel and she can't thank Y enough for all she had done for her.

Annex 2 – Complaints about Adult Services

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The procedure for dealing with Adult Services complaints is regulated by the 'The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009'.

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 operates as follows:

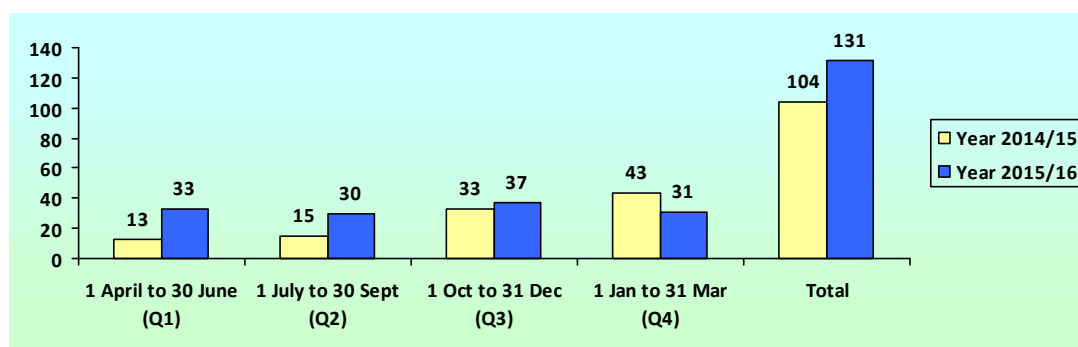
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service of the area complained about.
- Local Government Ombudsman.

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.

1. THE INFORMAL COMPLAINT

We will try to resolve enquiries/concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with a complainant. If we can solve the problem we will do so, immediately. This approach has helped to keep formal complaints at a low level.

Informal Complaints received – (Service requests)

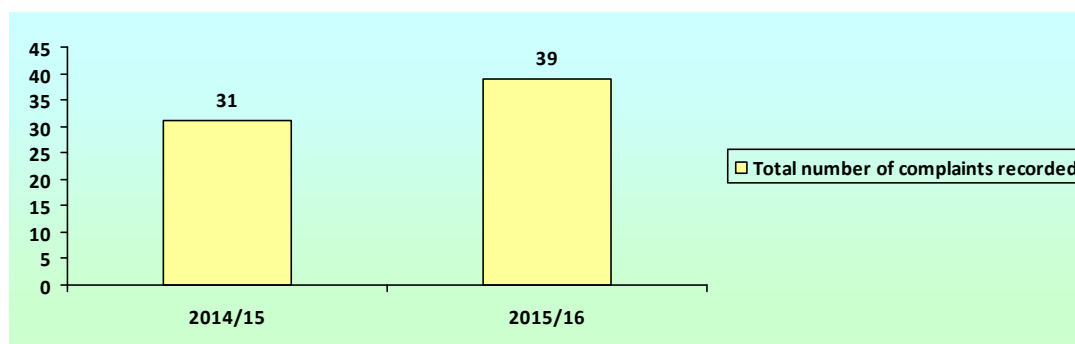


- 26% (27) more informal complaints when comparing 2014/15 figure of 104 with the figure for 2015/16 of 131.

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2. STAGE 1 COMPLAINT - LOCAL RESOLUTION

The Head of Service of the area complained about will aim to respond to the complaint within 20 working days.



- 26% (8) more Stage 1 complaint's when comparing the figure of 31 in 2014/15 with the figure of 39 for 2015/16. This was expected as the figure for 2014/15 of 31 was unusually low when compared with previous year's performance.

Table 8 - Breakdown of Stage 1 complaints by Service Area

Service Area	Volume	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Withdrawn
All Age Disabilities	20	1	4	14	1
Safeguarding Quality and Partnership	1	0	0	1	0
Social Work	17	1	2	14	0
Early Intervention	1	0	1	0	0
Total	39	2	7	29	1

- All Age Disability Service accounted for 51% of Adult Service complaints.
- Social Work accounted for 44% of Adult Service complaints.
- 5% (2) of complaints were upheld, 18% (7) partially upheld and 74% (29) not upheld

Table 9 – Time taken to conclude a complaint (working days)

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	2014/15	2015/16
Average time taken to conclude a complaint	13.42	7.97
Target	20	20
Variance	- 6.58	- 12.03

- The average time taken to conclude a Stage 1 complaint is 7.97 working days against a target of 20 working days. This is an exceptional performance when compared against our published and internal targets.

Table 10 - Number and % of complaints dealt with within 10 working days

Period	Total number of complaints	Number dealt with within 10 working days	% dealt with within 10 working days
2014/15	31	19	62 %
2015/16	39	36	92 %

- 92% (36) of Stage 1 complaints were dealt with within our internal target of 10 working days. All complaints were responded to within our published target of 20 working days.

Learning from complaints

From all the upheld/partially upheld Stage 1 complaints, the following learning and/or changes were made as a result:

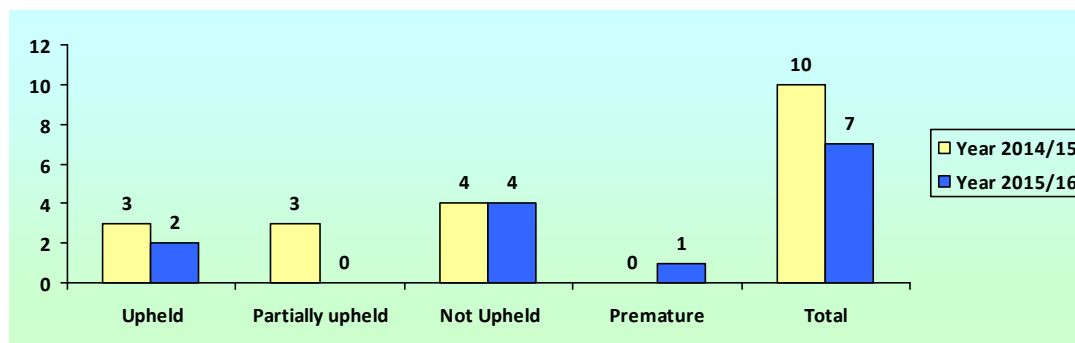
- In two complaints we apologised for not responding to the complainant's disagreement with the assessment undertaken. No changes were made as a result.
- in three complaints we apologised to the complainant that they were upset by the way the financial review/assessment was undertaken. In one of these complaints an in house social worker had to re do the assessment undertaken by an external agency.
- In four complaints we apologised that the complainant was not consulted as part of the support planning process - in all cases we advised that we had reviewed and changed processes.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations has 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

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Ombudsman normally refers the complainant back to the Council if a complaint has not first been fully considered by the Council.



- 30% (3) fewer referrals to the LGO. The findings and decision of the LGO is provided in table 4 below.

Table 11 - Outcome of LGO investigations

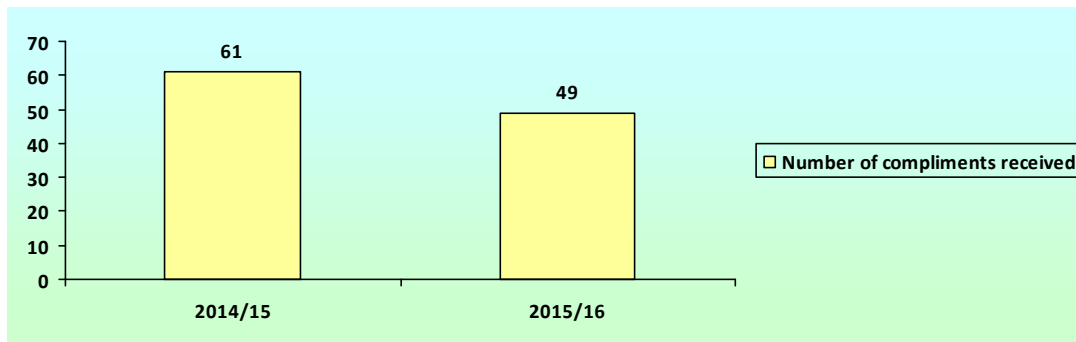
Complaint details	LGO decision
<p>Complaint ref: 3529167 Mrs X complained about the actions of the Council and the Hospital Trust in providing services for her late mother. She felt that the service on discharge was not coordinated and the parties did not communicate effectively.</p>	<p>Upheld The Ombudsman found evidence of fault and that Mrs X suffered an injustice in terms of distress and uncertainty. The Council apologised to Mrs X for what happened and to improve our practices a team to oversee hospital discharge was introduced.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4242262 Ms X was unhappy with the Council's re-assessment of her care needs and the proposed decrease in her Direct Payments. She was also unhappy with the decision to reduce her funding for personal care. Ms X feels that the Council should continue to provide funding at the current level as her needs have not changed since her last review.</p>	<p>Upheld The Ombudsman determined that the Council was at fault for (1) proposing to reduce Ms X's Direct Payments because her carer spends time on domestic tasks; (2) not giving a clear explanation for how Ms X can manage with fewer hours of care. The Council agreed to arrange a new assessment of Ms X's care package.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 3948026 Mr X was unhappy at charges made for his social care arranged by the Council. He complained that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • until the end of March 2015 he received care from two care assistants visiting him three times a day, he considered this excessive; • each visit arranged by the Council was 	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman did not agree with Mr X that the Council was at fault for the care charges it expected him to pay as she did not find the charges were unfair.</p> <p>The Ombudsman was satisfied with the Council's actions in this case.</p>

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<p>for a 30 minute duration, he said this was also excessive and that in practice his care assistants rarely stayed for this time.</p>	
<p>Complaint ref: 4573819 Mr X complained that his late great grandmother received poor domiciliary care. He said that in February 2015 carers failed to spot she had a serious leg infection. He feels that the alleged bad practice caused his great grandmother's death.</p>	<p>Not Upheld Mr X was informed that the Ombudsman will not investigate the complaint now. This is because other agencies were involved in her care - her GP and District Nurses. Once these bodies have considered the complaint the Ombudsman may investigate his concerns jointly with the Health Service Ombudsman.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4767229 Mrs X complained that the Council refused to provide her with Direct Payments to pay for a gym membership. She said that gym membership would support her health and well-being and help her to continue to provide care for her son.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found that the Council had carried out two carer's assessments for Mrs X through two different organisations. The outcome of both assessments is that Mrs X does not qualify for a personal budget. The Ombudsman found no evidence that the Council is at fault for refusing to give Mrs X Direct Payments</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4190188 Mr X complained that there was fault in the way the Council reassessed his son's Direct Payments and decided to stop payments to the grandfather. He felt that this breached the Council's earlier agreement and that the way the assessment was carried out was distressing for his son.</p>	<p>Not Upheld The Ombudsman found no fault in the Council's decision to withdraw the Direct Payments.</p>
<p>Complaint ref: 4610681 Mr X did not dispute that that he was overpaid but complained about the way the Council handled the overpayment issue.</p>	<p>Premature complaint The Ombudsman advised Mr X that his complaint was submitted prematurely and that he first needed to submit a complaint to the Council. Mr X has to date not submitted a complaint to the Council.</p>

4. COMPLIMENTS

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- 20% (12) fewer compliments received in 2015/16 when compared against the 2014/15 figure of 61.

Here's what some residents have said:

"Thanks so much for all your hard work over the last 18 months or so. You have really been a great support to X, and went above and beyond what we ever expected. You were a comrade to me during a time that was so stressful and unhappy. I could not have coped without your professionalism and support. X's life is very settled and happy now, and he is being cared for properly. So much of that is down to your hard work and as a family we really, really appreciate that".

"I would like to take the opportunity to admit that I was wrong to oppose the move and the move was "right" for dad. Thank you for listening to dad and believing in him. Dad is happier than I have seen him in years and is motivated in all aspects of his life, especially in getting out of bed, getting washed and shaved, going downstairs to eat and sitting and chatting to the other residents. He is also now taking pride in his appearance and his living area. He enjoys the feeling of space and privacy in his flat. Now that he has a BT landline he regularly calls me and has great chats. So, in spite of all my reservations and fears about the move it is my pleasure to say I have been proved wrong. Thank you for moving dad into the most excellent facility of House and setting up a highly supportive care package. Lastly I must mention Y, who had liaised and helps manage dad, like yourself, in not only a most highly professional way but also a dignified regard for the elderly whose voice has been "somewhat lost and unheard". Thank you X for standing firm, in adverse conditions, and giving dad "the best" in the last years of his life".

"I would sincerely praise X for his dealings with my aunt. My aunt got really ill in January, and X was called on to help. Since January, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that all my aunt's needs were met. My aunt does not have any relatives living in the UK, and as I am her next of kin, and live in Ireland it is difficult to manage an 88 year old blind lady. X has constantly kept in touch with me, via emails and phone calls, and at all times he was most courteous. He went to visit my aunt in Hillingdon Hospital while she was very ill, and subsequently found a temporary placement for her in

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House. Since yesterday, this placement has now become permanent, and we are all very happy that this has worked out so well. At a time when lots of complaints are heard about councils and public bodies, it is a real pleasure to meet such an efficient, kind, and caring social worker".

"I am writing this email as I would like to thank X for all her help in placing my mother in a home for respite care, this had to be done at short notice and she has had to deal with both my brother and myself getting irate, but she has acted in a most professional way. So often you hear all the negative comments about local authorities and I now know how hard social workers work and are dedicated to their jobs".

"I just wanted to say thank you for your time visiting my son in the nursery and for your advice. I didn't believe we had a major problem, which you confirmed, but at the same time the strategies you have recommended have already made a difference. We have implemented your advice and I have to say they are working very well".

"I write to thank you and every member of your team most sincerely for all the help and assistance you have provided for my wife and indeed for me following her fall. Fortunately, we have never needed the help of Social Services before and I have to say we are quite overwhelmed by the professionalism, real practical assistance and humanity shown to us".

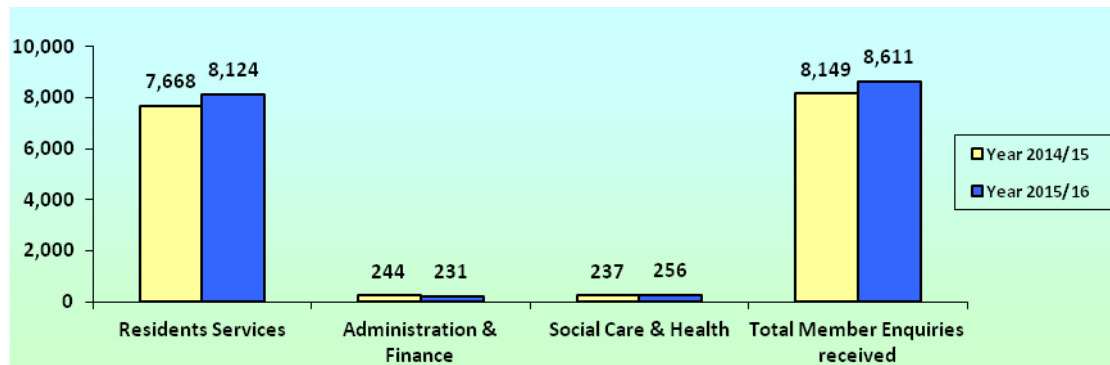
"I have an elderly grandmother with dementia and other issues, and last week was at my wits end as to how to resolve the issue of care for her. After contacting your department a few times I was finally put in touch with X. I am writing to let you know about the excellent service she has provided. From the start X was approachable, professional and supportive. She had knowledge of the various options available, advocated on our behalf to get the GP to instigate rapid response, gave me information on the various care options, arranged for the installation of a falls detector and was proactive in ensuring things were moving forward. Whilst I know she was just 'doing her job' I really feel that her care was exemplary, and I am extremely grateful".

Annex 3 MEMBERS ENQUIRIES

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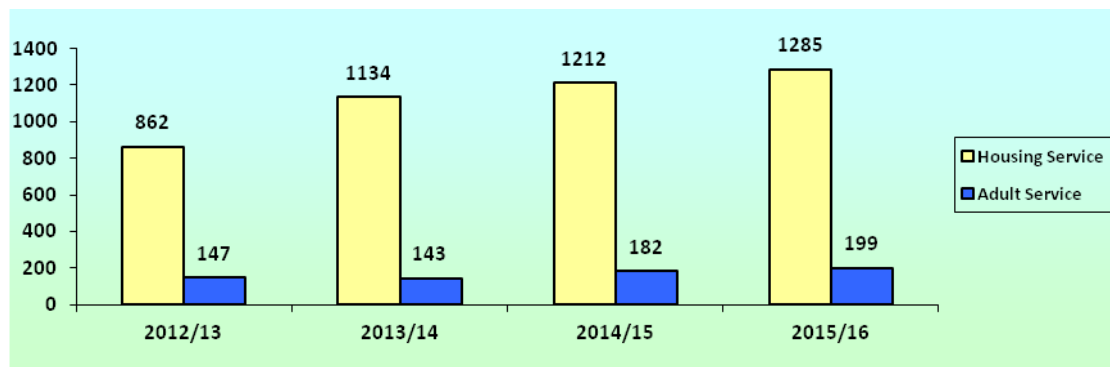
Enquiries can be submitted to officers on behalf of residents to Elected Members for further information.

Total number of Enquiries from Elected Members



- 5% increase in enquiries from Elected Members when comparing the figure for 2014/15 of 8,149 with the figure for 2015/16 of 8,611.
- Residents Services accounts for 94% of all Members Enquiries.

Total number of Members Enquiries for Housing and Adult Services



- Housing Services received 1,285 from Elected Members for 2015/16 which is a 6% (73) increase in enquiries when comparing the 2015/16 figure of 1,285 with the 2014/15 of 1,212.
- Adult Services received 199 enquiries from Elected Members which is a 9% (17) increase when comparing the 2015/16 figure of 199 with the 2014/15 of 182.
- For Housing Services, the main areas where Elected Members made enquiries about were: housing allocation and repairs.

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- For Adult Services the three main service areas where Elected Members made enquiries about were: All Age Disability Services 73 enquiries, Social Work 50 enquiries and Mental Health Services 28 enquiries.
- Housing and Adult Services both receive far more enquires from Elected Members than complaints.

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PART I – MEMBERS, PUBLIC & PRESS