

ANNUAL COMPLAINT REPORT FOR EDUCATION SERVICES FOR 1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2018

Committee name	Residents', Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Ian Anderson - Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries
Papers with report	Appendix A
Ward	All

HEADLINES

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members' Enquiries received between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018 for Education Services and satisfies the requirements to publish annual information about complaints.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

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

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

None.

Implications on related Council policies

None.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Provides assurance that complaints and Members' Enquiries are being processed in accordance with our published policies.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

None.

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COMPLAINT REPORT FOR EDUCATION SERVICES FOR 1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2018

SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

Informal Complaints

- Informal complaints (service requests) are down 22% (4) when comparing the same period for 2016/17 of 18 with 2017/18 of 14.

Stage 1 complaints

- There were 33 Stage 1 complaints for 2017/18. 29 related to complaints from Ofsted or parents about the way their children had been dealt with by a school. 4 related to parents dissatisfaction with the handling or decision not to admit their child to a particular school by the School Placement and Admission Team.
- Of the 33 Stage 1 complaints, 2 were partially upheld, 30 not upheld and 1 was withdrawn. 28 (85%) of the 33 Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 10 working day target.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

- There were no Stage 2 and 3 investigations during this period.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)

- One complaint was considered by the LGO but they decided not to investigate.

Compliments

- 2 compliments were recorded for 2017/18.

Members' Enquiries (ME) (page 8)

- 8,502 MEs were recorded for 2017/18. This is 683 (7%) fewer than 2016/17 figure of 9,185. The service areas with the highest number of MEs is Waste (3,340), Anti-Social Behaviour (1,273) and Planning (1,227) Services.

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, via our website or email, either directly to the service area, Contact Centre or to the Complaints and Enquiries 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

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 Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries 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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EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS COMPLAINTS

Complaints about education and schools are governed by the Education Act 2002.

The Local Authority will only deal with complaints that are education related such as the provision of the national curriculum, school admission appeals, exclusions, special educational needs assessments, child protection issues, allegations of child abuse, etc.

Complaints about the internal management of a school must initially be made in writing to the Head Teacher of the school. If this fails to resolve the issue, concerns should then be raised with the chair of governors. If a complainant remains dissatisfied they can then escalate their complaint to the Department for Education and beyond that to the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman via a Member of Parliament.

The Complaint Procedure

For those complaints where this local authority has a statutory duty to investigate, we will deal with these complaints under the corporate complaints procedure as follows:

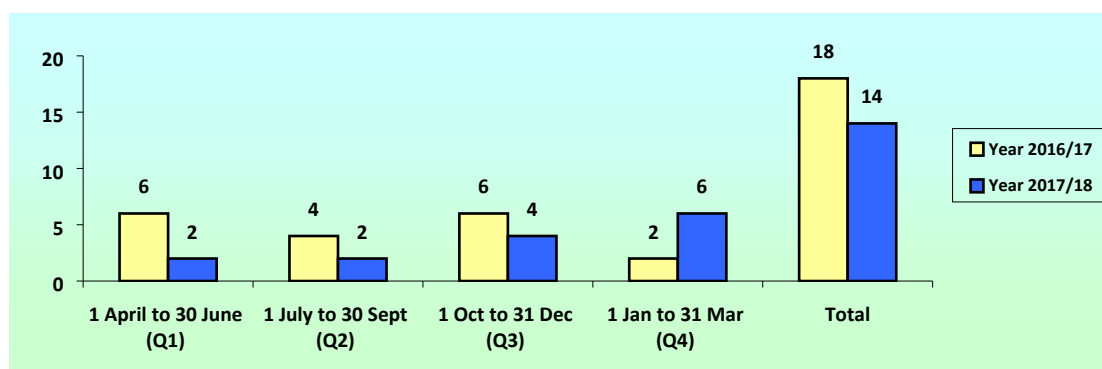
- The Informal Complaint (service request)
- Stage 1 – response from the Deputy Director for Housing, Environment, Education, Health and Wellbeing or a Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services.
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

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

A. THE INFORMAL COMPLAINT

This local authority will attempt to consider all concerns as close to the point of contact as possible, and in cases where minor or day-to-day concerns are raised these are dealt with as service requests.

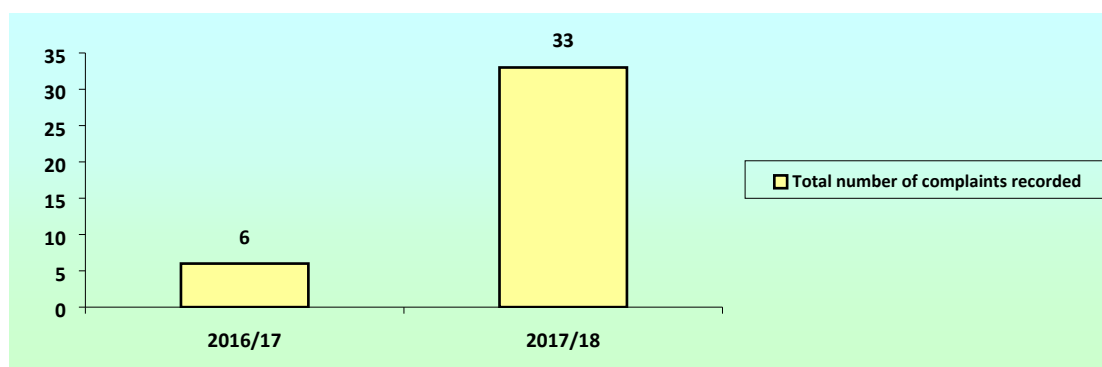
Informal Complaints received – (service requests)



Informal complaints are down 22% (4) when comparing the figure for 2016/17 of 18 with the same period in 2017/18 of 14.

B. STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

Total number of complaints recorded



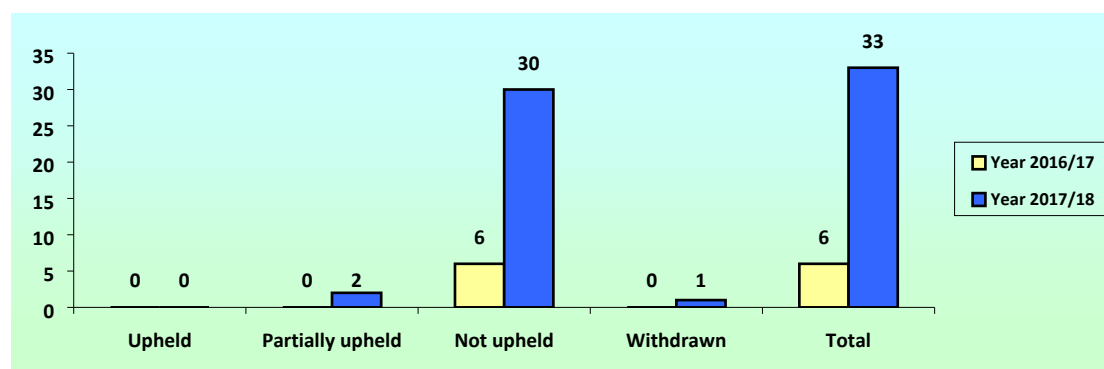
29 of the 33 complaints were submitted to Ofsted or direct from parents concerning the way their children had been dealt with by a school. In all complaints we raised this issue directly with the Head Teacher (safeguarding) but the outcome of the investigation was in almost all instances that this was a matter for the school to consider under their own complaints procedure. The increase in Stage 1 education related complaints between 2016/17 and 2017/18 is attributed to changes in the way Ofsted record and manage complaints from parents/carers. They now refer these complaints to the Council to co-ordinate rather than refer directly to the school, and as a result these complaints are now formally recorded as complaints by the Council rather than informal, service requests.

4 related to parents dissatisfaction with the handling or decision not to admit their child to a particular school by the School Placement and Admission Team.

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Outcome of complaints



6% (2) of complaints were partially upheld, 91% (30) not upheld and 3% (1) withdrawn.

Table 1 – Time taken to respond to a complaint (working days)

	2016/17	2017/18
Average time taken to respond to a complaint	7	9.36
Target	10	10
Variance	- 3.00	- 0.64

The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint was 9.36 working days and this is within the 10 working days target.

Table 2 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days

Period	Total number of complaints	Number dealt with within 10 working days	% dealt with within 10 working days
2016/17	6	6	100
2017/18	33	28	85 %

In three of the complaints that missed the target, this was because the school was closed (half term) and officers could not begin the investigation until the school re-opened.

c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

There were no Stage 2 complaints during this period.

d. STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS

There were no Stage 3 complaints during this period.

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e. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGO) INVESTIGATIONS

One complaint was considered by the Ombudsman during this period. The finding and decision of the LGO is set out below.

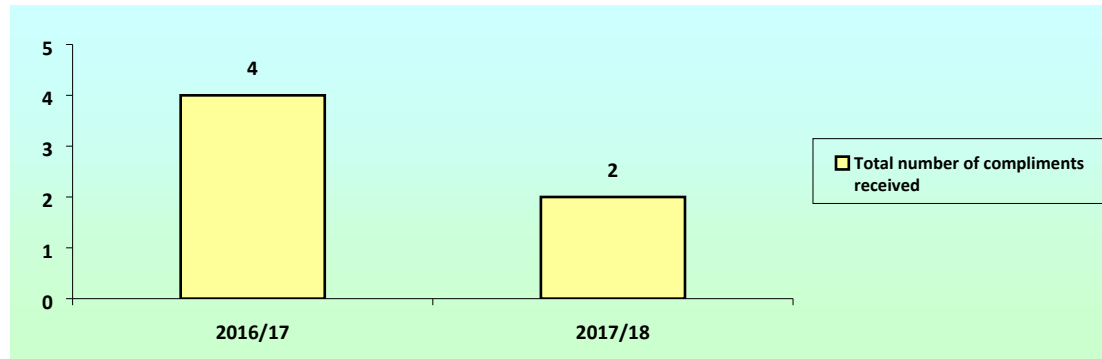
Complaint details	LGO decision
Complaint ref: 5976537 Mrs X complained that the Council delayed in providing an Education Health and Care Plan for her son and that it had resulted in him being absent from school.	Did not investigate Mrs X was informed that the Ombudsman Could not investigate her complaint that a delay in finalising her son's EHCP had caused the Council to take legal proceedings against her for school nonattendance. This because the LGO cannot investigate the commencement or conduct of Court action.

f. **LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS**

No changes or service improvements were made as a result of these complaints.

g. **Compliments**

Number of compliments received



Here's what the two people said:

"I'm so happy because after my email to you I help the classe tigger classe to be better and safe classe xx tigger classe is better now because before mums in tigger classe was sad and worry her children and xx said that staff Thanks for your letter. Thank you to help tigger class and thanks you because you make us very happy."

"thank you once again for all the support, challenge and guidance you have given to me as well as my colleagues this year! We have had another productive year and while we continue to develop and build upon the progress we are making, it does not bear thinking about that I could

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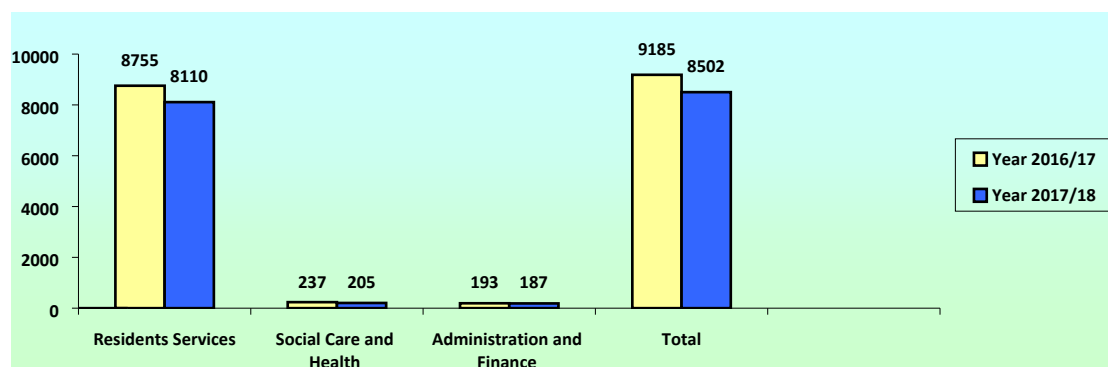
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be facing this journey without the input and support of the xx. Your team in particular, more than any other xx team at LBH, has been our constant support and expert guide, and I sincerely hope that my letter and any others that may be provided in support of your valuable work, go a long way to evidencing just how much we need your xx to continue, as always advising us in xx in the heart of Hillingdon."

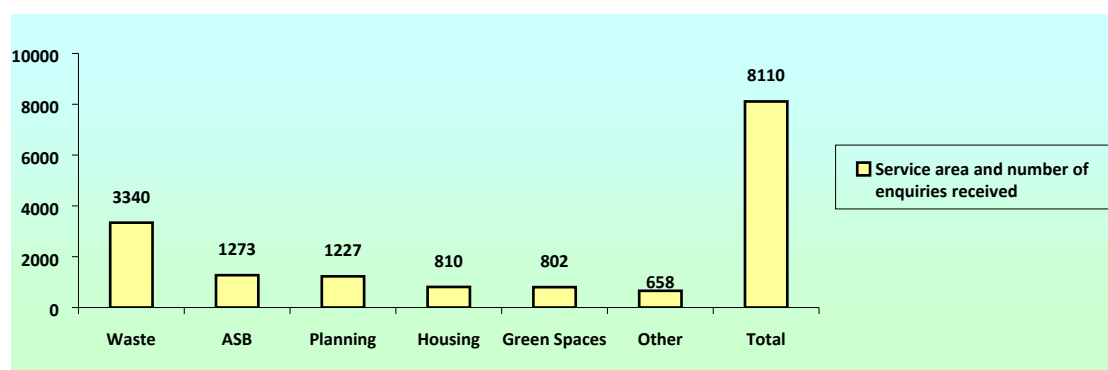
MEMBERS ENQUIRIES

Enquiries can be submitted to officers by Elected Members on behalf of their constituents.

Total number of Enquiries from Elected Members



- 7% (683) fewer (overall) enquiries from Elected Members when comparing the figure for 2016/17 of 9,185 with the figure for 2017/18 of 8,502.
- Residents Services accounts for 95% of all enquiries from Elected Members. Please see below for a breakdown of enquiries received for Residents Services.



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