

# ANNUAL COMPLAINT & SERVICE MONITORING REPORT FOR 1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 MARCH 2022

<b>Committee name</b>	Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee
<b>Officer reporting</b>	Ian Anderson - Business Manager, Complaints and Enquiries
<b>Papers with report</b>	Appendix A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H
<b>Ward</b>	All

## HEADLINES

To provide information to the Committee on key complaints and related service monitoring data.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

**That the Committee note the contents of the report and provide any comments to officers as appropriate.**

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

This report provides information and analysis of complaints and Members' Enquiries received between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022 and satisfies the requirement to publish annual information. The report includes:

- Appendix A: Background to the complaints process
- Appendix B: Complaints, compliments, and Members' Enquiries trends for 2021/22
- Appendix C: Complaint and Compliment report for Housing Services for 2021/22
- Appendix D: Complaint and Compliment report for Adult Social Care for 2021/22
- Appendix E: Complaint and Compliment report for Children and Young People Services for 2021/22
- Appendix F: Complaint and Compliment report for Education Services for 2021/22
- Appendix G: Complaint and compliment report for Finance Directorate for 2021/22
- Appendix H: Complaint and Compliments for Place Directorate for 2021/22
- Appendix I: Learning from complaints

## Implications on related Council policies

A key role of Select Committees is to monitor the performance of Council services within their remit. Select Committees may also recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

## How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

This report seeks to provide assurance that complaints and Members' Enquiries are being processed in accordance with the Council's published policies.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

## **Legal Implications**

None.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

NIL.

# APPENDIX A

## BACKGROUND TO THE COMPLAINT PROCESS

### 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 in the first place;
- 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.

## APPENDIX B

### COMPLAINT, COMPLIMENTS AND MEMBERS' ENQUIRIES FOR 2021/22

#### 1. Total number of complaints/compliments recorded for 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

Directorate	Informal complaints	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Ombudsman Investigations	Compliments
Finance Directorate	350	167	19	0	10	6
Adult Social Care	80	50	n/a	n/a	7	33
Children and Young People Services	106	69	0	0	3	77
Education Services	20	6	0	0	0	2
Place Directorate	3,917	510	83	0	55	231
<b>Total for 2021/22</b>	<b>4,473</b>	<b>802</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>349</b>
<b>Total for 2020/21</b>	<b>2,587</b>	<b>789</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>502</b>

- The Council's focus when dealing with complaints is in trying to resolve a complaint to the satisfaction of the resident. The figures above suggest that this is the case, with the volume of complaints decreasing when escalating up the complaint process i.e. only 18% of informal complaints (4,473) escalated to a Stage 1 complaint (802) and only 13% of Stage 1 complaints escalated to Stage 2 (102).
- The number of compliments (349) for 2021/22 compares favourably when compared against the volume of Stage 1 complaints recorded (802) for the same period.

#### 2. Total number of complaints/compliments recorded for 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022

Year	Informal complaints	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 Complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Ombudsman Investigations	Compliments
2017/18	2,090	889	43	1	50	146
2018/19	2,756	837	73	0	86	234
2019/20	2,339	861	80	0	59	301
2020/21	2,587	789	42	0	34	502
2021/22	4,473	802	102	0	75	349

- On the whole the number of compliments recorded over the past 5 years has continued to rise from 146 in 2017/18 to 349 for 2021/22. This suggests that satisfaction levels are higher than in previous years.
- The number of informal complaints recorded for 2021/22 of 4,473 is significantly higher than the 2017/18 figure of 2,090. Of the 4,473 informal complaints recorded, Housing Services (1,039), Waste Services (1,031), Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team

(665) and Finance Directorate (350) accounted for 23%, 23%, 15% and 8% respectively of all informal complaints.

- The Council's Corporate complaints procedure was revised in 2017, which allowed officers to escalate a complaint direct from Stages 1 and/or 2 to the Ombudsman where it is felt that the decision cannot be overturned through the complaint process. This change in approach has been applied by officers and it is for this reason that there have been fewer Stage 2 complaints and no Stage 3 complaint investigations in previous years. However, in 2021/22 we made the decision to offer more complainants Stage 2 and this is the reason for the rise in Stage 2 complaints for 2021/22.
- The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for 4 months in 2020/21 to allow Local Authorities to focus on our Covid 19 response. They have now caught up and this is the reason for the rise in the number of Ombudsman investigations concluded in 2021/22.

### 3. Members Enquiries (MEs)

#### Number of MEs recorded

Period	Residents Services	Adult Services	Children Services	Finance Directorate	Total
2017/18	8,110	144	61	187	8,502
2018/19	11,308	117	69	181	11,675
2019/20	11,047	135	62	179	11,423
2020/21	9,533	145	54	228	9,960
2021/22	9,432	112	58	167	9,769

- The number of MEs recorded for the last 2 years is lower than the two previous years and this is largely due to the impact of the Covid 19 restrictions, where people were adhering to the Government Guidance to stay at home and only to go out for essential travel.
- As a result of a re structure, Residents Services was replaced with a new directorate called Place, which accounted for 97% (9,432) of all MEs recorded and this pattern is consistent with the previous four years.
- Over the past 5 years, Adult Services, Children and Young People's Services and the Finance Directorate recorded fewer MEs when compared with Residents Services. However, these enquiries tend to be more complex and take longer to address.
- I envisage that the volume of MEs will reduce significantly in the years to come as we have re defined what an ME is i.e. *'a clear question has been asked that now requires investigation by Council Officers, or the supply of information from a Council department'*. We have also defined what a service request is i.e. *'a request for a one-off action to be taken, that requires action by an Officer and not investigative activities or supply of information'*.

## Top 3 enquiries raised by Ward for 2021/22

Ward	First (volume)	Second (volume)	Third (volume)
Barnhill	Fly-Tipping (141)	Highways Utilities (40)	Refuse/Litter (26)
Botwell	Refuse/Litter (280)	Fly-Tipping (264)	Highways Utilities (104)
Brunel	Fly-Tipping (25)	Highways Utilities (19)	Graffiti removal (10)
Cavendish	Highways Utilities (11)	Tree maintenance (10)	Highways (Crossovers) (7)
Charville	Fly-Tipping (49)	Highways Utilities (36)	Tree maintenance (27)
Eastcote	Highways Utilities (24)	Tree maintenance (19)	Planning applications (16)
Harefield	Highways Utilities (21)	Housing Repairs (13)	Fly-Tipping (12)
Heathrow Villages	Fly-Tipping (70)	Refuse/Litter on street (37)	Highways Utilities (36)
Hillingdon East	Fly-Tipping (99)	Highways Utilities (96)	Refuse/litter on street (69)
Ickenham	Highways Utilities (19)	Planning Enforcement (10)	Planning Applications (8)
Manor	Fly Tipping (21)	Highways Utilities (17)	Planning Applications (12)
Northwood	Tree maintenance (13)	Highways Utilities (11)	Tenancy Management (8)
Northwood Hills	Fly-Tipping (21)	Anti-social behaviour (10)	Planning Enforcement (8)
Pinkwell	Fly-Tipping (174)	Refuse/litter on street (99)	Highways Utilities (39)
South Ruislip	Fly-Tipping (69)	Highways Utilities (67)	Tree maintenance (41)
Townfield	Fly-Tipping 83)	Highways Utilities (38)	Refuse/litter on street (31)
Uxbridge North	Highways Utilities (18)	Planning Applications (11)	Anti-social behaviour (6)
Uxbridge South	Highways Utilities (18)	Fly-Tipping (16)	Housing Repairs (12)
West Drayton	Fly-Tipping (66)	Highways Utilities (31)	Housing need (30)
West Ruislip	Planning Enforcement (18)	Planning Applications (14)	Highways Utilities (11)
Yeading	Fly-Tipping (705)	Highways Utilities (165)	Refuse/litter on street (95)
Yiewsley	Fly-Tipping (43)	Highways Utilities (22)	Housing Repairs (20)

- The table above provides data on the three most frequently made enquiries from each Ward.

## Service areas that have the highest number of MEs recorded

Service Area	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Waste	3,340	5,566	5,950	4,964	3,934
Housing	905	1,239	1,288	1,269	976
Anti-Social Behaviour	1,261	1,649	1,408	1,176	1,258
Green Spaces	802	1,050	966	863	1,043
Planning	1,228	1,235	978	827	1,255

- Waste, Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour, Green Spaces and Planning Services (8,466) combined accounted for 87% of all enquiries submitted by Elected Members for 2021/22.
- Waste Service accounted for 40% of all MEs with Housing, Anti-Social Behaviour, Green Spaces and Planning accounting for 10%, 13%, 11% and 13% respectively, of all enquiries submitted by Elected Members for 2021/22.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR HOUSING SERVICES FOR 2021/22**

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

##### **Informal complaints**

- 83% (471) more informal complaints recorded when comparing the 2020/21 figure of 568 with the 2021/22 figure of 1,039.

##### **Stage 1 complaints**

- 227 Stage 1 complaints recorded for 2021/22. Of the 227 Stage 1 complaints, 17 were upheld, 40 partially upheld, 160 not upheld and 10 withdrawn or cancelled. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 8.75 working days, with 81% (183 out of 227) of Stage 1 complaints responded to within the 10-working day target.

##### **Stage 2 complaints**

- 91% (20) more Stage 2 complaints recorded when comparing the figure for 2020/21 of 22 with the 2021/22 figure of 42. Of the 42 Stage 2 complaints, 12 were partially upheld and 30 not upheld. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 2 complaint is 9.85 working days.

##### **Stage 3 complaints**

- There were no Stage 3 complaints investigated during 2021/22.

##### **Investigation by the Local Government or Housing Ombudsman**

- 19 complaints were concluded by the Ombudsman with 3 upheld, 3 partially upheld, 1 not upheld and they did not investigate the remaining 12.

##### **Compliments**

- 167 compliments were recorded for 2021/22 which is rise from the 2020/21 figure of 132 and the figure of 24 for 2017/18.

#### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

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

- The Informal Complaint (service request).
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from a Corporate Director of Place
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council

- Stage 4 - Designated Person for the Council
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman Service

## DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for Housing Services is set out below.

### a. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 1 - Informal complaints (Service Requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March	Total
2017/18	104	88	102	114	408
2018/19	94	90	114	123	421
2019/20	124	87	142	104	457
2020/21	84	86	155	243	568
2021/22	298	304	279	158	1,039

- 83% (471) more informal complaints recorded for 2021/22 of 1,039 when compared with the 2020/21 figure of 568. The increase in informal complaints recorded was largely as a result of resident dissatisfaction with the time taken to undertake repairs.

### b. **STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS**

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

**Table 2 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints**

Period	Total
2017/18	170
2018/19	157
2019/20	177
2020/21	231
2021/22	227

- The number of Stage 1 complaints remains broadly similar when comparing the 2021/22 and 2020/21 figures of 227 and 231, respectively.

**Table 3 - Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2017/18	13	32	121	4	170
2018/19	22	44	84	7	157
2019/20	18	40	113	6	177
2020/21	39	52	127	13	231
2021/22	17	40	160	10	227

- Of the 227 Stage 1 complaints, 7% (17) were upheld, 18% (40) partially upheld, 71% (160) not upheld and 4% (10) either cancelled or withdrawn.

**Table 4 - Time taken to respond to a complaint at Stage 1 (working days)**

	Time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint
2017/18	7.80
2018/19	8.50
2019/20	8.09
2020/21	9.89
2021/22	8.75

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 8.75 working days against the target of 10 working days.

**Table 5 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days**

Period	Total number of complaints	Number responded to within 10 working days	% responded to within 10 working days
2017/18	170	152	89 %
2018/19	157	129	82 %
2019/20	177	152	86 %
2020/21	231	195	84 %
2021/22	227	183	81 %

- 81% (183 out of 227) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days.

### c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Corporate Director for Place will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

**Table 6 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints**

Period	Total
2017/18	10
2018/19	24
2019/20	31
2020/21	22
2021/22	42

- 91% (20) more Stage 2 complaints were recorded when compared with the 2020/21 figure of 22 with the 2021/22 figure of 42. This was to be expected because in 2021/22 we made the decision to offer more complainants Stage 2 rather than a direct escalation from Stage 1 to the Ombudsman and this is the reason for the rise in Stage 2 complaints for 2021/22.

**Table 7 – Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Total
2017/18	4	2	4	10
2018/19	2	1	21	24
2019/20	4	3	24	31
2020/21	6	4	12	22
2021/22	0	12	30	42

- 29% of Stage 2 complaints were partially upheld and 71% not upheld.

**Table 8 - Time taken to respond to a complaint at Stage 2 (working days)**

	Time taken to respond to a Stage 2 complaint
2017/18	8.63
2018/19	8.83
2019/20	10.50
2020/21	10.85
2021/22	9.11

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 2 complaint is 9.11 working days against the target of 10 working days.

#### **d. 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.

There were no Stage 3 investigations from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022.

#### **e. INVESTIGATION BY THE COUNCIL'S DESIGNATED PERSON**

If a complaint is about a tenancy, leasehold, or other housing management issue, a complainant can either refer their complaint to the 'Designated Person' to see if they can help to the complaint. 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 Service.

- There were no investigations undertaken by the Council's Designated Person.

#### **f. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN AND HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SERVICE**

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman at any stage of the complaint process.

**Table 9 - Total number of Ombudsman investigations**

Period	Total number
2017/18	20
2018/19	16
2019/20	15
2020/21	5
2021/22	19

- The Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for 4 months to allow Local Authorities to focus on our COVID-19 response during 2020/21. However, they have caught up and this is the reason for the rise in the number of Ombudsman investigations when comparing 2021/22 figure of 19 with the 2020/21 figure of 5.

The findings and decision of the investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman is set out below.

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8888773</b> Ms W complained about the Council's handling of reports about mould in her property and her application for re-housing.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council delayed in completing the remedial works at the property and that it completed all the remedial works identified. The Council clarify its position regarding a possible management transfer to Ms W.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9025363</b> Ms T complained that the Council had not assessed her housing priority properly because it has not considered all the information she provided about her sons' circumstances.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council had allocated a lower priority band to Ms T and she missed opportunities to be rehoused. The Council agreed to backdate her housing priority and apologise and pay her a sum of money for distress.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9076209</b> Mr B complained that he and his family were living in a one-bedroom property and that the Council had incorrectly refused to award him bedroom entitlement to bid on three-bedroom properties and failed to consider the needs of his two children when refusing his application.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council had failed to consider his children's disability-related needs when it refused to allow him to bid on three bedrooms properties. The Council agreed to apologise, make him a payment and review its decision.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref:8827092</b> Mr H complained about the Council's handling of the adaptations needed within his property and his concerns about the recommendations made by Occupational therapist.</p>	<p><b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council acted appropriately by carrying out the adaptations recommended by OT. However, the Ombudsman felt that certain aspects of the resident's complaint at each stage of the complaint process had not been fully investigated.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9011432</b> Mrs M complained that the Council failed to tell her it had placed a charge on her property following disabled facilities grant (DFG)</p>	<p><b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman determined that the Council was not at fault for placing a charge on the property. However, it was at fault for failing to properly consider whether to waive repayment of the grant.</p>

works. She says she only found out about the land charge when she was selling the house.	
<b>Complaint ref: 8973047</b> Mr and Mrs Q complained that the Council refused to carry out kitchen adaptations originally agreed by an Occupational Therapist in 2018 and delayed carrying out adaptations to the bathroom.	<b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found no fault in the way the Council reached the decision not to adapt their kitchen but that there were delays in adapting the bathroom and that it failed to keep them updated on progress.
<b>Complaint ref: 8795008</b> Ms M complained about the Council's handling of her reports of repairs and rodent infestation.	<b>Not Upheld</b> The Ombudsman asked the Council to advise Ms M the process for obtaining an Occupational Therapy assessment and for the Council to move the kitchen cupboard to allow the condenser pipe to be fitted to the boiler.
<b>Complaint ref: 8793073</b> Ms C complained that the Council failed to help her find accommodation when she was homeless. She says she had to find her own accommodation and borrow money from a relative which she is now struggling to pay back.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman found that there was no evidence of fault by the Council as it advised Ms C that the accommodation, she had found was unaffordable, but she decided to rent it anyway.
<b>Complaint ref: 8955096</b> Mr X complained that the Council failed to award his housing application with priority based on his medical needs and that it failed to consider evidence he provided.	<b>Did not investigate</b> Mr X used abusive language and made threats when contacting the Council and it was entitled to refuse to deal with his request for a review of its decision
<b>Complaint ref: 8979538</b> Ms P complained about the Council's decision that she is ineligible to be included on its register for social housing. She said she needed to move to an area where more medical and social support is available.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.
<b>Complaint ref: 8993303</b> Mr A complained that the Council failed to award his housing application with priority based on his medical needs.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.
<b>Complaint ref: 9016371</b> Mr M complained that the Council had decided he was only entitled to a two-bedroom property. Mr M says he needs three bedrooms as he has two boys under ten with disabilities. One of his boys has been diagnosed with ASD-ADHD, and the other with ASD.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided that there is no evidence to suggest fault.

<p><b>Complaint ref: 8976486</b> Mrs T complained that the Council failed to give her housing application sufficient priority for her to be rehoused after being on the housing register for over 10 years.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation by the Ombudsman</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9061913</b> Mr Y complained that the Council failed to consider him as an exception under its housing allocations policy with regard to continuous residence in the Council's area. He says it failed to give him a satisfactory explanation in 2021 following his complaints and review of his case in 2018 and 2019.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided not to investigate as there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9115956</b> Mrs P complained that the Council had ignored her son's medical needs. She says he should be in a higher band on the housing register.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided not to investigate as there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9062401</b> Mr S complained that the Council wrongly valued his home when selling it to him and when he later offered to sell it back to the Council.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because Mr S could have gone to the district valuer, that part of the complaint is submitted late, and Mr S did not need to accept the Council's offer to buy his property.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9113241</b> Ms A complained that the Council had failed to give her housing application sufficient priority to reflect her medical needs and that her current accommodation is not habitable.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman took the view that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9158169</b> Mr C complained about the Council's handling of his application to purchase his property under the Right to Buy scheme, namely that the Council delayed his application and cancelled the application without notifying him.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint as it was reasonable for Mr C to have followed the statutory process regarding delays to the process and taken the matter to court. It is unlikely they would find fault with the Council's decision to cancel the application.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9040257</b> Miss X complained that the Council delayed responding to her Right to Buy application and when it did, she was informed the application was cancelled due to lack of response from her former landlord. The Council backdated her new application from January following</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman found that it was reasonable for Miss X to use the statutory procedure for delay in the purchase process. She could also have sought a remedy in the County Court when the Council failed to send a decision within four weeks.</p>

its cancellation notice in April. She says she may have missed mortgage offers due to the two months delay.	
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**g. COMPLIMENTS**

**Table 10 – number of compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	24
2018/19	67
2019/20	92
2020/21	132
2021/22	167

A 27% (35) rise in the number of compliments recorded for 2020/21 of 132 to 167 for 2021/22.

**Here’s what some people said about housing services:**

*“I know I have been quick to complain in the past but credit where credit is due the contractors who have been doing my kitchen are exceptional they have delivered a 5-star service polite courteous and helpful in every way, they were professional and cleaned up after themselves what they have done this week is amazing and to a good standard. So thank you and please pass on my thanks to your contractors.”*

*“Just note to say a huge thank you for dads step and paving. Xxx worked for a whole day in the rain to create a wonderful area that will enable dad to now leave his house with his aids and wheelchair. He is terminally ill, and has only seen 4 walls for many months, so this is just fantastic for him. xxx is an amazing, caring person who is an absolute credit to hillington borough. Please could you give him our thanks, and i hope some recognition for such a difficult job yesterday.”*

*“I would like to say how nice the contractors for fencing are considering what i been through and the fact the men I know sounds silly but after dv it affects you, I never felt more comfortable and great service if you could pass that on.”*

*“I just wanted to say thanks very much for your assistance in relocating expedition kit from RYPC to FMYPC today. xxx was an absolute star and made a huge difference to the success of this move. Please could you extend my thanks to him.”*

*“xxx from the flooring department of Housing Repairs came today and fitted new flooring in my kitchen. xxx completed and made an absolutely fantastic job of my kitchen floor today which looks fantastic and is now very safe and no longer a trip hazard. The job was carried out in an extremely efficient & professional manner by him. He is truly an expert in his field and you should be proud to offer him employment as an LBH employee as I understand, at the present moment in time, he is agency staff. If I had to rate him by stars he would definitely score 5 stars and 10/10 for his excellence. I am an extremely satisfied tenant and even though I thanked him most gratefully when the job was finished, I would be even more grateful if you would please convey this message to him for his extremely, friendly, efficient & professional expertise.”*

*“There is a very lovely young man called xxx who works as an inspector for the repairs team who came out and had all my repairs dealt with after I had had other inspectors out who didn't do the*

*job xxx did!! I had a severe issue with mould in my bedroom, issues in my bathroom, issues with my kitchen, and rotten broken leaky back doors and front garden doors they all been replaced and all repairs done no more mould which I'm allergic too so he deserves more recognition and more he's an amazing young man!"*

"Over the last two days I have had two of your operatives xxx and zzz working on my property. I am writing to say they are both a credit to your company, they are both hard-working, polite and engaging. They did not stop all the time they were on site and left my property in a clean and tidy state. They both brilliant and I hope your company recognises their fantastic work. Although I have personally thanked them I would be grateful if you would again pass my thanks to them."

*Cllr xxx email "You are all absolutely fantastic. You have made this mothers life a little less stressful. Thank you so much..."*

"I would just like to say what a pleasant and extremely helpful lady she was! She was very friendly and I could tell from the minute she answered the phone she wanted to help. I've been trying to get somewhere now for months regarding some repairs in my property and this is the FIRST time I feel like I'm getting somewhere and things are moving forward. She took her time to chase things up and get answers – she was honest with me and also apologised for the waiting time for these repairs which is the first time someone has which I really appreciated. She is a brilliant member of your staff."

*"I cannot thank you enough for all your help this morning. Sending us xxx to help get into our office before the arrival of the children at 8am. I very much appreciate that neither of you start work before 8am so with him coming before to help us was fantastic, especially as zzz in the 'Out of Office' team did not appear to recognise the urgency of the matter. Not having to explain to the children's parents about delaying the start of their day is priceless. Once again a BIG THANK YOU, as once again you have helped us out of a sticky situation."*

## **APPENDIX D**

### **COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE FOR 2021/22**

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

##### **Informal Complaints**

- 54% (28) rise in the informal complaints (service requests) recorded for 2021/22 of 80 when compared with the 2020/21 figure of 52.

##### **Stage 1 complaints**

- 50 Stage 1 complaints were recorded for 2021/22 of which 8 were upheld, 9 partially upheld, 29 not upheld and 4 either withdrawn or cancelled. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 13.04 working days which is within our published target of 20 working days but outside our internal target of 10 working days.

##### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)**

- The Ombudsman concluded 7 investigations during 2021/22 of which 2 were upheld, 1 partially upheld, 1 not upheld and they did not investigate the other 3 complaints.

##### **Compliments**

- 33 compliments were recorded for 2021/22, which is a significant drop from the 2020/21 figure of 92. We will remind officers/managers to ensure that compliments received is reported.

#### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

The procedure for dealing with Adult Social Care 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 and Social Care Ombudsman should the complainant be dissatisfied with the response from the Local Authority. The intention of this procedure is to achieve resolution at the first attempt, to remove bureaucracy and is designed to empower complainants in shaping from the outset the approach to resolving the complaint.

- The Informal Complaint (service request).
- Stage 1 – response from a Director or Assistant Director or Head of Service of the area complained about.
- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

#### **DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT**

A detailed explanation of all complaints and compliments for Adult Social Care is set out below.

## a. THE INFORMAL COMPLAINT

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 11 - Informal Complaints received – (Service requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March	Total
2017/18	18	18	12	16	64
2018/19	17	23	20	16	76
2019/20	18	10	14	11	53
2020/21	15	10	17	10	52
2021/22	21	15	26	18	80

- 54% (28) rise in the number of informal complaints (service requests) when comparing the 2021/22 figure of 80 with the 2020/21 figure of 52.

## b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINT - LOCAL RESOLUTION

At Stage 1 of the complaint process a Director or Assistant Director or Head of Service will carry out an investigation and aim to respond within 10 working days.

**Table 12 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	54
2018/19	40
2019/20	45
2020/21	48
2021/22	50

- 2 (4%) more formal complaints recorded for 2021/22 then 2020/21.

**Table 13 - Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn/cancelled	Total
2017/18	3	11	36	4	54
2018/19	5	7	25	3	50
2019/20	10	9	25	1	45
2020/21	9	11	26	2	48
2021/22	8	9	29	4	50

- The outcomes remain broadly similar when comparing the past five years.
- For 2021/22, upheld, partially upheld and not upheld complaints were 16%, 18% and 58% respectively of all complaints recorded.

**Table 14 - Time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint (working days)**

	Average time taken to respond to a complaint
2017/18	9.52
2018/19	9.50
2019/20	11.49
2020/21	11.22
2021/22	13.04

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint for 2021/22 is 13.04 working days, which is outside our internal target of 10 working days but within our published target of 20 working days.

### c. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATIONS (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council's own investigation has not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the LGO and at any stage of the complaint process.

**Table 15 - Total number of LGO investigations**

Period	Total Number
2017/18	11
2018/19	9
2019/20	8
2020/21	4
2021/22	7

- The Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for 4 months to allow Local Authorities to focus on our COVID-19 response during 2020/21. However, they have caught up and this is the reason for the rise in the number of Ombudsman investigations when comparing 2021/22 figure of 7 with the 2020/21 figure of 4.

The table below provides details of the complaints considered by the Ombudsman.

Complaint details	LGO decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8858794</b> Mr Y complained that he was being charged for care services at the extra care housing accommodation where he lives but does not receive the services and did not agree to them when he moved to the property. He says he cannot afford to pay the charge and would not have moved in if he had known about it.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Officer did not fully explain the standard care charges associated with extra care housing when Mr Y moved in. The Council agreed to waive the charges and assist Mr Y to move should he wish to do so.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9156555</b> Ms F complained about the Council's decision to have her son's school transport provision to begin and end at a pickup point rather than their home.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found the Council at fault for not following its published process, but this did not affect the Council's decision making. The Council agreed to apologise to Ms F remind all staff dealing with</p>

	transport appeals of the importance of following its published policy
<b>Complaint ref: 8797045</b> Ms Y complained that the Council did not reassess her mother's care and support needs in October 2020 when she asked it to do so and that the Council failed to provide her mother with 24-hour care, which she needed.	<b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that there was a delay in reviewing Ms Y's care plan in March 2021 and for its confused discharge planning. The Council agreed to apologise and pay a small sum for distress and anxiety caused.
<b>Complaint ref: 8891975</b> Mr T complained that the Council commissioned care provider overcharged him for care between May and June 2020 at the extra care housing facility where he lives which led to him cancelling the care.	<b>Not Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council was not at fault as the records show the Council explained the charges associated with extra care housing, and had charged Mr T for care based on his financial contribution.
<b>Complaint ref: 8824111</b> Mr B complained because the Council would not give him a female social worker. Mr B wants the Council to give him a female social worker and compensation.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.
<b>Complaint ref: 8968676</b> Ms E complained that a Council officer contacted her GP surgery with concerns for her welfare, in that she might have dementia, after the officer misinterpreted a police officer's report.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as they would be unable to add to the response already provided via the Council's investigation
<b>Complaint ref: 8912198</b> Mr Z complained that the Council overcharged his father-in-law for his domiciliary care package.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because the Council has provided a suitable remedy and there is nothing further, they would add to this.

#### d. COMPLIMENTS

**Table 16 - Number of compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	56
2018/19	68
2019/20	65
2020/21	92
2021/22	33

#### Here's what some people have said.

"I would like to express my thanks to the Hillingdon Adult care department and in particular the members of the team I had the pleasure of dealing with, xxx. They and their teams provided all the support, guidance and understanding at a very difficult and stressful time in my life and continued to do so till the end. When mum entered xxx Nursing home on a stretcher from xxx hospital the outcome was not promising. The love and the excellent care provided brought mum

back from the dead and gave her 3 more years enough to see 3 more great grandchildren.”

*“You’ve actually made my day I could cry happy tears , thank you ever so much I am truly grateful for processing this in the most speediest manner ever , I’ve always had to wait and face a battle getting things for xxx , you are an absolute star, this is better than winning the lottery having the best school for xxx for his needs and now transport sorted all in this one day, the best gift anyone could of ever given me , the stress and weight has been lifted I can now relax. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for sorting this, can’t thank you enough I’m so so happy and made up for xxx and means I can continue to take my other child to school without having to worry. Thank you and I am beyond grateful for your help and your customer service you are a true asset to your team. Thank you beyond all measure!”*

“Hope you are well. We are always talking about you. We will never forget the practical and empathetic support you gave us towards their end of our mum xxx life. You did wonders to give us a direction and maintain our spirits during the most difficult of times. We believe the council are lucky to have you. Keep in touch.”

*“Peace, love, happiness and health, please could you kindly pass on this feedback to your Manager or alternatively give me his/her contact details so I can also send this directly. I just wanted to thank you so much for your kind and incredibly supportive help with my grandmother’s care. It is so rare to find someone willing to go the extra mile and also show compassion to all parties involved - especially with regards to our complex case. I am so grateful that you really took the time to listen and fully understand the situation before coming up with a solution that was so meaningful for us. It is very rare to find people with such exceptional qualities - you are genuinely a great asset to you Manager and Department. We will be forever grateful - thank you.”*

“I wanted to let you know since xxx has been assigned to me he has absolutely shown empathy and compassion for me and that has made a massive impact on my mental health. xxx has given me support which I have never had before. I feel that xxx is in my corner and has explained everything so clearly that I can actually relax and know that I am not alone. If there is any recognition awards I would like to put xxx forward to show my appreciation. I worked in sales for the retail motor industry for over 30 years and took responsibility for every customer every phone call and email etc. Xxx is doing the same. I know if I speak with him and have a problem or questions he keeps me informed. Thank you so much for all your support and help especially with my physical health and wellness. God bless you all and keep up with the great work, especially under the circumstances i.e. Covid.”

## **APPENDIX E**

### **COMPLAINT REPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE'S FOR 2021/22**

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

##### **Informal Complaints**

- 106 informal complaints (service requests) were recorded for 2021/22, which is 23% (20) more than the 2020/21 figure of 86.

##### **Stage 1 complaints**

- 69 Stage 1 complaints were recorded for 2021/22, which is 21% (18) less than the 2020/21 figure of 87. Of the 69 complaints, 7 were upheld, 15 partially upheld, 45 not upheld and 2 either withdrawn or cancelled. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 9.97 working days and 81% (56 out of 69) Stage 1 complaints were responded to within 10 working days.

##### **Stage 2 and 3 Complaints**

- There were no Stage 2 investigations concluded during this period.
- There were no Stage 3 review hearings held during this period.

##### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)**

- 3 investigations were concluded during this period, with 1 complaint partially upheld, 1 not upheld and the Ombudsman did not investigate the remaining complaint.

##### **Compliments**

- 77 compliments were recorded for the period 2021/22, which is significantly less than the figure of 132 for 2020/21.

#### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Complaints made by children or on their behalf are governed by the Children's Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 (Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1738). This sets out the three-stage complaint procedure that Local Authorities are required to follow when dealing with complaints made by for example any child or young person, any local authority foster carer, children leaving care, etc. Hillingdon's procedure operates as follows:

- The Informal Complaint (service request).
- Stage 1 – Local Resolution - response from an Assistant Director or Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – Independent Investigation by two people (Investigating Officer and Independent Person).
- Stage 3 – Review Panel comprising of three independent people

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for Children and Young People Service's is set out below.

### a. THE INFORMAL COMPLAINT

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 17 - Informal Complaints received – (Service requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March	Total
2017/18	14	15	16	15	60
2018/19	14	23	33	21	91
2019/20	21	16	25	26	88
2020/21	21	18	21	26	86
2021/22	23	27	27	29	106

- 23% (20) more informal complaints (service requests) recorded for 2021/22 when compared with the 2020/21 figure of 86.

### b. STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

An Assistant Director or Head of Service will investigate and aim to respond to complaints within 10 working days.

**Table 18 - Total number of complaints recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	53
2018/19	60
2019/20	71
2020/21	87
2021/22	69

- 21% (18) fewer Stage 1 complaints recorded when compared with the 2020/21 figure of 87 with the 2021/22 figure of 69.

**Table 19 - Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2017/18	4	10	36	3	53
2018/19	9	15	32	4	60
2019/20	9	21	37	4	71

2020/21	9	25	47	6	87
2021/22	7	15	45	2	69

- Proportionally, the volume of upheld, partially upheld, and not upheld complaints remains broadly the same for 2020/21 and 2021/22.
- For 2021/22, 10% of complaints were upheld, 22% partially upheld, 65% not upheld and 3% withdrawn or cancelled.

**Table 20 - Time taken to respond to a complaint (working days)**

	Working days
2017/18	10.75
2018/19	10.82
2019/20	9.75
2020/21	9.82
2021/22	9.97

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 9.97 working days for 2021/22, which is within the 10-working day target set.

**Table 21 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days**

Period	Total number of complaints	Number responded to within 10 working days	% responded to within 10 working days
2017/18	53	45	85%
2018/19	60	47	78%
2019/20	71	57	80%
2020/21	87	72	83%
2021/22	69	56	81%

- 81% (56 out of 69) of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 10-working day target. This is comparable with previous years.

### c. STAGE 2 INVESTIGATIONS

A Stage 2 investigation is conducted by an Investigating Officer (IO) and Independent Person (IP) with specialist skills and knowledge of the Children's Act. The timescale to conclude such an investigation is set by statute at 25 working days but this may be extended to a maximum of 65 working days.

**Table 22 – Total number of Stage 2 complaints recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	2
2018/19	2
2019/20	0
2020/21	0
2021/22	0

- No Stage 2 children's investigations were commissioned for 2021/22.

#### d. STAGE 3 INVESTIGATIONS

At Stage 3 of the statutory complaint process, three people independent of the Council, will consider the complaint and wherever possible work towards a resolution. The timescale to conclude such an investigation is 45 working days.

- There were no Stage 3 investigations commissioned between 1 April 2017 and 31 March 2022.

#### e. INVESTIGATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN (LGO)

Where it appears that a Council's own investigations have not resolved the complaint, the complainant is entitled to refer their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and at any stage of the complaint process.

**Table 23 – Total number of LGO investigations**

Period	Total number
2017/18	7
2018/19	5
2019/20	1
2020/21	1
2021/22	3

- The Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for 4 months during 2020/21 to allow Local Authorities to focus on our COVID-19 response. However, they have caught up and this is the reason for the rise in the number of Ombudsman investigations when comparing 2021/22 figure of 3 with the 2020/21 figure of 1.

The table below provides details of the complaints considered by the Ombudsman.

Complaint details	LGO decision
<b>Complaint ref: 9046705</b> Mr and Mrs P complained about how the Council dealt with and reviewed their child, Z's, Education Health and Care (EHC) plan.	<b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the Council was at fault for failing to consider if Z needed an educational psychology assessment following a review of his plan. This did not cause a significant personal injustice because Mr and Mrs P paid for a private assessment before they were aware of the Council's error. In the other matters complained about, the Ombudsman is either prevented from investigating, or the Council was not at fault.
<b>Complaint ref: 9210204</b> Miss M said the Council and a court put her children into care by relying on false evidence supplied by social services	<b>Not Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found that the complaint did not meet the tests in our Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. Where Miss M's children live has been decided by a court and only a court can alter that.
<b>Complaint ref: 8884840</b> Mr F complained about the contents of a child and family assessment.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman informed Mr F that they could not investigate this complaint as the assessment had

He said that the Council's assessment has negatively impacted his relationship with his children.	already been considered during court proceedings which placed the matter outside of their jurisdiction.
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**f. COMPLIMENTS**

**Table 24 – number of compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	60
2018/19	12
2019/20	124
2020/21	132
2021/22	77

- Compliments have fallen from 132 in 2020/21 to 77 for 2021/22.

**Here's what some people have said.**

*“xxx you've done such a lovely thing for zzz there - he looks so happy! He's so fortunate to have found you and please don't underestimate the profound positive influence you've had on his life since entering the UK.”*

“I would like to take this opportunity to actually express my very appreciation as well as all my gratitude for you and xxx for the vital role you have played in mine but more importantly zzz's life. Your professionalism, care and attention to detail meant that I was given all the support I needed throughout this journey to enable me to continue caring and protecting zzz. You have put zzz first, facilitated change to ensure she is safe and have been patient in your approach with your time and effort to ensure both zzz and I are in a better situation than we started. For this alone, I will always be grateful. zzz is still very young to understand the crucial role you are playing. I am hoping her smiles and wave goodbyes at the door when the masks are off is a small gestures to show you how we very much cherish the job you guys are doing. One day, I hope to be able to covey to her about you both, and how all your concern was she is safe and is given the right to a positive upbringing. Thank you for all that you do, we truly do appreciate you!”

*“I wanted to say to you thank you so much, for everything you helped me a lot. God bless you. Whoever has you as a case worker are Lucky ones. Have a wonderful life darling.”*

“I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude for you and your team in helping us during these difficult times. The social workers attached to the case have been very kind and helpful in working closely with us and zzz and advising what is best for a peaceful future. The parenting program has been extremely helpful to me in better understanding some inert parenting skills. The Family Group provided the much-needed support in these difficult times. The school has been very cooperative and supportive to ensure zzz's emotional wellbeing as well as physical and academic growth. All this has been possible by your continued support and guidance, so I would like to sincerely thank you for all you have done for me and my child.”

*“I lost 1000 units in surgery had blood transfusions I've had iron transfusions too. It was a very difficult pregnancy in and out of hospital. A beautiful blessing. I'm so grateful you worked with us. If there was a survey the impact you have is highly professional always go above your job role. You helped me in my darkest days and I'm truly grateful.”*

## **APPENDIX F**

### **COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR EDUCATION SERVICES FOR 2021/22**

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

##### **Informal Complaints**

- 20 informal complaints (service requests) were recorded for 2021/22.

##### **Formal Complaints**

- 6 Stage 1 complaints were recorded for 2021/22 of which 2 were upheld and 4 not upheld. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 6.33 working days, which is within the 10-working day target set.
- There were no Stage 2 and 3 complaints investigations undertaken during this period.

##### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO)**

- There were no LGO investigations concluded during this period.

##### **Compliments**

- 2 compliments were recorded for 2021/22.

#### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

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 Headteacher 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.

For those complaints where this Local Authority has a statutory duty to investigate, we will deal with these complaints under the Council's Corporate complaints procedure as follows:

- The Informal Complaint (service request)
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from the Executive Director for Education and SEND
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council.

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

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

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 25 - Informal Complaints received – (Service requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March	Total
2017/18	2	2	4	6	14
2018/19	8	2	6	4	20
2019/20	4	2	0	2	8
2020/21	1	2	11	8	22
2021/22	1	2	14	3	20

- 9% (2) fewer informal complaints when comparing the figure of 22 for 2020/21 with the 2021/22 figure of 20. Most of these informal complaints were complaints received by Ofsted who forwarded the complaint(s) to the Council to investigate.

### b. STAGE 1 – LOCAL RESOLUTION

The Head of Service will aim to respond within 10 working days.

**Table 26 - Total number of complaints recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	33
2018/19	32
2019/20	16
2020/21	3
2021/22	6

- Fewer formal complaints were registered for the last 2 years mainly because we made a decision to treat complaints received from Ofsted as informal complaints. This is because these complaints mainly related to the operation of the school which needed to be addressed through the school's own complaint procedure or a safeguarding concern which has a separate procedure to follow.

**Table 27- Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2017/18	0	2	30	1	33
2018/19	1	1	29	1	32
2019/20	2	6	8	0	16
2020/21	1	0	2	0	3
2021/22	0	2	4	0	6

- 33% (2) of Stage 1 complaints were partially upheld and 67% (4) not upheld.

**Table 28 - Time taken to respond to a complaint (working days)**

	Working days
2017/18	9.36
2018/19	10.84
2019/20	8.94
2020/21	7.67
2021/22	6.33

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 6.33 working days.

**Table 29 - 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
2017/18	33	28	85 %
2018/19	32	25	78 %
2019/20	13	12	92 %
2020/21	3	3	100 %
2021/22	6	6	100 %

- All six complaints were responded to within the 10-working day target.

**c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS**

The Executive Director for Education and SEND will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

**Table 30 – Total number of Stage 2 complaints recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	0
2018/19	0
2019/20	1
2020/21	0
2021/22	0

There were no Stage 2 investigations undertaken during 2021/22.

#### d. 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.

- There were no Stage 3 complaints from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022.

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

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 complaint process.

**Table 31 - Total number of LGO investigation**

Period	Total number
2017/18	1
2018/19	4
2019/20	0
2020/21	0
2021/22	0

- There were no investigations concluded by the Ombudsman during this period.

#### f. COMPLIMENTS

**Table 31 - Compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	2
2018/19	1
2019/20	1
2020/21	4
2021/22	2

Here's what the two people said:

*"I would like to thank the School Placement and Admissions Team, particularly X, who I feel has gone above and beyond in helping me secure a school place for my 5-year-old. As a military family posted to the area short notice during the middle of a global pandemic her kindness and prompt replies have made a stressful situation much more manageable. I am extremely grateful for her help and would like this to be formally recognised."*

"I would like to start with a wholehearted thank you to both you and your team. At a time of such unprecedented stress and anxiety for people and parents in the UK/Hillingdon your department has done amazingly to keep going with this whole process and in spite of some of the absolute crap you read about in the media, you should all be commended for forming some sort of normality out of the turmoil."

## **APPENDIX G**

### **COMPLAINT AND COMPLIMENT REPORT FOR FINANCE DIRECTORATE FOR 2021/22**

#### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

##### **Informal complaints**

- 350 informal complaints (service requests) recorded for 2021/22, which is a significant rise from the 2020/21 figure of 121. This was largely as a result of enquiries relating to the Business Support Grant and the introduction of the Energy rebate scheme.

##### **Stage 1 complaints**

- 167 Stage 1 complaints recorded for 2021/22 of which 19 were upheld, 27 partially upheld, 114 not upheld and 7 either withdrawn or cancelled. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 5.55 working days with 96% of all Stage 1 complaints responded to within 10 working days.

##### **Stage 2 complaints**

- 19 Stage 2 complaints recorded for 2021/22. The average time taken to respond to a Stage 2 complaint is 4.79 working days with all 19 Stage 2 complaints responded to within 10 working days.

##### **Stage 3 complaints**

- There were no Stage 3 investigations for 2021/22.

##### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) referrals**

- 10 complaints were concluded by the Ombudsman during this period with 1 not upheld and the Ombudsman did not investigate the other 9 complaints.

##### **Compliments**

- 6 compliments were recorded in 2021/22.

#### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Finance Directorate complaints are managed in line with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

- The Informal Complaint (service request)
- Stage 1 – response from a senior officer from the Appeals and Complaints Team.
- Stage 2 – response from the Corporate Director for Finance.
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council.

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

## DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

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

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 32 - Informal complaints received – (Service requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March	Total
2017/18	129	36	26	31	222
2018/19	25	30	33	20	108
2019/20	25	22	16	19	82
2020/21	18	9	23	71	121
2021/22	91	86	78	95	350

- 189% (229) more informal complaints (service requests) recorded for 2021/22 than 2020/21. This is partly because of an unusually high number of Business Rate enquiries relating to our application of the Business Support Grant and Energy rebate scheme.

### b. STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS

An experienced officer from the Appeals and Complaints Team will investigate the complaint and aim to respond within 10 working days.

**Table 33 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints**

Period	Housing Benefit	Council Tax	Finance	Total
2017/18	91	141	11	243
2018/19	72	157	6	235
2019/20	82	125	6	213
2020/21	45	121	5	171
2021/22	28	133	6	167

- 2% (4) fewer Stage 1 complaints when comparing the 2020/21 figure of 171 with the 2021/22 figure of 167.

**Table 34 - Outcome of complaints**

Period	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
2017/18	40	37	161	5	243
2018/19	19	24	191	1	235
2019/20	38	23	151	1	213
2020/21	15	16	140	0	171
2021/22	19	27	114	7	167

- Proportionally, the outcome of complaints remains broadly similar to previous years.
- For 2021/22, 11% (19) were upheld, 16% (27) partially upheld and 68% (114) not upheld.

**Table 35 - Time taken to respond to complaints at Stage 1 (working days)**

	Working days
2017/18	6.81
2018/19	6.39
2019/20	5.79
2020/21	5.78
2021/22	5.55

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint is 5.55 working days against a target of 10 working days.

**Table 36 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days**

Period	Total number of complaints	Number responded to within 10 working days	% responded to within 10 working days
2017/18	243	241	99 %
2018/19	235	231	98 %
2019/20	213	210	99 %
2020/21	171	169	99 %
2021/22	167	161	96 %

- 96% (161 out of 167) of Stage 1 complaints were responded to within the 10-working day target.

**c. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS**

The Corporate Director for Finance will investigate and aim to respond within 10 working days.

**Table 37 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints**

Period	Housing Benefit	Council Tax	Finance	Total
2017/18	7	16	0	23
2018/19	7	20	0	27
2019/20	10	10	1	21
2020/21	6	9	0	15
2021/22	6	13	0	19

- The number of Stage 2 complaints has risen slightly from 15 for 2020/21 to 19 for 2021/22.

**Table 38 - Time taken to respond to a complaint at Stage 2**

	<b>Working days</b>
2017/18	4.30
2018/19	5.88
2019/20	7.38
2020/21	6.87
2021/22	4.79

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 2 complaint is 4.79 working days against the target of 10 working days.

**Table 39 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days**

Period	Total number of complaints	Number responded to within 10 working days	% responded to within 10 working days
2017/18	23	23	100 %
2018/19	27	25	93 %
2019/20	21	19	90 %
2020/21	15	15	100 %
2021/22	19	19	100 %

- All Stage 2 complaints were responded to within the 10-working day target.

#### **d. 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.

- There were no Stage 3 investigations undertaken for 2021/22

#### **e. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN INVESTIGATION (LGO)**

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 complaint process.

**Table 40 - Total number of LGO investigations**

<b>Period</b>	<b>Total number</b>
2017/18	10
2018/19	12
2019/20	8
2020/21	6
2021/22	10

- The Ombudsman decided to pause their investigations for 4 months during 2020/21 to allow Local Authorities to focus on our COVID-19 response. However, they have caught

up and this is the reason for the rise in the number of Ombudsman investigations when comparing 2021/22 figure of 10 with the 2020/21 figure of 6.

The table below provides details of the complaints considered by the Ombudsman.

<b>Complaint</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9074746</b> Mrs H complained that the Council assessed her mother's finances incorrectly despite evidence that both her parents had contributed to the savings account</p>	<p><b>Not Upheld</b> The Ombudsman found no evidence of fault in the way the Council assessed Mrs H's finances when she requested help with her care</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8793771</b> Mr Q complains about the Council's decision to end its council tax discount scheme for the over 65s. Mr Q says this discriminates against him and that he has lost out financially</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate as there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8806545</b> Mr X complained that the Council had decided not to award another Discretionary Housing Payment.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> This is because the Council has decided to make an award and the complainant asked us to close the case.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8931382</b> Mr V complained about the Council's refusal to award him housing benefit and council tax reduction</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman stated that it cannot investigate a complaint where a right of appeal to a tribunal has been (or could be) used.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9092579</b> Mr C complained the Council had wrongly charged him for his care, had not considered the amount he had paid for repairs to his property and wrongly assessed his financial contribution towards his care costs.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint as they could not provide a remedy for any fault an investigation might uncover as Mr C is now deceased</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9031935</b> Miss T says that the Council has miscalculated her earnings, which means that its assessment for housing benefit and council tax support has not been made correctly. Miss T would like the Council to reassess her benefits</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because Miss T can use her review and appeal rights.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8846750</b> Miss L complained that her request for an audio recording of her council tax bill had not been met by the Council. This meant she did not know its details properly or if she was paying the right amount.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because the Council had since sent a recording and will be doing so for future bills.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8850979</b> Ms V complained on behalf of her mother about unauthorised card payments taken from her mother's bank account by council tax debt collectors</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint the money was refunded, and an investigation would serve no useful purpose.</p>

acting on behalf of the Council and the delay in refunding of these payments.	
<b>Complaint ref: 9062510</b> Mr X disputes his liability for council tax and his recorded payments since 2012	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because Mr X can appeal to a Valuation Tribunal and part of the complaint is out of time.
<b>Complaint ref: 9146480</b> Ms Y complained that the Council wrongly refused her housing benefit and council tax.	<b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as it had already been considered by a tribunal and they had no discretion to consider anything related to it including the costs incurred by the complainant.

## f. COMPLIMENTS

**Table 41 - Number of compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
2017/18	4
2018/19	2
2019/20	10
2020/21	17
2021/22	6

### Here's what some people said about the service provided:

"Thank you. In fairness to the team they have already been in touch (google found me their email address), and they have responded very promptly. I don't doubt the team works hard and is kind and thoughtful, I was simply at the end of my tether with being held on a line endlessly - and of course I fully appreciate the horrible times that we are all having to live and work through."

*"We would like to thank you and your team for all the work you have carried out to assist us with xx care cost. Also the professional way all our questions were answered."*

"It is with sadness that I report the death of my mother xx at the age of 102. She died peacefully on the 1/4/2021 ending a very long and at times difficult life. I would like to express my thanks to the Hillingdon Adult care department and in particular the members of the team I had the pleasure of dealing with. They and their teams provided all the support, guidance and understanding at a very difficult and stressful time in my life and continued to do so till the end."

## **APPENDIX H – COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS FOR PLACE DIRECTORATE FOR 2021/22**

**(This directorate also includes Housing Services whose figures are shown in Appendix C)**

### **SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS**

#### **Informal complaints**

- 1,031 informal complaints (service requests) were recorded for Waste Services for 2021/22, followed by 665 for the Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team (ASBET), 345 for Green Spaces, 303 for Highways, 244 for Parking Services, 196 for Planning and 94 for Transport and Projects.

#### **Stage 1 complaints**

- 83 Stage 1 complaints were recorded for Planning and Building Control, followed by 71 for ASBET, 40 for Green Spaces, 38 for Parking Services, 29 for Waste Services, 19 for Highways and 3 for Transport and Projects.

#### **Stage 2 complaints**

- 18 Stage 2 complaints were recorded for ASBET, followed by 13 for Green Spaces, 4 for Planning and Building Control, 2 for Waste and Highways and 1 each for Parking and Transport and Projects.

#### **Stage 3 complaints**

- There were no Stage 3 investigations undertaken for 2021/22.

#### **Investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman**

- The Ombudsman concluded 17 Planning and Building Control, 7 Green Spaces, 6 ASBET, 3 Highways, 2 Parking and 1 Transport and Projects complaints during 2021/22.

#### **Compliments**

- 39 compliments were recorded for Green Spaces, followed by 16 for Waste, 3 for Planning and Building Control and Parking and one each for Highways, Transport and Projects and ASBET for 2021/22.

### **THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**

Complaints are managed in line with the Council's Corporate complaints procedure. This procedure operates as follows:

- The Informal Complaint (service request).
- Stage 1 – response from the Head of Service.
- Stage 2 – response from a Corporate Director for Place
- Stage 3 – response from the Chief Executive of the Council

- Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

## DETAILED COMPLAINT REPORT

A detailed report of all complaints and compliments for Housing Services is set out below.

### 1. INFORMAL COMPLAINTS

The feedback we have received from residents indicate that most want action to resolve their concerns on the spot by discussing the problem with an officer/manager rather than going through the more formal complaint route. If we can resolve a resident's issue in this way we will do so, immediately. We will continue to take this approach, wherever possible.

**Table 42 - Informal complaints (Service Requests)**

Year	1 April to 30 June (Q1)	1 July to 30 Sept (Q2)	1 Oct to 31 Dec (Q3)	1 Jan to 31 March (Q4)	Total
Highways	75	99	69	60	303
Parking	61	74	49	60	244
Transport and Projects	25	29	21	19	94
Waste	291	306	228	206	1,031
Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team	203	220	102	140	665
Green Spaces	123	127	52	43	345
Planning	36	65	39	56	196

- For this directorate, Waste accounts for 36% (1,031) of all service requests followed by ASBET 23% (665), Green Spaces 12% (345), Highways 11% (303), Parking 8% (244), Planning 9% (196) and Transport and Projects 3% (94).

### 2. **STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS**

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

**Table 42 - Total number of Stage 1 complaints**

2021/22	Total number
Highways	19
Parking	38
Transport and Projects	3
Waste	29
Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team	71
Green Spaces	40
Planning and Building Control	83
Total	283

- Planning accounts for 29% (83) of all Stage 1 complaints for Place directorate followed by ASBET 25% (71), Green Spaces 14% (40), Parking 13% (38), Waste 10% (29) and Transport and Projects 1% (3).

**Table 43 - Outcome of complaints**

2021/22	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highways	2	3	13	1	19
Parking	4	7	24	3	38
Transport and Projects	0	0	3	0	3
Waste	15	1	13	0	29
Anti-Social Behaviour and Environment Team	11	18	41	1	71
Green Spaces	0	7	32	1	40
Planning and Building Control	9	15	57	2	83
Total	41	51	183	8	283

- 14% (41) were upheld, 18% (51) partially upheld, 65% (183) not upheld and 3% (8) withdrawn or cancelled.

**Table 44 - Time taken to respond to a complaint at Stage 1 (working days)**

2021/22	Highways	Parking	Transport and Projects	Waste	ASBET	Green Spaces	Planning
Average time taken to respond	9.47	10.92	12.33	4.34	15.68	11.43	13.19
Target	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Variance	- 0.53	+ 0.92	+ 2.33	- 5.66	+ 5.68	+ 1.43	+ 3.19

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint for these services is set out above.

**Table 45 - Number and % of complaints responded to within 10 working days**

2021/22	Total number of complaints	Number of complaints responded to within 10 working days	% responded to within 10 working days
Highways	19	15	79 %
Parking	38	31	82 %
Transport and Projects	3	2	67 %
Waste	29	29	100 %
ASBET	71	38	54 %
Green Spaces	40	33	83 %
Planning and Building Control	83	58	70 %

- The table above provides the performance for each service area. A few of the area's response times is lower than expected and I am working with colleagues to improve response times in these areas.

### 3. STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS

The Corporate Director for Place will aim to respond to Stage 2 complaints within 10 working days.

**Table 46 - Total number of Stage 2 complaints**

2021/22	Total number
Highways	2
Parking	1
Transport and Projects	1
Waste	2
ASBET	18
Green Spaces	13
Planning and Building Control	4
Total	41

- ASBET and Green Spaces accounted for 44% (18) and 32% (13) of all Stage 2 complaints for these services.

**Table 47 – Outcome of complaints**

2021/22	Upheld	Partially upheld	Not upheld	Withdrawn	Total
Highways	0	0	2	0	2
Parking	1	0	0	0	1
Transport and Projects	0	0	1	0	1
Waste	1	0	1	0	2
ASBET	5	4	9	0	18
Green Spaces	0	1	11	1	13
Planning and Building Control	1	1	2	0	4
Total	8	6	26	1	41

- 20% (8) were upheld, 15% (6) partially upheld, 63% (26) not upheld and 2% (1) withdrawn.

**Table 48 - Time taken to respond to a complaint at Stage 2 (working days)**

2021/22	Highways	Parking	Transport and Projects	Waste	ASBET	Green Spaces	Planning
Average time taken to respond	7	6	10	7.5	13.05	8.62	17.25
Target	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Variance	- 3.00	- 4.00	0	- 2.50	+ 3.05	- 1.38	+ 7.25

- The average time taken to respond to a Stage 1 complaint for these services is set out above.

#### 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.

There were no Stage 3 investigations from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2022.

#### 5. INVESTIGATIONS BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE 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 relevant Ombudsman at any stage of the complaint process.

**Table 49 - Total number of Ombudsman investigations**

2021/22	Total Number
Highways	3
Parking	2
Transport and Projects	1
Waste	0
ASBET	6
Green Spaces	7
Planning and Building Control	17

The findings and decision of the investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman is set out below.

#### Highways

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8943713</b> Mrs P lives on a road with deep grass verges between the road and the properties' front boundaries. Mrs P complained that the Council unreasonably refused her request for a dropped kerb for her property, failed to advise her of her final appeal right and referred to her in a rude manner in an email</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman felt that there was not enough evidence of fault in the Council's decision-making to warrant them investigating. They also determined that the Council had informed her of her appeal rights and that the email to which Mrs P took offence was by a Councillor and not a Council officer.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9118013</b> Mr T complained that a vehicle crossover, which was approved by the Council, at the property next door to his mother's house, is too wide and does not comply with Council policy.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as the complainant is not caused a level of injustice from this that would warrant their involvement</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9183788</b> Mr C complained about the</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mr C that it would not investigate</p>

Council's decision to refuse his application for a vehicle crossover	his complaint as was no sign of fault by the Council as it has considered and decided Mr C's application in line with its current published policy for crossover applications.
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## Parking

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8946398</b> Mr H complained that bailiffs clamped his car for a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) that he was unaware of. Mr H was willing to pay the PCN but wants a refund of all the other charges</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate as there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9183421</b> Miss T complained that the Council had wrongly issued a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) to her, after a company she paid to park her car, did so incorrectly. Miss T is unhappy the Council has refused to refund her payment of the penalty and refused to reissue the PCN to the parking company instead.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Miss T that it would not investigate this complaint as there was not enough evidence of fault to justify them investigating.</p>

## Transport and Projects

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8808188</b> Mr Z complained that the Council extended the zig-zag lines outside a school which has led to her drive being blocked. She says the original length of the lines was fine and there were no safety issues. Mrs Z wants the Council to return the lines to their original length</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate as there was insufficient evidence of fault by the Council.</p>

## ASBET

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8840248</b> Mr P complained about the conduct of two enforcement officers who he says intimidated him and took photographs of his car and blue badge without properly explaining their reasons for this.</p>	<p><b>Partially Upheld</b> The Ombudsman could not determine whether the civil enforcement officers acted appropriately on the day, but they did find fault with their administrative practice.</p>

<p><b>Complaint ref: 8878249</b> Ms T complained that the Council held an inaccurate report about her which had been shared with other people</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as the Information Commissioner's Office is better placed to do so.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8944725</b> Mr L complained that the Council alleged he installed a gate in his fence giving him access to a Council car park when he was not supposed to. Mr C is unhappy the Council issued him with a Fixed Penalty Notice.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because they decided that the courts are best placed to resolve the dispute between the Council and Mr L as to whether he had committed an offence.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9108379</b> Ms P complained that the Council failed to respond to her complaint under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 about an information sharing agreement between the Council and another public body.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because the Council is not a prescribed body that can deal with such complaints and so it is unlikely, we would find fault in its response to the complaint.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9012518</b> Ms W complained to the Council about anti-social behaviour caused by other residents in her street. She felt that the Council did not act on her concerns or assign an officer to investigate</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as they were satisfied with the actions the Council had taken.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9203384</b> Ms L complained about the lack of response from the Council about being issued with a PCN allegedly for dropping a cigarette end. She said the enforcement officer misled her by saying she could not appeal unless she paid the fine first.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because they could not achieve the outcomes requested.</p>

## Green Spaces

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8828047</b> Mr B complained that the Council had failed to cut back trees on his property boundary and wanted the trees to be cut so that they do not overhang his boundary.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman felt that there was insufficient evidence of fault which would warrant an investigation</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8872349</b> Mr G complained about the Council's decision to introduce a £5 fee per hour for use of some public tennis courts in the borough.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman felt that there was not enough evidence of fault by the Council or of significant injustice to Mr G.</p>

<p><b>Complaint ref: 8948743</b> Ms F complained about the Council's decision to charge £5 per hour to use tennis courts which were previously free to use.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman felt that there was not enough evidence of fault by the Council or of significant injustice to Ms F.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8950009</b> Ms H complained to the Council regarding a tree which overhangs in her garden, which she would like the Council to prune and liaise with the Forestry Commission.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint as there was no good reason to exercise their discretion to investigate it now.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8925250</b> Mr A complained about the Council's decision to introduce a fee of £5 per hour to use some of its tennis courts.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman felt that there was not enough evidence of fault by the Council or of significant injustice to Mr A.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9066660</b> Mrs G complained that the Council is not taking responsibility for cutting back trees it owns which are next to and overhang her garden and that a Council-owned tree trunk has grown through and damaged her fence.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mrs G that there was not enough evidence of fault in the Council's decision-making process to warrant us investigating. The claim of damage to Mrs G's fence by one of the trees is a legal matter for the Council's insurers or the courts to determine.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9066867</b> Ms L complained about the management of Council trees which run along her road. She says they have not been properly maintained, are too near the houses and have caused drainage problems</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Ms L that it would not investigate this complaint as they are unlikely to find evidence of fault by the Council.</p>

## Planning and Building Control

Complaint details	Ombudsman decision
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8822057</b> Mr F complained that his neighbour built an outbuilding described as a games room wider than it should be and it encroached on his parents' land. He wrote to the planning department about this and other concerns he had about the building work but says he received an apathetic response</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Ombudsman determined that there was fault by the Council because the planning enforcement team delayed responding to his concerns while other departments or persons may not have responded at all. However, the identified fault did not cause Mr F significant injustice to warrant further pursuit of the complaint by the Ombudsman.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8926955</b> Mrs B complained that the Council took too long to give pre-application advice on a proposed planning application. The Council agreed to refund Mrs B the £225 fee but it took too long to do this as well.</p>	<p><b>Upheld</b> The Council acknowledged that it took too long to provide pre-application advice to Mrs B on her proposed planning application. The Council also failed to consider the additional time and trouble she had been put to in pursuing matters, and it took too long to refund the fee as agreed. In recognition of the frustration, it has caused Mrs B, the Council will</p>

	apologise to her for its further delay.
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8797409</b> Ms P complained about several issues about planning matters in the area near her home. She was concerned about the impact changes have had on the character of the area.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as it was unlikely that they would find evidence of fault by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8939616</b> Ms L complained about how the Council dealt with a planning application for a development near her home. Ms L felt that the Council had failed to properly consider the application and that the new extension will cause significant loss of light to her home and that her home will lose value.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint as it was unlikely that they would find evidence of fault by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8846314</b> Mr Y complained that the Council had granted planning permission for a development, and he was worried about the impact of the development on sunlight and daylight reaching his home</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman decided not to investigate this complaint as the complaint does not meet the tests in their Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. There is nothing to suggest fault affected the Council's decision.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8961590</b> Mr A complained that the Council failed to send him a notification letter about a planning application for a development next to his home, so, he has not had the opportunity to object.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because the complaint does not meet the tests in our Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. In any event, the fault by the Council did not directly cause the complainant a significant injustice, as it was not responsible for approving the application</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9018443</b> Ms C complained that the Council failed to take enforcement action against her neighbour for failing to comply with a grant of planning permission and approved an application to alter the planning permission without considering the impact of the development on her property.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because there is no evidence of fault by the Council and the injustice Ms C claims results from the actions of her neighbour, against whom she may have a legal remedy.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9049951</b> Miss X complained about how the Council dealt with her neighbour's planning application. She says it did not follow the correct procedures before granting planning permission and believes the development will cause damage to her property.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because they were unlikely to find fault.</p>

<p><b>Complaint ref: 9068314</b> Ms F complained that the Council incorrectly decided the development was compliant with GDPR and failed in its duty to evaluate how the neighbour's works would affect her property.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because there is not enough evidence of fault by the Council in how it dealt with and decided the matter to warrant the Ombudsman investigating.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9112372</b> Mr G complained that the Council has not acted proportionately and failed to properly consider his concerns.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because Ms G had already appealed to the Planning Inspector. He can also appeal against the Council's decision to refuse his application for a Certificate of Lawful Development. The complainant's concerns about compliance with the enforcement notice are better dealt with by the courts.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9088102</b> Ms T complained about the Council's decisions to approve development by her neighbour between 2017 and 2021. She also complained that the Council failed to properly investigate her concerns about possible breaches of planning control.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint there is no evidence of fault by the Council or to show the matter has caused significant injustice to Ms T.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9002776</b> Mr A complained about the way the Council considered a planning application for a neighbour's extension.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman did not investigate this complaint because there is no evidence of fault by the Council.</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 8800769</b> Mrs F complained about the Council's handling of her neighbour's planning application. She says it made its decision without taking her objections into account and relied on incorrect information</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mrs F that they were unlikely to find evidence of fault by the Council which has caused Mrs F significant injustice</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9149172</b> Mr Q complained about the Council's decision to grant planning permission for a development near his home. Mr Q says the new dwellings are not in keeping with the area and will overlook his property.</p>	<p><b>Did not Investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mr Q that it would not investigate his complaint because part of it was late and that he has not suffered significant injustice in relation to the remaining issues complained about</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9153484</b> Mr B complained that the Council lost his objection to his neighbour's planning application and failed to notify him that it had granted planning permission.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mr B that they would not investigate his complaint because it was late and the injustice, he claims is not the result of any fault by the Council.</p>

<p><b>Complaint ref: 9163419</b> Mrs Y complained about how the Council dealt with her planning application and request for pre application advice. She says there were long delays by the Council, and she disputes its reasons for refusing planning permission.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mrs Y that it could not investigate this complaint because she has the right to appeal to the Planning Inspector</p>
<p><b>Complaint ref: 9153503</b> Mrs H complained that it took the Council eight months to determine her planning application and did not adhere to agreed extensions of time.</p>	<p><b>Did not investigate</b> The Ombudsman told Mrs H that it would not investigate her complaint because the complaint does not meet the tests in our Assessment Code on how we decide which complaints to investigate. It is reasonable to expect the complainant to have used the right of appeal to the Planning Inspectorate for non-determination of an application</p>

## 7. COMPLIMENTS

### Number of compliments recorded

**Table 50 – number of compliments recorded**

Period	Total number
Highways	1
Parking	3
Transport and Projects	1
Waste	16
ASBET	1
Green Spaces	39
Planning and Building Control	3

### Here's what some people said:

#### Highways

*“the complaints dept who were very helpful and put me in contact with xxx. He was very helpful and organised for the works to be done and he always returned my calls. He got someone to come and inspect both driveways who agreed to the works on zzz Road driveway and also said that broken paving stones needed replacing on both zzz Road and ccc Road next to the driveways. xxx arranged for the works to be done and after it had been done I noticed that the concrete hadn't been completed properly and spoke to xxx who immediately got the team to return to rectify. That same evening, I noticed that my garden lights weren't working on the front of my drive, and I called xxx the next day and he answered his phone whilst on vacation and told me to call him on his first day back which I did, and he immediately came out the same day to inspect. He said he was not happy with the quality of the work done on the paving stones apart from the issue of the lights not working. He arranged for the team to come back and remove the concrete and he came back again to inspect and saw that an electric cable had been cut. He asked the team to go and get some barriers to put across the drive until the electrics could be repaired by my electrician which has now been done and the concrete is being reinstated next week and the paving stones rectified, and grass seeds being put on the topsoil that had been replaced.*

I have to say that in my experience it is rare to come across someone who is so thorough and conscientious. xxx has ensured the works were done and where not up to standard he is arranging for the problems to be rectified. In this whole saga after being so disappointed with the experience received from the council in trying to get the works done in the first place, particularly the person in charge of having the works done, who told me to refer to complaints dept if I wasn't happy as the work had been done. it is refreshing to have a competent person handling the case who gets things done and this can only reflect well on the council as you do have a good reputation as a competent and efficient council."

## **Parking**

*"I would like to thank xxx, ..... for his useful and thoughtful help and ideas on a problem I had recently. I appreciate him."*

"The permit arrived on Tuesday 20th July. I would like to thank yourself for the very quick response to my complaint and to the Parking department for dealing with the matter so promptly and rectifying the problem. Please pass on my thanks and understanding in this matter. I was very impressed with the efficiency of all departments."

## **Transport and Projects**

*Just to let you know that I have had a lengthy but positive discussion with xxx this morning and he would like to thank officers for all they are trying to achieve for zzz Lane and the surrounding roads.*

## **Waste**

"Thank you very much for sending the garden refuse bags. I just would like you to know that the refuse operatives put mine and all my neighbours' bags in their gardens and drives today, thank you for passing on my complaint. In other ways the way our refuse is collected is really good and the men do a superb job which I know must be physically tiring, so thank them for a job very well done, our Borough is very lucky."

*"I would like to praise the wonderful work done by xxx from the Harrington Depot Team in clearing up the household waste etc. once the bins have been collected every Thursday...For years there have been issues in clearing up promptly. I'm glad that xxx and his colleagues work hard to keep our community surroundings clean and hygienic. Thank you and well done."*

"I would like to thank you and the Waste services team for any extra work you are undertaking to keep our town centre clean."

*"The waste/recycling team are absolutely great. Every time I have had to call for something they have been friendly and helpful."*

"After having my walk in Swakeleys Park today I would just like to register my thanks to you in arranging and locating two large skip bins at each end of the entrances within the park. As you know, recently, there have been problems with litter overflowing the sited small pedestal bins for some time and this new installation by the council will mitigate this. Please feel free to pass on my thanks to those involved, the Park now looks fantastic!"

## **ASBET**

*"I am writing to thank you for your email below and thank you for your kind and considerate decision."*

## **Green Spaces**

"For the Green Spaces team...They answered a query of mine re tree maintenance promptly and in detail. Most of all though for the fantastic decision to plant wildflowers in the grass verges and small spaces ...it's innovative and beautiful...a total joy to see so thank you."

*"I wanted to pass on my congratulations to the people who have put together the exhibition "Remembering the Fallen" that is currently on show on the Ground Floor of Uxbridge Library. XX visited this yesterday and thought it was a really excellent display of how the country has remembered the servicemen and women who gave their lives for this country since WW1. I was also very struck with how the opportunity has been taken to provide examples from all around the Borough – from Harefield, Hayes, Northwood Hills, Ruislip, and Eastcote, etc – in addition to Uxbridge. The use of examples such as the ANZAC cemetery in Harefield, the statue of the angel holding a life-boat (in memory of two of the party of WRENS on their way to Gibraltar in 1941 who lost their lives when their ship was sunk by a U-boat) which is in St Edmund's church in Northwood Hills and the rolls of honour preserved in various forms from Uxbridge provided a wide range of illustration for the theme of the exhibition. It is clear that much thought and effort has been given to putting this together."*

"I would like to say how very impressed we were visiting The Polish war memorial today. We took a family friend whose father was Polish and served in the war. Our friend lives in Liverpool, so it was lovely to see the whole area so immaculate. Thank you."

*"Congratulations on the truly beautiful flower display on the grass verges in Field End Road. They look fabulous."*

"Morning. We wanted to say how much we loved the wildflower planting on verges and beds. I also appreciate the new look for Eastcote and the natural bedding there. We generally appreciate how well Hillingdon Council looks after the Borough but specifically during the last 18 months. Lots of areas, even out in the countryside were strewn with litter but I was never aware of that locally."

## **Planning and Building Control**

*"I must admit we are impressed with your levels of professionalism - a really transparent, pleasant and positive experience."*

"You have not only earned the trust of the residents but your popularity within your department is blazing with appreciations. The lady lawyer had very high opinions of you and was very appreciative. She advised me to get in touch with xxx and mention her name to you. My answer, "I had met xxx in 2018 in petition hearing. He is an epitome of goodness." She seemed to be exalted with my praise."

*"On a personal level I wanted to write in so it is noted how helpful xxx has been on a planning matter. I rarely experience such assistance from officers for various functions from many other local authorities."*

## APPENDIX I

### LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Changes made to existing processes</b>
Housing	Application of the Council's Social Housing Allocation Policy	Circulate guidance to staff on the need to provide clear reasons to applicants on bedroom-entitlement decisions, which explains how it has weighed any conflicting evidence from health professionals involved with the applicant's family and its own medical advisers. Template letters reviewed to ensure there are clear directions on when it is necessary for staff to include such reasons.
Corporate Finance	Applicant not being given written information on service charge for living in extra care housing.	Officers must ensure that the service charge for living in extra care housing is explained to potential tenants and information is provided in writing to them about the charges before they move in.
Social Care	Application of the Home to School transport policy by not providing an applicant with information on what was considered and the rationale for the decisions reached	All staff dealing with transport appeals to be reminded of the importance of following its published process and sending detailed responses, at each stage, and any responses should be detailed and contain information about how reviews were conducted, what was considered, and the rationale for decisions.
Anti-Social Behaviour	Civil Enforcement Officers took photographs of Mr X's car and blue badge without properly explaining their reasons for this	Reviewed our policy about body worn camera footage to ensure it is clear on what interactions the officers should be recording. Policy changes were shared with the civil enforcement agents to ensure they know when and how to record their investigations.
Planning and Building Control	Failure to respond to enquiries	Implementation of transformation programme within Planning Service and all staff reminded of the need to comply with the Council's Customer Service Standards.
Planning and Building Control	Time taken to give pre-application advice on a proposed planning application.	Reviewed pre application advice procedure and streamlined procedure to reduce waiting times for pre application advice.