

# Compliments & Complaints

Annual Report 2018/19



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**As of 2017/18, all complaints relating to Adult Social Care matters have been managed separately by the Performance, Analyst & Systems Team within the Communities Department, as part of a re-structure of the service. A full end of year report was presented to the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019.**

## 1. Principles

Carmarthenshire County Council's Complaints Procedure was first adopted in May 2011 and a revised version was approved by the Executive Board in October 2017. The Procedure aims to emphasise the following principles:

- To ensure that as many complaints as possible are **resolved at Stage 1**, local resolution
- To ensure that investigations follow the *'Investigate Once, Investigate Well'* principle

## 2. Definition of a complaint

The **definition of a complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern,

- about a public service provider's action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- which requires a response
- whether about the public service provider itself, a person acting on its behalf, or a public service provider partnership

Complaints which are currently open and under investigation are **not included** in this report.

The complaints referred to within this report are those where the investigation has been completed during the review period.

### 3. Complaints investigated & responded to during 2018/19 – Stage 1

Service	Stage 1				
	No. of complaints responded to <sup>1</sup>	No. receiving a full response within allocated time period <sup>2</sup>		No. receiving a full response after allocated time period <sup>3</sup>	
Chief Executives	28	21	75%	7	25%
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	23	17	74%	6	26%
Statutory Complaints for Education & Children's Services	15	4	27%	11	73%
Corporate Services	33	31	94%	2	6%
Communities (excluding Adult Social Care Complaints)	91	59	65%	32	35%
Adult social care (managed through Communities Department team)	56	40	71%	16	29%
Environment	458	345	75%	113	25%
Cross Departmental Issues	11	8	73%	3	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>715</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>27%</b>

<sup>1</sup>This is the cumulative figure of complaints investigated and responded to within the period of the report this financial year

<sup>2</sup>Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 10 working days, with an additional 10 working day extension with the complainant's consent

<sup>3</sup> Any complaints which have been investigated and responded to outside the allocated time period

## 4. Complaints investigated & responded to during 2018/19 – Stage 2

Department/Service	Stage 2				
	No. of complaints responded to	No. receiving a full response within allocated time period <sup>4</sup>		No. receiving a full response after allocated time period <sup>5</sup>	
Chief Executives	1	1	100%	0	0%
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	3	2	66%	1	33%
Statutory Complaints for Education & Children's Services	2	0	0%	2	100%
Corporate Services	3	0	0%	3	100%
Communities (excluding Adult Social Care Complaints)	5	2	40%	3	60%
Adult social care (managed through Communities Department team)	8	8	100%	0	0%
Environment	18	7	39%	11	61%
Cross Departmental Issues	3	1	33%	2	67%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>51%</b>

<sup>4</sup>This is the cumulative figure of complaints investigated and responded to within the period of the report this financial year

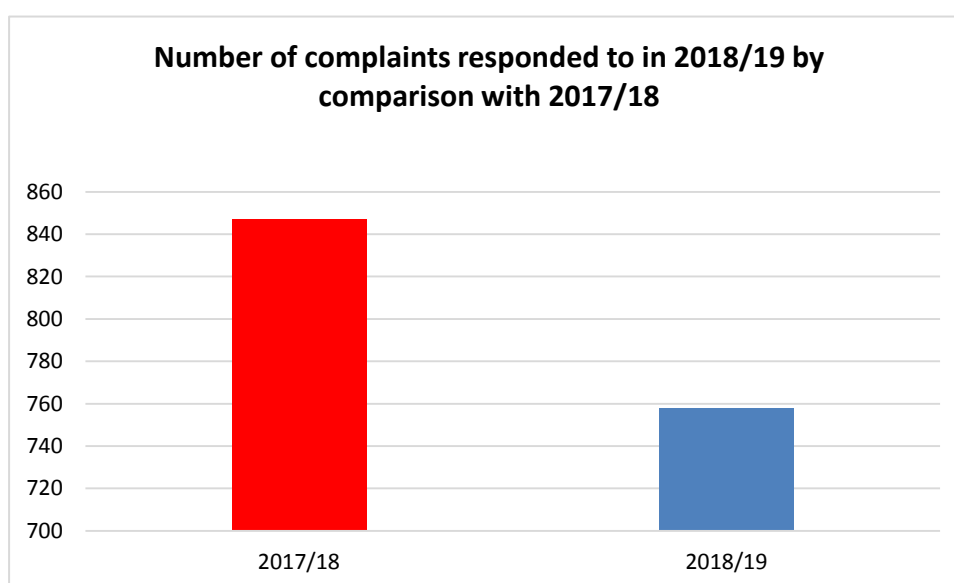
<sup>5</sup>Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 10 working days, with an additional 10 working day extension with the complainant's consent

<sup>6</sup>Any complaints which have been investigated and responded to outside the allocated time period

## 5. Summary of complaints

- The Council recorded and responded to a total of 758 complaints during 2018/19, compared to 847 during the same period in 2017/18. This equates to an 11% decrease
- Overall, 72% of cases received a response within the allocated time period, compared to 65% for the same period last year. This represents a considerable improvement in performance

Department	Total number of complaints 2018/19	Total number of complaints 2017/18
Chief Executive's Department	29	27
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	26	27
Statutory complaints for Children Services	17	14
Corporate Services	36	29
Communities (excluding Adult Social Care complaints)	96	116
Communities – Adult Social Care	64	95
Environment	476	531
Cross Departmental & External Providers	14	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>758</b>	<b>847</b>



## 6. Redirected communication

In addition to the 758 formal complaints, the Team also addressed a further **599** 'Redirects' – enquiries and requests for assistance which offered the team the opportunity to try and rectify difficulties before complaints arise. This figure would also include any dissatisfaction received regarding properly made Policy decisions which would not be addressed by the formal Complaints Policy.

Within Adult social care, **60** were recorded as 'Redirected' which meant the complainant did not wish to go through the formal complaints procedure and the matter was dealt with informally or the communication did not fall under the Welsh Government guidelines for complaints.

Department	Number of redirected communications received
Chief Executive's Department	32
Education & Children's Services	35
Corporate Services	38
Communities	145
Communities – Adult Social Care (managed through Communities Department team)	60
Environment	317
Cross Departmental	28
External Providers	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>659</b>

## 7. Councillor enquiries

In 2017/18, it was requested that the Compliments & Complaints report include data on the enquiries received via the Democratic Services Unit (DSU) from Councillors representing residents within their wards.

A large volume of enquiries are processed each year by the DSU and a response obtained from the appropriate Head of Service, the target being within 10 working days from the date of submission.

A breakdown by department is provided below, however, it is anticipated that more detailed information regarding these enquiries will be included in future reports.

Department	Number of enquiries received
Chief Executive's	68
Communities	615
Corporate Services	32
Education & Children's Services	31
Environment	2,073
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,819</b>



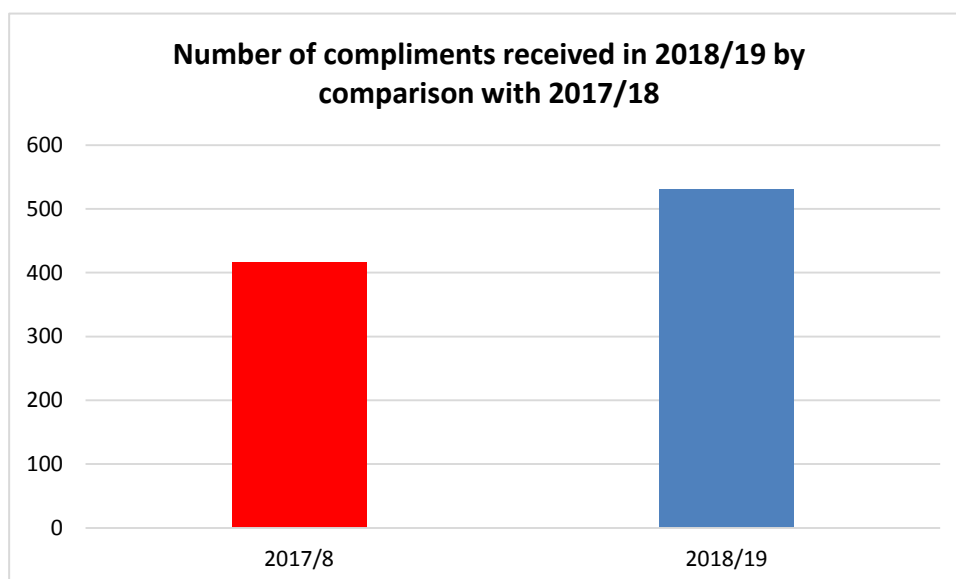
## 8. Complaints determined by the Ombudsman

- A total of 48 complaints were concluded by the Ombudsman during 2018/19
- Of the complaints determined by the Ombudsman in 2018/19 there were no findings against the Council
- A total of 4 cases were in relation to issues relating to Llanerch Fields, Llanelli
- A further 2 cases were regarding the Stradey Park development, Llanelli

Department/ Service	Concluded in 2018/19	Settled	Ombudsman conclusion				
			Not upheld	Dis- continued	Out of jurisdiction	Referred back to Authority	Upheld
Chief Executives	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Education & Children's Services	6	2	0	0	2	2	0
Corporate Services	4	0	0	2	2	0	0
Communities	5	0	0	3	1	1	0
Adult Social Care	7	1	0	1	2	3	0
Environment	23	0	0	9	2	12	0
Cross Departmental Issues	2	1	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>0</b>

## 9. All departments Compliments

Department/Service	Compliments received in 2018/19	Compliments received in 2017/18
Chief Executive's	45	33
Education & Children's Services	57	19
Corporate Services	1	2
Communities (excluding Adult Social Care)	141	83
Adult Social Care	152	106
Environment	131	166
Cross Departmental Issues	13	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>416</b>



## 10. Departmental Complaints & Compliments

### 10.1 Chief Executive's

Complaints	Regeneration and Policy		People Management		Administration & Law		ICT	
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	24		0		1		3	
Upheld	4	17%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%
Partially Upheld	9	37%	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%
Not Upheld	11	46%	0	0%	1	100%	1	33%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints investigated</b>	0		1		0		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

#### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Four complaints regarding the Contact Centre were recorded as upheld. One concerned an error in information given regarding the time of an appointment. An apology was provided and enquiries are to be made regarding the possibility of sending text confirmations to customers.

Three complaints were also raised regarding the call-handling skills of members of staff. Apologies were provided and staff were reminded of customer service expectations. Three complaints were also recorded as partially upheld. They related to call waiting times, a grammatical error on a recorded message and the handling of a specific telephone call.

One complaint relating to the electoral canvassing process was partially upheld. Further training advice will be given to canvassers regarding situations that arise where information is refused.

Customer Services recorded two partially upheld complaints – one acknowledged that a visit to report a resident’s death could have been handled in a better way and one related to the manner of a member of staff.

One complaint regarding a Council owned car park was classed as partially upheld, with a further review of the matter promised.

The Marketing & Media team received two complaints that were partially upheld. A further “alert” page was added to the Council’s website during times of weather disruption, to guide users to key pages. This followed a complaint relating to difficulty establishing if a school was open. The other complaint was resolved by the team, who liaised with a Town Council to remove a sign for a Tourist Information Centre that had been funded locally and had since closed.

One Stage 2 complaint was recorded as partially upheld in relation to People Management. It related to the advice given around the procurement of a training package. The initial handling had been correct but it was acknowledged that some guidance could have been misleading.

A complaint was upheld regarding the initial difficulty setting up a “My Account” online. Adjustments were made to resolve the situation as soon as possible. A partially upheld complaint was also recorded for ICT. It related to the difficulty in reporting an issue with a street lamp online. Again the issue was addressed and the relevant team notified of the lamp failure.

Compliments	Regeneration and Policy
Compliments received	45

**Examples of compliments**

*“She’s an asset to your project & I’m sure she will continue to help & inspire many more job-seekers” – Workways Plus Mentor*

The Agent was *“very courteous, efficient and very informed” – Contact Centre Agent*

*“They are bright, clean and full of ‘Efficiency’” – New Hwb offices in Ammanford*

*“I must feedback how efficient , courteous and helpful the staff are” – Staff at Carmarthen Customer Services*

*“I have been helped so much, people are great and super friendly” – Staff at the Hwb Llanelli*

*“I appreciate very much the efficiency with which you have handled both my requests.” – Freedom of Information Team*

*“I am over the moon!! I would like to thank you both for your support in this matter, it is very much appreciated.” - thanks received from the recipient of a grant from Economic Development*

## 10.2 Education and Children's Services

Complaints	Children's Services Statutory		Children's Services Corporate		Education Services		Access to Education		Curriculum & Wellbeing		School Effectiveness	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	15		4		2		16		1		0	
Upheld	3	20%	0	0%	0	0%	9	56%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	6	40%	3	75%	2	100%	2	13%	1	50%	0	0%
Not Upheld	6	40%	1	25%	0	0%	5	31%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints Investigated</b>	2		0		1		2		0		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	2	100%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

#### Children's Services

There were 19 Stage 1 complaints received in relation to Children's Services. Fifteen were Statutory, and the remaining 4 were recorded as Corporate. Only 3 of the Stage 1 complaints were upheld and all were Statutory. These focused on the lack of contact by a team during an assessment; unauthorised access to a Children's Social Care file, and a concern highlighted by a parent as to the accuracy of specific records.

With regard to the case of unauthorised access, this was investigated as a personal data breach and led to a disciplinary investigation and a revision of the corporate Information Security Policy, with a clearer and more robust policy requirement included in this regard. This was communicated to all Council staff.

Six further Statutory Stage 1 complaints were partially upheld, as were 3 of the 4 Corporate Stage 1 complaints.

The 3 Corporate complaints highlighted elements of how a case conference was concluded; a breach of confidentiality and a concern raised by a foster parent, who felt unsupported during an investigation. Seven Stage 1 complaints were not upheld.

There were 2 independently investigated Statutory Stage 2 complaints. Both were partially upheld. One upheld a very small element of the overall complaint, which raised a concern as to the handling of a situation by an assessment team.

The remaining Stage 2 highlighted a procedural delay by the initial investigating officer, in responding to the Stage 1 complaint. No element of the complaint itself was upheld.

### **Education Services**

Two complaints were received and were partially upheld. One related to the Inclusion service and concerned various issues regarding educational support. The other was in relation to comments allegedly made by an officer and overheard by a parent during a telephone conversation with a team.

### **Access to Education**

A total of 16 complaints were received regarding services provided by the division. Of these, 9 were upheld and 2 partially held.

Three of the upheld complaints concerned the difficulty parents had in contacting the School Admissions team directly. Another 3 of the complaints that were upheld concerned faults with the school meals 'ParentPay' system. Two separate parents also raised issues as to the quality and amount of food offered by a specific school canteen on a particular day.

One upheld complaint highlighted the fact that information regarding some new schools had not been updated on the Council's website. The information was corrected once this had been highlighted.

One Stage 2 complaint was upheld. This was referred via the Ombudsman and concerned problems experienced with the 'ParentPay' system.

The other Stage 2 complaint was partially upheld and related to a number of issues connected with the location of a new school in Llanelli.

### **Curriculum & Wellbeing**

One complaint was received and raised issues regarding the lack of contact by the Governor Support team. This was in relation to information published on the Council website about the curriculum of a secondary school. The complaint was partially upheld.

Compliments	Children's Services	Director	Education Services	Access to Education	Curriculum & Wellbeing	School Effectiveness
Compliments received per division	17	7	5	15	12	1
<b>Examples of compliments</b>						
<p><b>Children's Services</b></p> <p>Five of the 17 compliments recorded were for the Family Information Service.</p> <p>Five separate compliments were recorded regarding the Nurture Programme Parenting Courses.</p> <p>The others ranged from individual Social Worker compliments to specific teams within the department.</p> <p><b>Director</b></p> <p><i>"It was a wonderful gesture..."</i> – Teacher's retirement reception</p> <p><i>"Fantastic turnaround – thanks"</i> – efficiency of PA</p> <p><b>Education Services</b></p> <p><i>"...care &amp; understanding of the superb staff – given confidence"</i> – Speech and Language support</p> <p><b>Access to Education</b></p> <p><i>"Thanking you for your sterling work in securing a hydropool for us"</i> – from Ysgol Heol Goffa</p> <p><i>"Thank you so much you guys are brilliant"</i> – School Admissions</p> <p><i>"Very impressed with the ease and efficiency of the school admission system."</i></p> <p><b>Curriculum &amp; Wellbeing</b></p> <p><i>"Prynhawn hanesyddol. Diolch i'r holl swyddogion am y trefnu graenus"</i> – Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</p> <p><i>"Mae wedi bod yn brofiad anhygoel iddyn nhw oll ac mae'r gwasanaeth cerdd wedi rhoi oriau yn paratoi"</i> – Music Service</p> <p><b>School Effectiveness</b></p> <p><i>"Incredibly supportive in every way but challenging at the same time – exactly what I need"</i> – Challenge Advisor support</p>						

## 10.3 Corporate Services

Complaints	Revenues & Financial Compliance		Financial Services	
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	30		3	
Upheld	5	17%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	6	20%	1	33%
Not Upheld	19	63%	2	67%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints Investigated</b>	3		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	3	100%	0	0%

### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

#### Revenues & Financial Compliance

Thirty Stage 1 complaints were received regarding Revenues & Financial Compliance.

Seventeen complaints related to Council Tax, with five being upheld. One related to an error with the date used on an arrears notice, one concerned a Council Tax summons being issued after payment had been made, one highlighted concerns with the accuracy of address details given to an enforcement agency, one related to ownership details not being updated on a Council Tax demand and one concerned a payment for when a property was still empty. Apologies were made and any errors identified corrected. Five complaints were classed as partially upheld.

Thirteen complaints concerned Housing Benefit, with one being classed as partially upheld.

Three Stage 2 complaints were investigated, one related to Council Tax and two to Benefits. None were upheld.

#### Financial Services

Financial Services received three Stage 1 complaints.

One complaint was regarding the payment of an invoice was partially upheld following investigation.

The Pensions and Payments teams also each received a complaint, which were not upheld.



<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Revenues &amp; Financial Compliance</b>
Compliments received per division	1
<b>Examples of compliments</b>	
The Housing Benefit team were thanked by a gentleman with learning difficulties for the assistance they gave him with his claim <i>“Very grateful and thankful for getting help for proof of entitlement”</i>	

## 10.4 Communities Department (excluding complaints relating to Adult Social Care)

Complaints	Public Protection		Housing		Leisure	
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	8		54		29	
Upheld	0	0%	13	24%	9	31%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	16	30%	7	24%
Not Upheld	8	100%	25	46%	13	45%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints Investigated</b>	2		3		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	1	50%	3	100%	0	0%
Not Upheld	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%

### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

#### Public Protection

None of the 8 Stage 1 complaints were upheld. One of the Stage 2 complaints was partially upheld. It related to the handling of a smoke nuisance report. The matter had not proved straight forward as it was felt that legal proceedings would be appropriate given the circumstances.

#### Housing

There were three complaints recorded at Stage 2, all were classed as partially upheld. One complaint concerned the handling of a Housing application and two related to the management of Social Let properties. Apologies and appropriate process improvements were made.

Of the 54 Stage 1 complaints addressed regarding Housing, 13 were upheld. Two complaints related to the support and assistance provided by the Housing Options team, one concerned a private residents sewerage charges, one was unhappy with the manner of a member of staff and one tenant complained that their expired passport had been mislaid.

A further complaint related to the wording of an email to a tenant, one raised concerns about the condition of a communal area, one raised concerns about the support offered to Autistic residents,

another related to the level of information given to a tenant that was moving property.

Concerns were also upheld regarding the level of enquiries made by an Environmental Health Officer, an apology was made regarding the wrong payment being taken by the rents team, a further complaint related to a delay in processing removal costs and one concerned the manner of a member of staff and the way a Social Let property was managed.

Of the 54 complaints, 16 were recorded as partially upheld following investigation.

### Leisure

Twenty nine Stage 1 complaints were recorded for Leisure, of these, 9 were classed as upheld. The concerns regarding Leisure Centres related to the length of time “on hold” while telephoning the Leisure Centre and also not being able to get an answer, incorrect opening times advertised for Llanelli swimming pool, delays cancelling a Direct Debit payment, queues at reception desks, hygiene levels, outstanding equipment faults and the manner of a member of staff while relaying health and safety guidance. Concerns were also raised about the mobile library failing to keep to a scheduled visit.

A further 7 complaints were recorded as partially upheld.

Compliments	Public Protection	Housing	Leisure
Compliments received per division	23	57	61

### Examples of compliments

#### Public Protection

*“Thank you for your help with amendments to labels” – Food Safety*

*“Thank you all for you hard work and commitment over the last year & half in bringing the prosecution” – Trading Standards*

*“I’m very pleased to see the professional skills of your officer & the way he heard our concerns” – advice and guidance given about a wasp nest*

#### Housing

*“The service was excellent and he is very thankful”- Hand rails and support rails to be fitted by Adaptations Team*

*“Thank you for the support you have given to our client during the process of her move” – Compliment received By Housing Allocation from Mencap Cymru*

*"One of the most helpful officers they have met and were very grateful for offer of further contact" – Housing Options*

*"Thanks to all your engagement team who organised an excellent, enjoyable evening" – T2T Award evening*

*"Marvellous service you gave me at the changeover at the property" - Simple Lettings Team*

### **Leisure**

*"It's always a pleasure to work in partnership...it was clearly a mutually-fulfilling event" - Disability Sport Wales Indoor Athletics*

*'Please thank everyone involved on a great night" – Actif Award evening*

*"Thank you so much for your prompt action and expertise. Fantastic work!" - Footpath Work RSPB Rhandirmwyn*

*"Thank you so much! We have had the most wonderful time! Thanks to everyone who made our stay special" – Pendine Outdoor Education Centre*

*"The support from your staff leading up to the concert and on the night was exemplary" - Theatrau Sir Gar & Rotary Gala Concert*

*"...fab idea to link Oriel Myrddin, CCM and Parc Howard in this way. Lovely" - Oriel Myrddin Chairs Exhibition*

*"Thank you for the Digital Library Service... it has been a godsend to me..."*

*"The team were extremely professional, courteous & helpful". Thank you for hosting event" - Memorial Event held in Pembrey Country Park*

**10.5 Adult Social Care (a full report on these complaints has been provided separately to the Social Care & Health Scrutiny Committee)**

<b>Complaints</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Stage 2 Complaints investigated</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Numbers of complaints relating to each social care service area</b>	
*Please note that some of the complaints covered more than one service area*	
<p><b>Stage 1</b></p> <p>Central Referral Teams – 30          Private Domiciliary Care – 18          Finance &amp; Fairer Charging – 4          Delta Wellbeing – 4          Mental Health &amp; Learning Disability – 4          Blue Badges – 2          Commissioning – 2          In-house Domiciliary Care – 2          Diverse Cymru – 1          Occupational Therapy – 1          Re-ablement – 1</p> <p><b>Stage 2</b></p> <p>Central Referral Team – 7          Finance – 2          Mental Health &amp; Learning Disability – 1          Shared Lives – 1</p>	
<b>Compliments</b>	
Compliments received	152

## Examples of compliments

*"Thank you ever so much Mark you have been extremely helpful. It is lovely to have spoken to someone who understands the situation."*

*"We would like to thank you for all your help and support with my father. We were able to keep him independent for as long as possible with your help. Yourself and your team have sometimes gone above and beyond what you need to do to help us. We really appreciate all the help we have received and can't thank you enough! Social services deserve much more praise considering outside circumstances at the moment. Thank you so much!"*

*"I felt compelled to contact you to compliment you on your professionalism and efficiency in dealing with my complaint from 21st Dec 2018 onwards. As first point of contact for your department, I could not have asked for better. You were timely in your despatch of letters, and always polite and professional on the telephone. Thank you very much for making a difficult situation so much easier."*

*"I just want to let you know that I'm so grateful for everything that your company has done for me. And the girls that have been coming out to me have been so fab and great and I'm going to miss them."*

*"Diolch o galon am dy help a'th gefnogaeth drwy gyfnod hunllefus i ni."*

*"I feel I must extend my gratitude and appreciation to Sarah who has provided support and guidance to a close family member who recently returned home after a hospital stay. She has been supportive to us as a family at a difficult time, being flexible and providing ongoing information regarding support and help from the Red Cross etc."*

*"I would like to take this opportunity to thank ALL the ladies who cared for my wife during enablement period following a long period of hospitalisation. My wife, I'm pleased to say is doing well at the moment. Much of her progress was instigated by the devotion shown by the CCC carers and I again thank you for this invaluable service."*

## 10.6 Environment

Complaints	Planning		Waste & Environmental Services		Property Services		Transportation & Highways	
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	18		291		63		86	
Upheld	3	17%	147	50%	24	38%	26	30%
Partially Upheld	5	28%	72	25%	23	37%	23	27%
Not Upheld	10	55%	72	25%	16	25%	37	43%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints Investigated</b>	8		2		3		5	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%
Partially Upheld	3	38%	1	50%	2	66%	2	40%
Not Upheld	5	62%	1	50%	1	33%	2	40%

### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

#### Planning

Eight of the 26 complaints were recorded at Stage 2. None were upheld, but 3 were recorded as partially upheld. Two of these highlighted concerns around communication and levels of customer care within the department.

The remaining partially upheld Stage 2, raised concerns regarding the non-determination of a planning application.

Three of the 18 Stage 1 complaints were upheld. Five were recorded as partially upheld, with the remaining 10 all found to be not upheld.

With regard to the upheld Stage 1 complaints, one provided clear evidence of three unanswered emails sent to a Planning Enforcement officer by a resident. Another concluded that a delay in the request for the outstanding information, fell "*well below the standard of service expected within the Planning division*". This caused a delay in the determination of a planning application. The third complaint upheld a concern around the length of time it took to address a planning application.

Two of the 5 partially upheld Stage 1 complaints highlighted delays in correspondence/emails being responded to or addressed within the Planning Enforcement team. One further complaint was submitted when the CCC Planning website failed on a particular day. The issue was already known, and an alternative link had already been set up. Ten Stage 1 complaints were not upheld.

#### Waste & Environmental Services

Of the 293 complaints received during 2018/19, only 2 were dealt with under Stage 2 of the Procedure. A concern regarding Environmental Enforcement was partially upheld and the other

complaint was not upheld.

A breakdown of the Stage 1 complaints revealed that 147 complaints were upheld, 72 were partially upheld and the remaining 72 not upheld.

There was a significant drop in the number of complaints received in relation to the Garden Waste Scheme. A total of 39 complaints (of which 28 were upheld), were received in this regard compared to the previous year's 99 (of which 78 upheld). The remainder of the complaints included various issues around regular missed collections, including properties who receive an assisted lift, and general litter/cleansing concerns.

### **Property Services**

Three Stage 2 complaints were dealt with regarding this service area.

Of these, 2 were partially upheld, and the other not upheld. It was acknowledged that clearer communication and guidance would have been more effective during a land drainage concern. It was also accepted that communication around policies and procedures could have been more effective, when advice had been sought from the New Homes Team.

Twenty four of the 63 Stage 1 complaints were upheld, and a further 23 were partially upheld. A delay in undertaking work accounted for 9 of the upheld complaints. A further 4 upheld and 5 partially upheld complaints related to boiler or heating matters. These varied from missed appointments, out of hours work, or delays in fixing faults. Two further complaints were upheld following accidental damage to tenants' property, during work carried out by the Council.

The remaining 16 complaints were not upheld.

### **Transportation & Highways**

Five Stage 2 complaints were recorded. One was upheld and concerned an individual's bus pass entitlement. A complaint around the location of a disabled parking bay was partially upheld, and a further concern regarding waste from a ditch clearance was partially upheld.

The other two Stage 2 complaints were not upheld.

Of the 86 Stage 1 complaints, 40 (12 upheld) were about Highways issues, 41 (12 upheld) were concerned with issues such as Traffic Management, Parking and Engineering Design, and 5 (2 upheld) were in relation to the Street Lighting.

A further 11 Highways, and 12 Traffic Management/Engineering issues were partially upheld,

The 12 upheld Stage 1 complaints on Highways issues varied in their subject matter. Four related to the lack of action, or a lack of response, to previously reported Highways concerns.

Five of the upheld complaints raised issues around communication with the Traffic Management team. An apology was given to all, and the substantive issue was progressed and responded to, following receipt of each complaint.

A further complaint was upheld when an incorrectly issued skip licence had been granted. An apology was also given to a resident whose driveway was damaged by the stabilisers of a street lighting van. It was acknowledged that pads should have been used during high temperatures.



The 23 partially upheld complaints varied from Highways matters, to concerns that Pay & Display machines were not being fully bilingual, or not working. The replacement of a school bus pass; the difficulty in distinguishing the area between residents parking permits and free parking in a specific area within the County.

Compliments	Planning	Waste & Environmental Services	Property Services	Transportation & Highways
Compliments received per division	8	35	43	45

### Examples of compliments

#### Planning

*“Thank you very much for your excellent presentation at the Wales Planning Conference and for the time you put into your preparation. Delegates found it very useful to hear about a practical approach and use of planning to deliver mitigation to support economic growth”* – Conservation presentation to the Royal Town Planning Institute

*“Our thanks to the Conservation Team & Planning Development Team who have been professional throughout the process and ensured only the best standards for our very special old cinema”* – Save the old Llanelli Odeon group

#### Waste & Environmental Services

The department received a total of 35 compliments. These were spread between the refuse crews, cleansing teams and events such as the Waste Amnesties. Examples include:

*“...first rate and went about their job in a quiet an professional manner”* Refuse teams

*“Much improved cleanliness of the road and its surrounding area.”* Cleansing team

*“... we were both struck by the helpful attitude of the staff. Thank you.”* Waste Amnesty

*“Thank you for your quick and efficient response to my fly tipping report”* Enforcement Team

#### Property Services

Included in the compliments received were a number for Authority tradesmen, Building Inspectors and general appreciation for the prompt service received.

*“Carpenter called this morning very promptly, and provided a professional service.”*

*“Thank the boys for doing a great job, and the inspector for arranging it”*

*“Pass on thanks to the electrician, he was efficient and very friendly”*

## Transportation & Highways

45 Compliments were received, shared between the Highways, Parking Services, Traffic Management, School & Public Transport and Engineering Design Teams.

The Highways department received a total of 29 compliments. A significant number were from grateful residents who were affected by the unprecedented floods during late 2018;

*"Thank you for the commitment, dignity and respect shown by the department staff..."*

*"Resident would like to thank all involved in the support received during flood at property."*

Included, was also praise from the Route Director of the OVO Energy Tour of Britain, which held part of the opening stage of the 2018 Tour on the roads of Carmarthenshire;

*"Thank you for the part played in making Stage 1 such a huge success..."*

An example of the remaining 16 compliments;

*"CEO is a credit to the town. Very helpful in finding us a disabled parking spot"*

*"Gratitude to department for their professionalism and support during recent transport appeal"*

*"A well organised event with a really amazing attendance"* Motorbike Awareness Days 2018

*"Thank you very much for managing the re-installation of the Electric Vehicle charging station in Nant-y-Ci"*

## 10.7 Cross Departmental and External Providers

Complaints	External Providers		Cross Departmental	
<b>Stage 1 Complaints Investigated</b>	0		11	
Upheld	0	0%	3	28%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	4	36%
Not Upheld	0	0%	4	36%
<b>Stage 2 Complaints investigated</b>	0		3	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	3	100%

### Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Three of the Cross Departmental complaints were upheld, four were partially upheld and four were not upheld.

Of the complaints that were upheld, one concerned rent payments and Housing Benefit entitlement, since a change of circumstances. An apology was provided and payments / rent sorted out between the departments concerned.

An apology for inconvenience and upset caused was provided to a tenant after officers from the Voids team and Housing team accidentally knocked the rear door of the incorrect property whilst making enquiries into anti-social behaviour.

It was acknowledged that communication with a resident could have been better following a report they had made to Housing and Planning regarding a tree. The matter itself had been addressed and was being monitored, but no update had been provided to the resident.

The four partially upheld complaints related to the handling of a report of a “*dangerous tree*” on private land, concerns around communication, concerns with refuse collections and advice given by the Contact Centre and the way in which Property Services and Housing addressed a concern relating to slippery steps and anti-social actions from a neighbour.

None of the three Stage 2 complaints were upheld.

<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Cross Departmental</b>
	13
<b>Examples of compliments</b>	
<p>A resident noted that he was grateful for the support from his Housing Officer and Property Services during the process of moving house.</p> <p><i>“My housing officer has been an absolute angel...Occupational Health has been absolutely amazing.... I can't express how grateful I am”</i></p> <p><i>“An excellent tool to promote the focus of national Licensing week in a concise and informative way” - Trading Standards &amp; Communications</i></p> <p><i>“The positive publicity brought thousands of people out to watch the race... It was a great success” – Tour of Britain cycling event</i></p> <p><i>“Thank you very much for taking the time to provide this very helpful information” – Freedom of Information and Cleansing teams</i></p> <p>The way the Contact Centre works with colleagues in the Environment department to capture concerns effectively and resolve issues was commented on.</p>	

## 11. Conclusions

There was a reduction of 89 in the number of complaints the Council recorded and responded to during 2018/19 (758), compared to 2017/18 (847). This equates to an 11% decrease.

The largest percentage of complaints received once again related to Waste & Environmental Services (293), which equates to 39% of the total received by the Council in 2018/19. However, this is not surprising given that nearly all of these complaints related to refuse collection/recycling, a service used by all households within the County, regardless of age or social circumstances.

There was another overall increase in the number of cases that received a response within the allocated time period: 72% in 2018/19 compared to 65% in 2017/18.

In addition to formal complaints, a total of 659 Redirects, which are enquiries and requests for assistance which the teams manage in order to try and rectify difficulties before complaints arise - the Complaints Team (599) and Adult Social Care (60).

During 2018/19, 48 complaints were concluded by the Ombudsman, compared to 23 in 2017/18. Whilst this does represent a significant increase, the breakdown provided on page 8 demonstrates that no complaints were upheld against the Council and that the Ombudsman did not investigate the overwhelming majority of matters received by them.

There was a substantial increase of 114 in the number of compliments received by the Council during 2018/19 (530), compared to 2017/18 (416).