



City of  
Doncaster  
Council



## Annual Complaints and Compliments Report 2022/23

## 1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarise complaints and compliment information for 2022/23 for the City of Doncaster Council (CDC) and partners. This includes the Council, St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) and Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT).

The aim of complaint procedures is to resolve any dissatisfaction promptly, effectively and transparently and to inform service improvements to prevent service users experiencing the same issues in the future. The Council, SLHD and DCLT all have complaint policies and procedures. They also have officers who are responsible for ensuring the complaint and compliment processes are followed and are available to support customers and staff to ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible for all concerned. These officers also ensure we respond to enquiries and investigations from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

The Council's definition of a complaint is:

***“An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action taken by the Council or their staff, which affects a customer or a group of customers”***

All Councils have a duty to provide available access to residents to report concerns and must investigate and respond within a reasonable and defined timescale.

## 2. Complaints Procedure

The following Complaint Procedure relates to all the organisations; however, complaints relating to Children's Social Care have a different statutory procedure, which is detailed later in this section.

### Early Resolution

Complaints that can be fully resolved to the complainant's satisfaction within 3 working days is the Council's preferred method of dealing with complaints. We aim to deal with the majority of complaints by early resolution. However, the Council will need to deal with some complaints through a formal investigation approach due to their complexity.

### Stage 1 – Local Resolution

At this stage, a senior officer within the service area will investigate the complaint and send a full response to the complainant within 10 working days. In the event a complaint cannot be responded to in full by this time, the customer must be updated and an extension recorded with a new due date. Any extensions agreed should be shared with the Customer Experience Team who will be monitoring the progress of each complaint.

### Escalated Complaint Investigation

A complainant can request an escalated complaint investigation if they are unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation. The Customer Experience Team will liaise with the Head of Service to discuss whether there has been any additional information provided by the complainant that would require a further review. An independent senior officer would conduct the escalated complaint investigation. Their role is to ensure that a thorough investigation is carried out and a full response provided to the complainant within 20 working days (or a pre agreed timescale) of their latest communication. The escalated investigation is the end of the Council's internal complaints

procedure. There is no further right to appeal to the Council following the issue of a Stage 2 response.

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

Following a full investigation, a complainant can approach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). The LGSCO will not usually investigate a complaint unless it has been dealt with through the Council's complaint procedure first and exhausted the internal complaints procedure. The option to approach the LGSCO is the third and final stage of the complaints procedure and is the final point of contact to attempt resolution of a complaint.

St Leger Homes of Doncaster may also receive applications from The Housing Ombudsman specific to their functions. DCLT do not have an Ombudsman, therefore any Stage 3 complaints are investigated and responded to by their Chief Executive.

### **Outcome and Resolution**

There are three main categories for classifying the outcome of a complaint, which are as follows:

- *Upheld:* This is where we agree with the concerns raised and as a result, have put measures in place to improve service delivery going forward.
- *Partially Upheld:* We agree with some of the issues identified but not all.
- *Not Upheld:* There has been no evidence found to support the allegations of concern.

In cases where a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, an apology is always given for any distress or inconvenience caused to the resident. In some instances, the investigator of the complaint may recommend that training be carried out for relevant staff members to ensure any knowledge gaps are addressed.

There may also be instances whereby complainants are offered a gesture of goodwill for time and trouble in making their complaint. This can be monetary or an appropriate gift. In most cases where a fault has been identified and a recommendation made, the Customer Experience Officer will monitor this to ensure any agreed action is carried out.

The LGSCO can ask a Council to:

- Apologise to a customer.
- provide a service a customer should have had.
- make a decision the Council should have done before.
- reconsider a decision the Council did not take properly in the first place.
- improve the Councils procedures so similar problems do not happen again; or
- Make a payment to the customer.

The LGSCO do not have legal powers to enforce the organisations they investigate to follow their recommendations however it would be unlikely that an organisation would fail to do so.

## **Children's Social Services Statutory Complaint Procedure**

The majority of representations that the council receives regarding the functions of children's social care fall under the statutory complaints procedure. The procedure is defined in The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The statutory procedure allows for children and young people "to make representations, including complaints about the actions, decisions or apparent failings of a local authority's children's social services provision. Complaints that do not fall under the statutory complaints procedure are generally those matters that do not relate to children's social care involvement or services that are not provided directly by children's social workers.

### **Statutory Stage 1 - Local Resolution**

The aim is to resolve as many complaints as possible by the local team at this early stage. The Customer Experience Manager should discuss the complaint with the complainant and attempt to address the issues as quickly as possible. They should exchange information and thinking behind decisions and try to agree a way forward. This should take up to 10 working days, with a maximum extension of up to 20 working days for complex complaints.

### **Statutory Stage 2 – Investigation**

When a complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of Stage 1, they may request that the Customer Experience Manager escalate their complaint to a statutory Stage 2 investigation. The Customer Experience Manager will then make a decision on whether or not to escalate the complaint to Stage 2 based on the evidence provided by the complainant.

If the Customer Experience Manager does not agree to escalate the complaint to Stage 2, they write to the complainant and explain why they have made this decision. The complainant is advised of their right to contact the LGSCO if they are unhappy with this decision.

The investigation is conducted by an external Investigating Officer who is accompanied by an external Independent Person (whose role is to ensure that the investigation is open, transparent and fair). Both officers complete a report with their recommendations following the investigation, which is passed onto a senior manager within the Council (Adjudicating Officer) for the adjudication process. The Adjudicating Officer is a senior manager who does not have management responsibility for the service area that has been complained about.

The Adjudicating Officer then considers the reports and responds to the complainant on behalf of the Trust. A copy of the Investigating Officer and Independent Person's reports are also shared with the complainant at this stage. The Stage 2 process should be completed within 25 working days, although this timescale can be extended to 65 working days for complex complaints.

### **Statutory Stage 3 – Review panel**

Following a full Stage 2 investigation a complainant can request that their complaint is considered further by a review panel (Stage 3). The Customer Experience Manager will make a decision on whether or not to escalate the complaint to Stage 3 based on the evidence provided by the complainant.

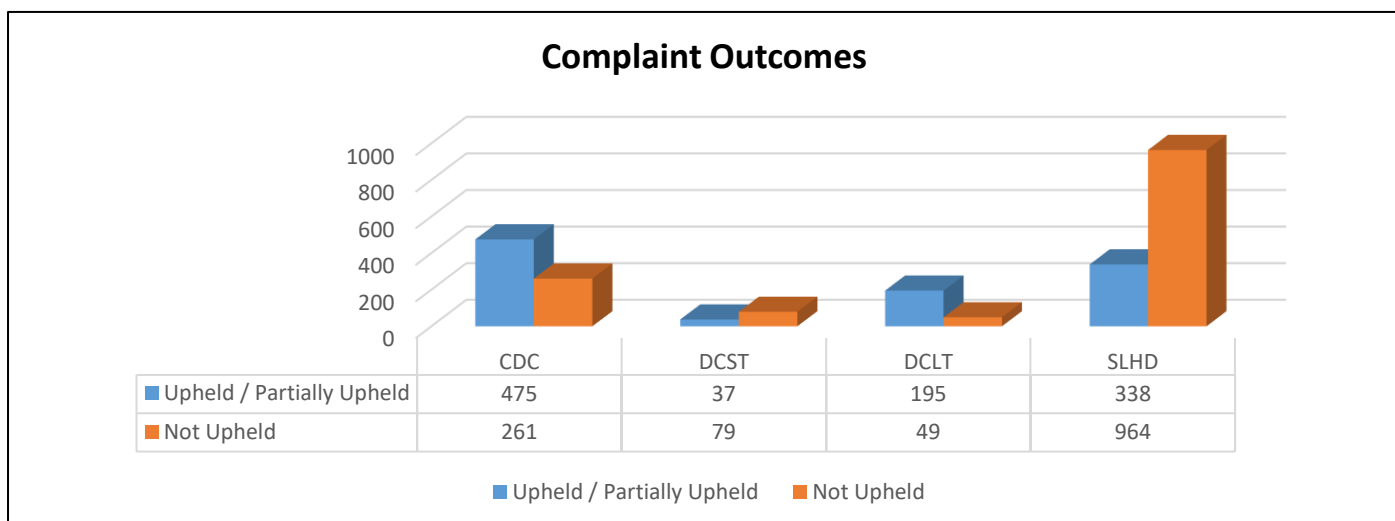
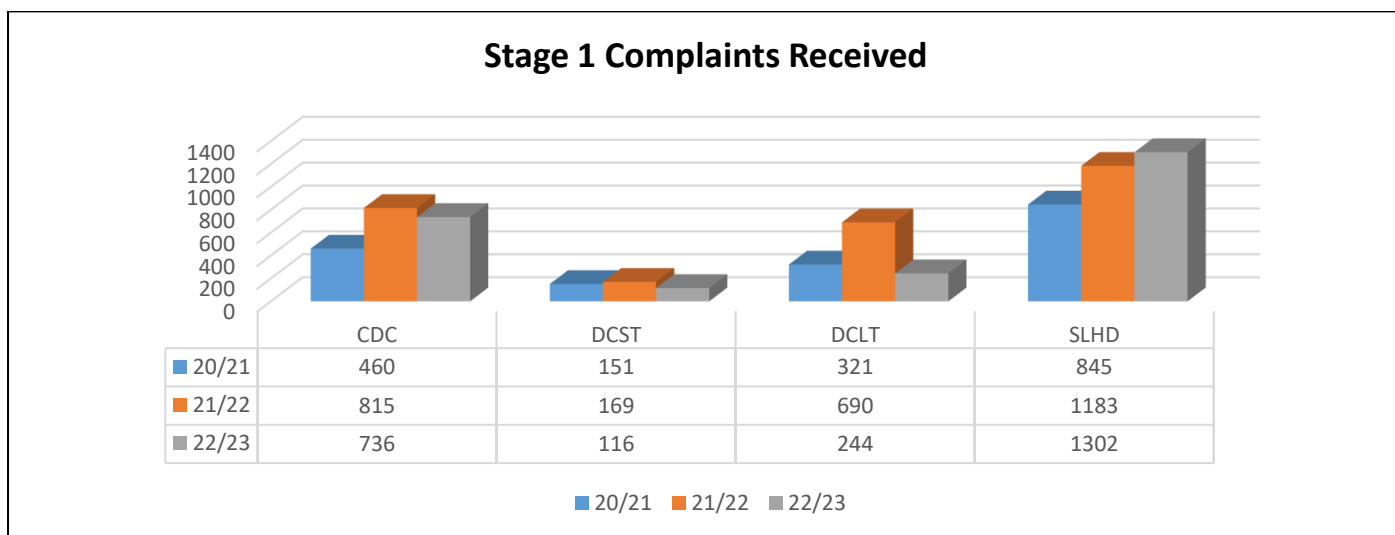
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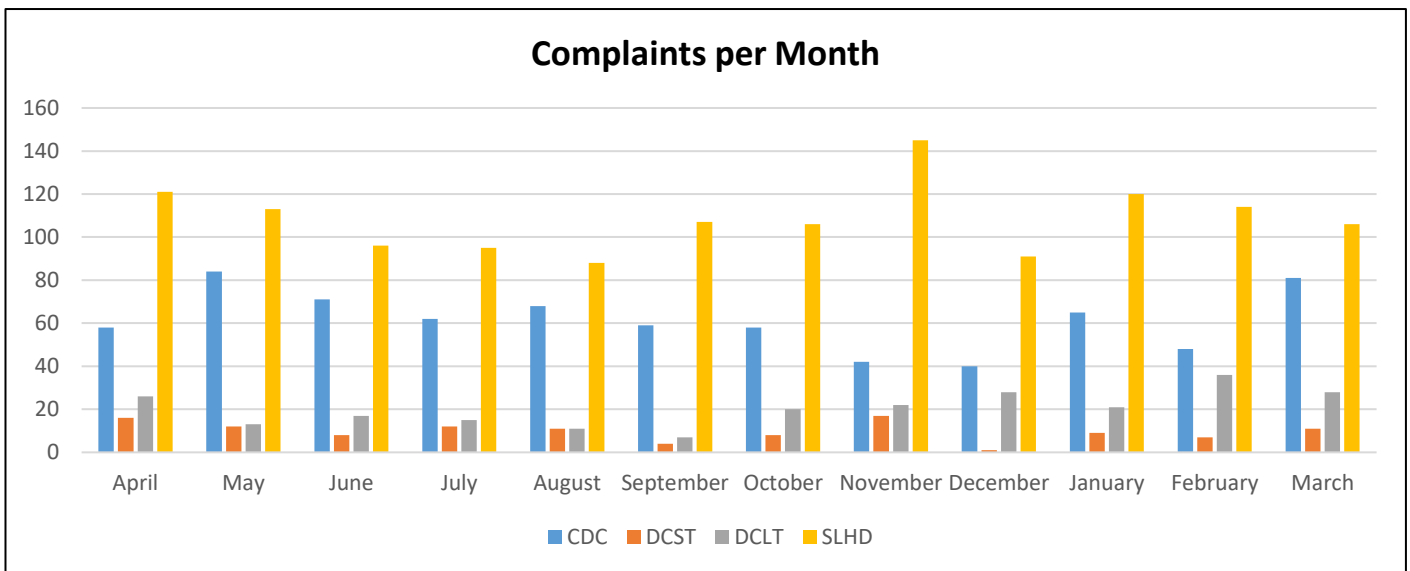
The review panel should be held within 30 working days of the request. Within 5 working days of the review panel meeting the Independent Chair will send a letter to the Chief Executive outlining the panel's findings and recommendations. The Chief Executive will then provide the Council's final response within a further 15 working days. The whole process should take a maximum of 50 working days.

### 3. High Level Analysis

Across all the organisations in 2022/23, we saw a decrease in the number of complaints received by a cumulative 459, resulting in 2,398 complaints being received compared to 2,857 in the previous year. The report includes a comparison to the 2020/21 year, however due to the pandemic impacting both residents and services during this period it is not a useful tool of comparison when assessing the annual figures year on year.

Below are accompanying graphs and comments from each organisation showing these figures in more detail and providing further information relating to the difference in complaints received for the period.





### City of Doncaster Council (CDC)

As shown in the graph above, CDC did not note any particular month or quarter in which we received a peak in complaints, the number stayed quite consistent throughout the year.

Doncaster Council, in total, saw a decrease of complaints. Below are the percentage increases / decreases by directorate:

- Corporate Resources – Increase of 13%
- Adults Health and Wellbeing - Decrease of 15%
- Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) - Increase of 25%
- Economy and Environment – Decrease of 17%

The average time to resolve complaints across all directorates was just 8 working days. The directorate information follows within this report.

### St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD)

SLHD received a total of 1302 complaints this year, which is an increase of 119 from the previous year. It is worth noting that notwithstanding the increase compared to 21/22, the number of complaints received in the latter part of 22/23 have been reducing. Complaints in Property Services reduced in Q4, from 101 in January 2023, to 79 in March 2023 and in Housing Services, comparing Q4 22/23 to Q4 21/22, by 45 complaints.

- 77% (998) of the complaints were for Property Services.
- 23% (296) of the complaints were for Housing and Customer Services.
- 1% (8) of the complaints were for Corporate Services.

This trend of increasing complaints is consistent with an increase in complaints nationally. HouseMark who collate complaint data from all local authorities cite policy changes and publicity campaigns such as the 'Make it Right Campaign' which the Government launched in England to 'empower social housing residents to raise complaints and seek resolution' as an impacting factor. Nationally, by March 2023, there was an increase of nearly 19% compared to February 2023.

In addition to the government campaign, SLHD ran its own local campaign to raise awareness on how to make a complaint – this in keeping with best practice cited in the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Code.

### **Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT)**

During the year DCLT received a total of 244 complaints, a 64% decrease on the previous year. The reason for this is due to a significant change this year in the method of reporting complaints and bringing their process in line with CDC's corporate complaints procedure. Previously DCLT had reported all negative feedback as a complaint regardless of if there was any allegation of fault on DCLT's behalf. They now record dissatisfaction as customer insight if there has been no allegation of failed service.

The majority of complaints for service delivery were the following:

- Cancellation of swimming lessons.
- Condition of Crookhill Golf Course due to weather conditions.
- Pool Temperature at The Dome.
- Balby Sauna and Steam Room.
- High volume of youths in the gym.

DCLT have seen a decline in membership complaints since transferring over to in-house membership collections from a third-party provider in July 2022, meaning that all customer queries either at site or through the Contact Centre are dealt with more promptly and more accurate information is now available.

DCLT continues to receive complaints with regards to swimming lesson cancellations, despite attempts to resolve this there are still shortages with recruitment of swimming teachers. DCLT have completed recruitment drives, have substantially increased hourly rates and have worked with swimming clubs to try and bring more teachers into the business. The number of skilled teachers continues to be a national problem in this sector.

DCLT received a number of complaints throughout the period of October 2022 to March 2023 regarding pool temperatures at The Dome. This was due to an emerging issue with the pump and boilers, that has caused intermittent failure of the heat source. DCLT continue to try and resolve with contractors and remedial works.

### **Children's Social Care Complaints (formally Doncaster Children's Service Trust, DCST)**

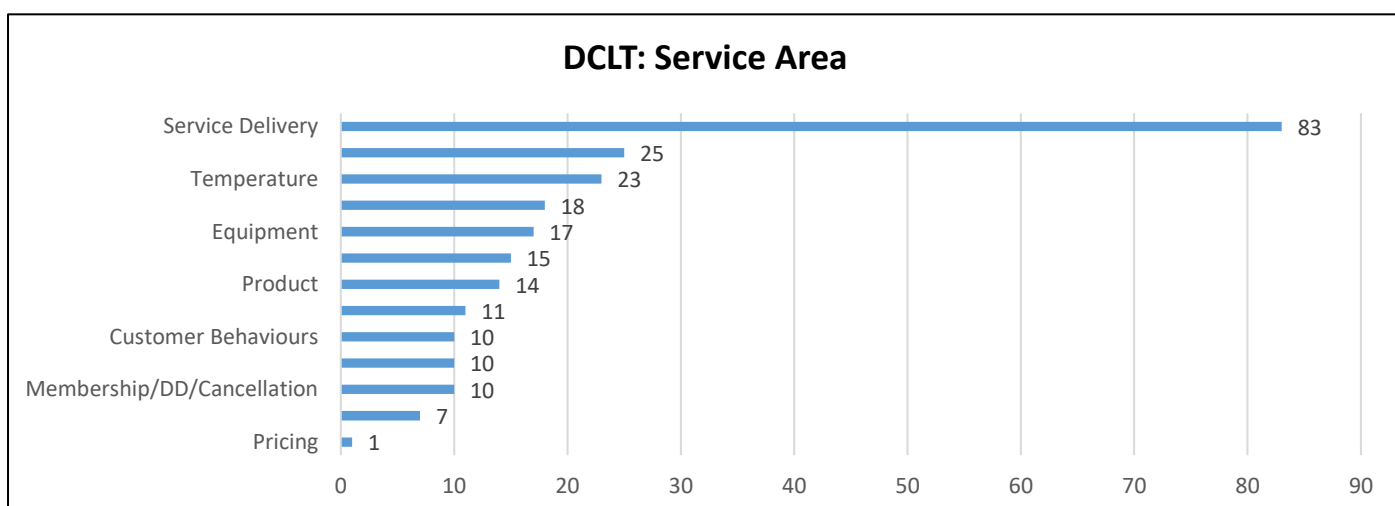
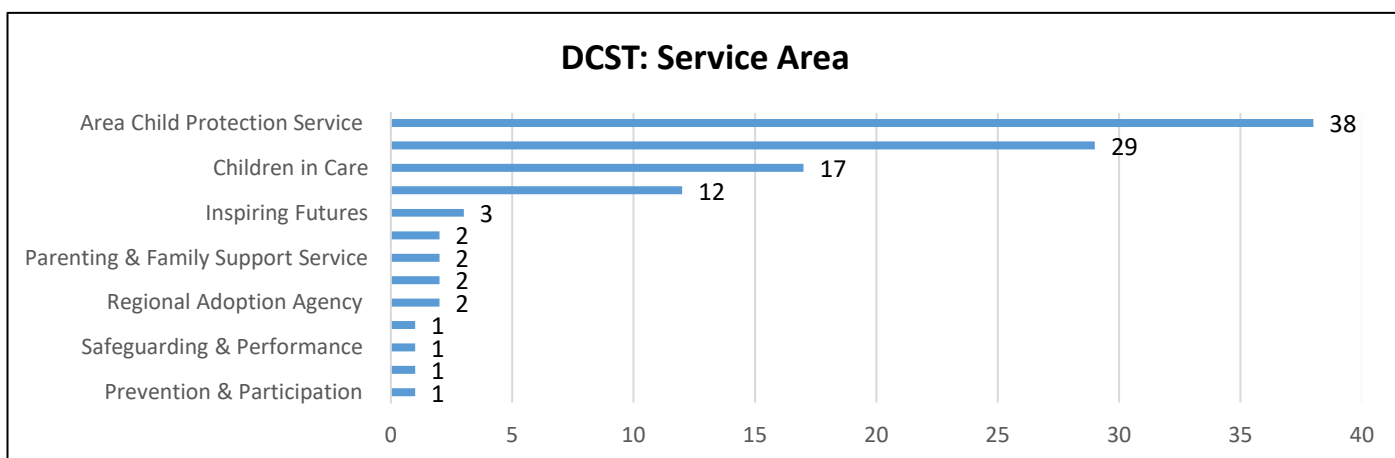
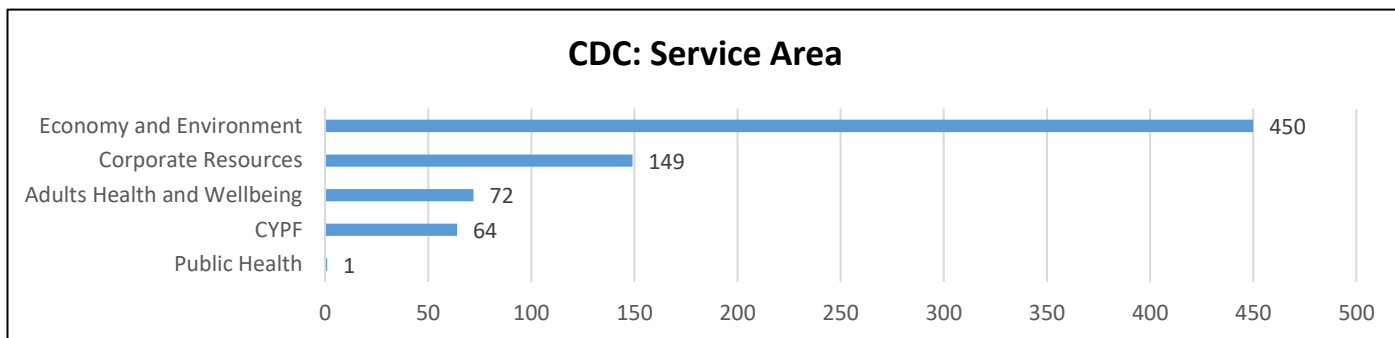
Doncaster Children's Services Trust moved into the City of Doncaster Council on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

During the year Children's Social Care received 263 contacts, a reduction of 40 contacts compared to 2021/22. There were 31 contacts from young people during the year, this is the highest number since 2017/18. Of the 263 contacts, 40 were accepted at Stage 1 of the statutory complaints procedure, which was 24 less than in 2021/22 and 76 complaints were dealt with through the corporate complaints procedure, 29 less than in 2021/22. One statutory complaint was escalated to Stage 2 and none were escalated to Stage 3.

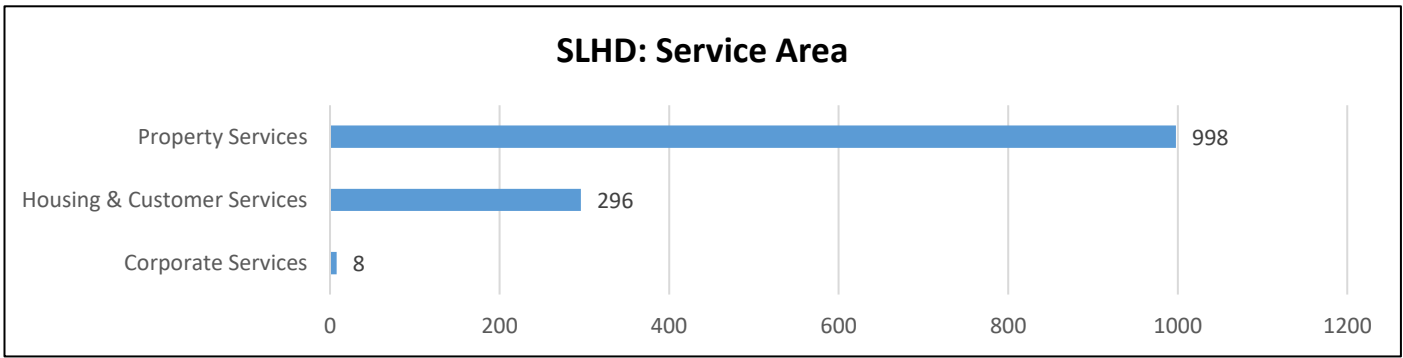
The majority of complaints were received by the Area Child Protection Service teams, followed by the Assessment Service. As these teams deal with child protection matters, which is an emotive subject and will involve the need for difficult conversations with families, it is expected that these may result in complaints being received. These teams also hold the highest proportion of cases.

The top three main presenting themes of statutory complaints were poor communication, decision making and delays in receiving services and for corporate complaints they were actions of workers, decision making and poor communication.

#### 4. Complaints by Organisation and Service Area

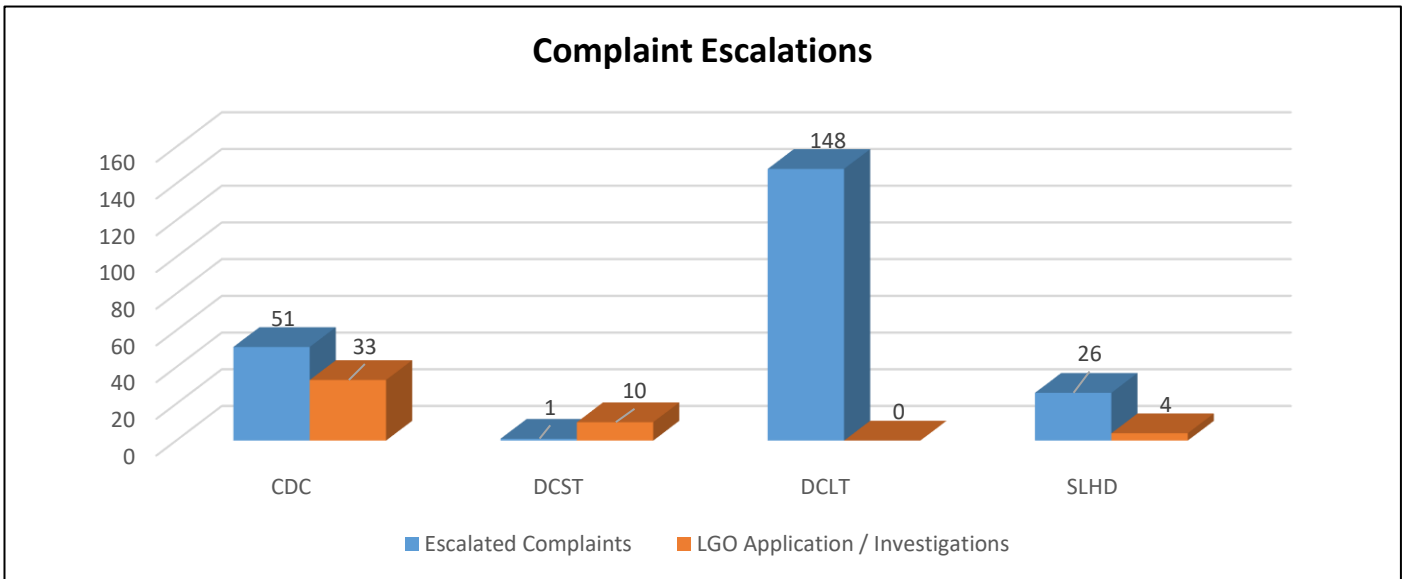






## 5. Escalated Complaints

Although the majority of all complaints will be investigated and resolved at the first stage of the complaints procedure, if a customer still feels aggrieved or they have additional evidence they wish to provide they can request that their complaint is escalated to Stage 2 of the complaint procedure. The Stage 2 investigations are carried out internally. If they are still dissatisfied with the response from their Stage 2 investigation, they may then proceed to an independent investigation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. The figures relating to these investigations are as follows.



## Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)

As a final stage to the Council's corporate complaint's procedure, complainants have the right to approach the LGSCO following an unsatisfactory Stage 2 response. The LGSCO will direct the customer back to the Local Authority if the complainant has not yet given the Council the opportunity to resolve the complaint through our complaint's procedures. The LGSCO may also pass the complaint back to the council if they consider that there is more that could be done to resolve the complaint.

The LGSCO will request necessary information from us for review and then will contact the Council should they decide that the matter falls within their jurisdiction and wish to investigate further. The LGSCO investigate malpractice or poor service and are instructed to comment on or request changes to council policies.

Throughout the year we have been ensuring that any Stage 1 or Stage 2 investigations that were carried out within the internal complaint procedure had addressed all the customers concerns before the response was sent to the customer. This ensures that if a customer chooses to seek independent advice, we have done all we can to improve. In 100% of cases the LGSCO were satisfied that CDC and SLHD had successfully implemented their recommendations when a complaint was upheld.

During 2022/23 the LGSCO received 47 complaints across all organisations, of these 19 investigations were carried out with 10 complaints being upheld.

The LGSCO publish an annual review letter every year, which details the complaints that they have received for each authority.

**Appendix 2** includes a copy of the LGSCO Annual Letter to Doncaster Council published in July relating to performance in 22/23 when it is received later in July. This will be included at the Executive Board and Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **6. Lessons Learned and Service Improvements**

### **City of Doncaster Council**

As a result of this year's customer feedback, the following teams have introduced the following service improvements to positively impact the services provided by Doncaster Council.

#### **Adults Health & Wellbeing: Community Care & Support**

The highest number of concerns raised were associated to miscommunication in relation to paying for care and support. A key theme was about people and their families lack of understanding about how and when to pay for care and support. The following service improvements have been introduced:

- Review of staff practice guidance to ensure that workers are aware of the information to share with people and who to connect the person with to gain further information and advice.
- Implementation of the BetterCare web platform that supports people going through the process of financial assessments for care and support. It allows people and their family to complete their own assessments, informing decision making while ensuring transparency, clarity and simplicity throughout. It also allows a person to receive an indicative financial contribution that is the estimated maximum amount of money that they will need to pay towards their care.
- The team are currently working to improve the information available on the council's website and developing leaflets providing information on how to pay for care and support.
- Changes in mosaic practice to improve timescales for financial assessments, particularly for direct payments.

#### **Adults Health & Wellbeing: Community Adult Learning Disability Team**

There have been 6 complaints in 2023 into the CALDT/Transitions Team. The key themes were staff communication and knowledge and care providers and their services. The following service improvements have been introduced:

#### Staff communication and knowledge

- There has been lots of review of training needs for the team, particularly in relation to mental capacity knowledge and the language used to talk to people, linked to the statement of purpose and the practice framework.
- Mandatory adult social care refresher training accessed by the majority of staff.
- The duty function has been reviewed and ensured that there is consistent practice across the team, in relation to follow up of enquiries in a timely way.
- Communication addressed, and case recording at individual and team meeting levels, to ensure all staff are accountable for the work they undertake.

#### Care providers and their services

- Regular contract monitoring meetings with the supported living contracted providers where issues are escalated and worked through via feedback from safeguarding, clients and staff members, lessons learned are identified from this process.
- Taking steps with commissioning and contracts to reduce the number of direct payments used for supported living, where the providers don't fall under contract monitoring, by looking at a flexible purchasing system, this is in its early stages.
- Ensuring staff are aware of how to raise professional concerns about care providers, and escalating any issues to managers, or safeguarding in a timely way to ensure timely response and support from the team.

#### Adults Health & Wellbeing: Adult Social Care Duty Teams

Concerns were raised around inconsistency of workers in the duty teams as a result there has been implementation of practice guidance across all teams to ensure that there is a consistent handover process, which includes the communication within the Mosaic system and the creation of a duty email inbox for each team to support managers when covering another team

#### Corporate Resources: Council Tax

Council Tax Services received 86 Corporate Complaints during this year, a slight increase on the 71 received in the previous year. It is worth noting that this service affects the majority of residents in Doncaster, 142,000 households currently receive an Annual Council Tax Bill.

The majority of complaints in relation to Council Tax were disputes in relation to billing and difficulties when attempting to contact the service.

At the beginning of the year Council Tax staff were carrying out additional work such as the Government's Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme. This naturally caused a backlog of work and delays in answering phones and responding to emails. Although the Council Tax team haven't specifically seen any change in the number of Council Tax complaints being logged during this period, the nature of the complaints has changed. During the first part of the year the team received more complaints from residents in relation to experiencing difficulties when trying to contact the

service, in the second half of the year the team have seen a return to more usual complaints around billing.

Service Improvements have been developed and introduced within the team recognising which aspects of the service customers were having difficulty accessing and understanding. Specifically, work has been carried out to improve Council Tax's online access including a re-design of the web pages to make it easier for customers to understand, reduced jargon and introducing a 'Chatbot' to navigate the website on behalf of customers.

### Children, Young People and Families (CYPF):

CYPF have reviewed their processes surrounding families moving into the City of Doncaster area in light of recent Ombudsman recommendations. All children moving into the area are allocated to the Locality Officer covering that postcode area. That officer would assume responsibility for undertaking the consultation process in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice and all Teams have been reminded of the agreed moving in process. If the setting named in the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is still accessible then this would be maintained and this includes residential provision. If the current setting is not accessible the Local Authority would place in the closest setting that replicates the provision received in the previous Local Authority and that can meet the needs set out in the EHCP.

To improve the service to families moving into area children who are classed as Children Missing Education are identified immediately and monitored through a weekly cross service meeting involving SEND and Virtual School and Education Welfare. SEND cases are reported to the responsible Head of Service with agreed actions to ensure the child/young person is receiving full time educational provision that can meet their needs. These processes must take place within the statutory timescale.

The Local Authority will publish a 7-year sufficiency strategy and there is a dedicated sufficiency work stream reporting directly to the SEN Board. The Local Authority is commissioning additional Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision to address the identified shortfall in specialist provision within the City of Doncaster.

### Economy & Environment: Regulation & Enforcement

Upon receipt of 16 complaints regarding Enforcement Officers attitude to members of the public when issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. Although it is not uncommon due to the nature of the role to receive these types of complaints, all allegations are investigated and the body worn footage is reviewed, meetings take place to discuss these matters internally and thoroughly should malpractice be identified. Additional training for all public facing officers has been implemented, including how to approach and address individuals, officers also now ask residents how they wish to be addressed.

The majority of complaints received in relation to Doncaster Council's Licensing service were relating to delays in issuing licenses and difficulties when residents were attempting to contact the team. Licensing is currently one of the Rapid Improvement Projects included in the Customer Experience Strategy Delivery Plan. The project is working with the service to re-design the current processes to enable fully digital end to end transactions and improve the experience of our customers.

The Directorate also identified that due to the number of service teams which fall under this area and the number of officers responsible for investigating complaints there have been instances where complaint responses could have been issued in a timelier manner. To alleviate this going forward the team have expanded a job role to include the management of complaints and customer feedback, MP and Councillor enquires to ensure relevant timescales are met.

### Economy and Environment: Planning

Following a recent upheld decision and recommendation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the planning team spoke to members of staff in relation to decision making processes caused by deviations from approved plans. The planning team have been instructed to document all relevant information when carrying out site inspections particularly any on site discussions with the builder which may show deviations from the submitted plan.

### St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD)

SLHD has successfully implemented changes to its repairs service, following some complaints about lack of communication. Customers now receive a call prior to their repair appointment, reducing 'no access' issues. Customers are now sent an automated survey following the completion of the repair to gauge satisfaction with the overall service provided. 85.69% of customers who had work carried out in Q4, 22/23 were satisfied with the service they received.

SLHD has continued with the changes in the delivery of the repairs service in February 2023, by combining the scheduled repairs teams with the responsive repair teams. This improves the availability of trade resources, which means they can be more responsive to demand. This also improves communication as customers now receive an appointment at the first point of contact, as well as a confirmation text and text reminder.

To further improve how SLHD engage and deal with customers it launched an in-house customer excellence training programme in February 2023 and all employees will attend this training. The training content was informed by tenant discovery sessions held with tenant representatives.

SLHD have commenced their Journey to Excellence programme. The overall aim of the project is to improve the customer journey for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and promote the prevention agenda. Working with customers to help them remain in their own homes by assisting with tenancy management and helping them to ensure their income is maximised. As a result of this, at the end of 22/23 SLHD saw the lowest number of households in B&B accommodation, reducing to 16. SLHD will continue to work on this journey to excellence.

### Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT)

DCLT has received complaints with regards to the volume of youth fitness members they have in the gyms. It is recognised that despite the complaints they receive, it is essential that they continue to offer a youth package. Approximately a third of children aged 2-15 are overweight or obese and DCLT support the UK Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of all young people engaging in an

hour of daily physical activity. DCLT are aware of the popularity of these memberships and are acting where necessary to improve the experience for all and they expect their teams to be challenging any inappropriate actions. Updates have been made to their member etiquette requirements that all members must follow and staff must monitor. This etiquette is displayed on banners around the gym and on posters throughout the gym area.

### **Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST)**

When a complaint is raised relating to Children's Social Care services, the complaint is looked into and responded to. In most cases the complaint is resolved locally, an apology is offered and information about how the complaint will be addressed is shared if applicable. Where required, suitable management guidance or training is put in place. However, there are also occasions where learning has been identified which has a wider impact and the opportunity is taken to ensure lessons are learnt to adapt services to reduce the risk of a matter being subject to complaints in the future. Examples of lessons learnt from complaints during 2022/23 are as follows:

On occasion, there has been a breakdown in the relationship between a parent and a child's social worker. In one case, to support resolution, the Customer Experience Manager asked an independent senior manager to review a case file. The findings of the senior manager were that allegations had been investigated appropriately and correct management decisions had been made. However, the senior manager also found that some, not all, professionals experienced the parent as being hostile and aggressive. The view of the senior manager was that as an organisation - lessons should be learnt from the review to ensure that parent/carers and social work professional relationships do not escalate to a point where there becomes an impasse. As a result of the review training was adapted to ensure conflict of this nature is reviewed earlier, where possible, to address the issues and reduce the risk of this type of escalation.

A young person was unhappy about how their change in social worker had been handled including a worker leaving and informing them via email. The opportunity was taken to remind all social workers, working with children in care, to ensure they spoke to their children directly before leaving.

Lessons have been learnt about the level of support needed by young people in care/care leavers who are about to become parents themselves, and this has informed service delivery. The opportunity has also been taken to address the assumption of some, that the unborn child of these parents is automatically at risk, or that these parents would not be able to care for their own child when the child is born. Whilst the availability of other services for expectant parents is outside the control of children's social care, understanding and responding to the anxieties of these young people is within children's social care's control and having an agreed clear and timely plan in place provides much needed reassurance to all parties.

A complex complaint crossed a number of service areas including an Area Child Protection Team, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Team, Fostering Team, Kinship Team, Independent Reviewing Service and the court arena. Working closely with Internal Audit the following actions took place which was also informed by lessons learnt from this complaint:

- Relevant policies and procedures were reviewed and updated to reflect lessons learnt and to ensure clarity around roles and responsibilities. This also included financial decision-making processes and commitment to spend.
- Referral documents to panels were updated to ensure pertinent information was provided to inform decision making.

- Best social work practice was identified which kept the child at the centre of decision making.
- Stronger links were built between teams to ensure information sharing to support the correct procedures being followed from the outset.
- Processes were reviewed and implemented to ensure a consistent approach to gathering information for court to the required standard to inform decision making and avoid the risk of any unnecessary delay as a result of children’s social care involvement.

Complaints received where the main presenting theme is ‘actions of worker’, ‘poor communication’ and ‘decision making’ often relate, in part, to information that has been included in an assessment that has been undertaken by a social worker. To inform the development of assessment training for children’s social workers the following feedback was shared from complaints to ensure the opportunity was taken to culturally reinforce lessons learnt:

Assessments should, after prioritising safeguarding:

- Take into consideration the needs of those being assessed so that any individual needs can be met, where appropriate.
- Take into consideration cultural and religious differences and the potential impact of these.
- Signpost people to appropriate services if support is not provided by children’s social care.

Assessments should be –

- Written in plain English and not be judgemental.
- Balanced, looking at positives as well as negatives.
- Clear, for example detail where information has come from or where a professional opinion has been shared, if the opinion is not evidenced based.
- Inclusive of input from both parents, where possible, as well as involved carers.
- Clear about what/who the risks are.

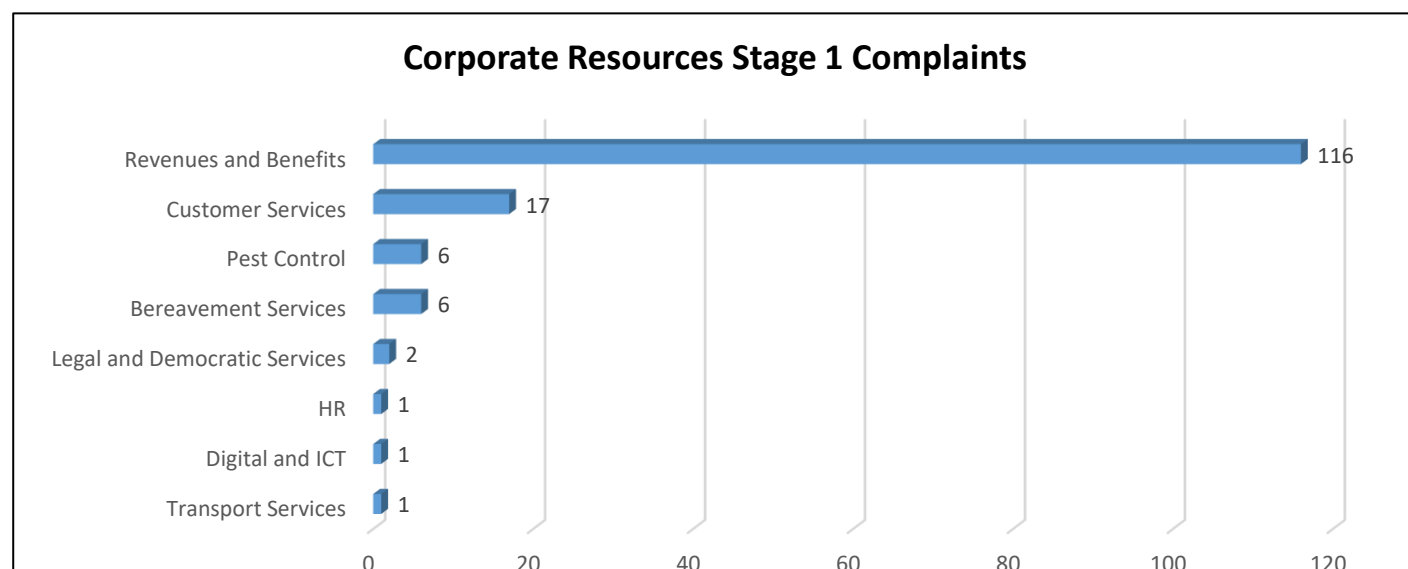
When completed assessments should be:

- Written up in a timely way
- Shared with parents/carers, preferably face to face so a discussion can take place about the findings and recommendations so that people understand the next steps and ask any questions they may have.
- Shared through an Advocate when an Advocate is involved.

## 7. Doncaster Council by Directorate

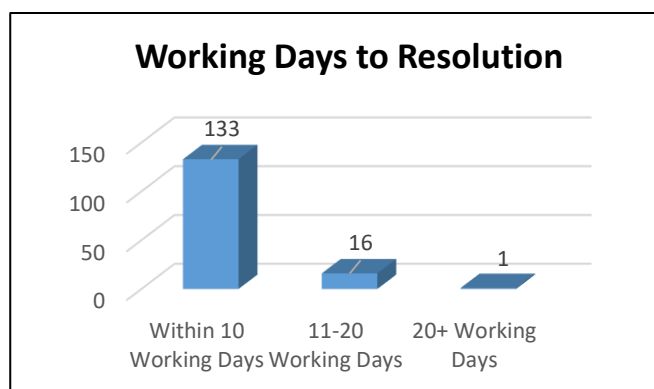
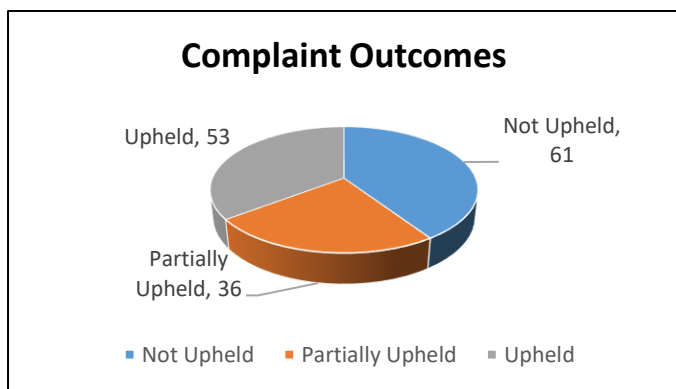
### Corporate Resources

The Corporate Resources Directorate received 150 corporate complaints in 2022/23.



Revenues and Benefits received a total of 116 complaints, of which 86 were for Council Tax and 30 were for other services such as Housing Benefits, Business Grants and Business Rates. Although there were a considerable number of complaints received for this area compared to other Corporate Resource service teams, it is worth noting that this is because this service affects the majority of residents in Doncaster with almost all households using at least one service provided by this team.

Across the Directorate, 89% of all customer complaints were responded to within the timescale of 10 working days.



### **Escalated Complaints**

Corporate Resources investigated 9 escalated complaints during 2022/23.

Of these escalated complaints, 8 were related to services provided by Revenues and Benefits. Of those 8, 5 were circumvented to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as there was no further evidence for the Council to consider.

Of all Corporate Resources complaints that were received last year, 10 customers sought advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Of these 10 cases submitted, 5 investigations were discontinued by the LGSCO, 2 were not upheld, 2 were upheld and 1 case (Insurance) is still active with a decision yet to be reached by the LGSCO.

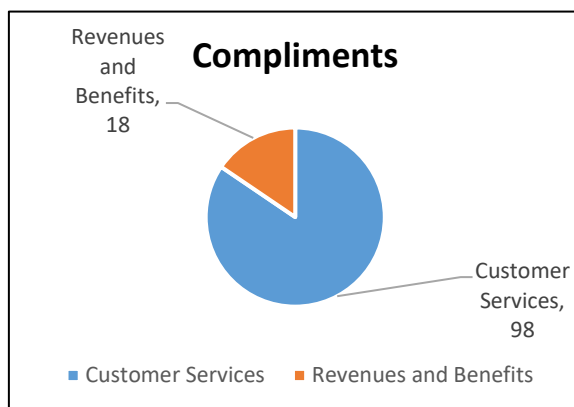
These related to the following service areas:

- Revenues and Benefits: 9
- Insurance: 1

### **Compliments**



Doncaster Council have received in total 403 compliments, of which 116 were for teams across Corporate Resources. The breakdown of the directorate is below.

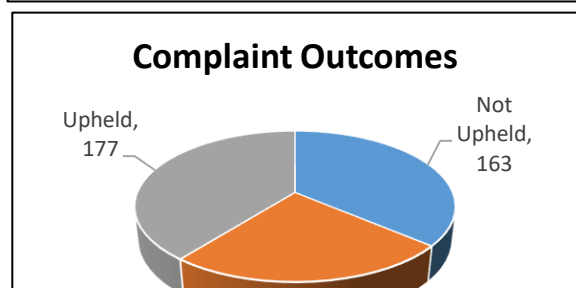
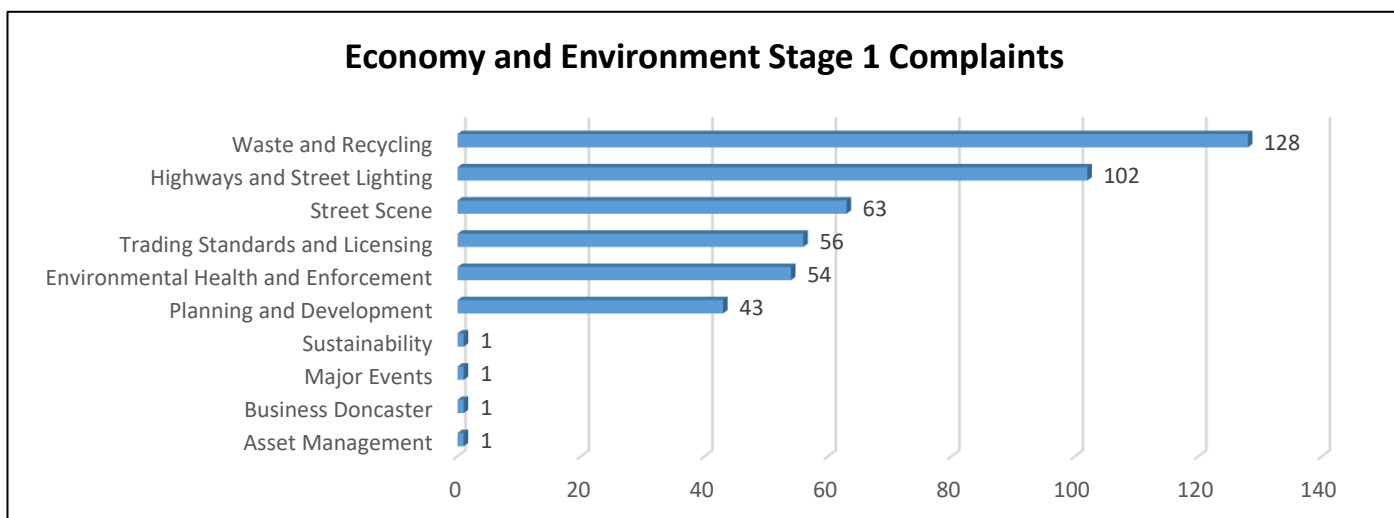


### Economy and Environment

The Economy and Environment Directorate received 450 complaints in 2022/23, a reduction of over 100 complaints in the previous year. The services that received the most complaints were those which have the largest impact on the majority of the residents in the borough, Waste and Recycling, Highways and Street Lighting, Street Cleansing and Fly Tipping. These three services equated for 65% of all complaints received for this directorate.

Waste and Recycling received 163 complaints last year, a reduction of 21.5% from last year. Although there were a higher number of complaints received for this area compared to other services, it is worth noting that this is because this service affects the majority of residents in Doncaster with almost all households using services provided by Waste and Recycling. There were no particular trends identified in these complaints. The main complaint theme for Highways were around road works, road closures and temporary Highways measures across the borough.

Across the Directorate, 77% of all customer complaints were responded to within the timescale of 10 working days.



## Escalated Complaints

Economy and Environment received 26 escalated complaints during 2022/23. Of these, 9 were circumvented to the LGSCO and 8 were either upheld or partially upheld following a further investigation. Of all Economy and Environment complaints that were received and responded to over the course of the last year, 14 customers sought the advice from the LGSCO.

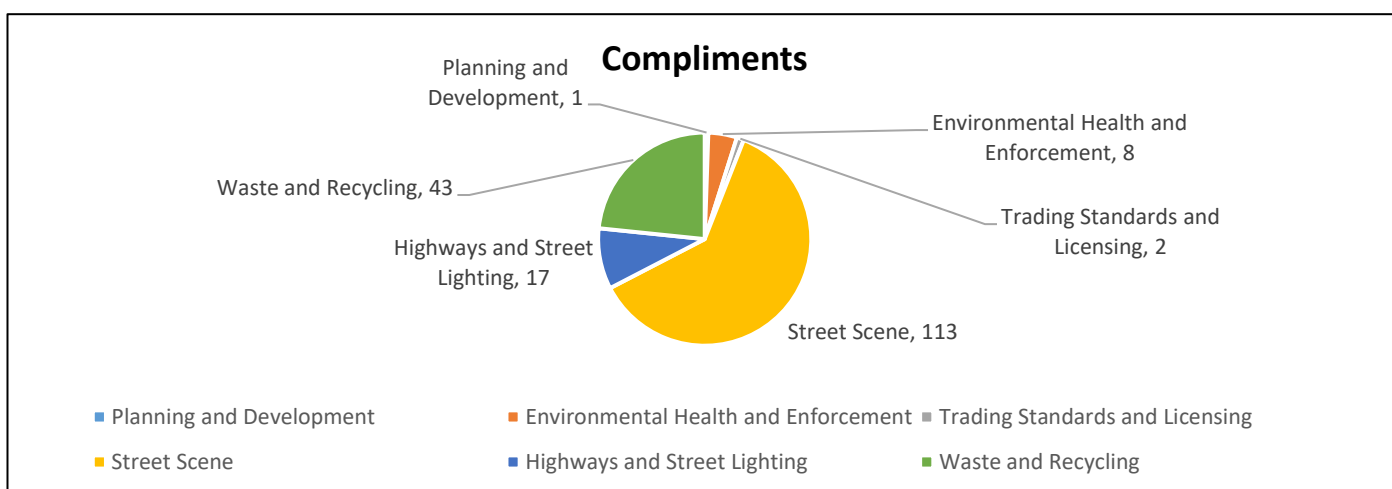
Of these 14 cases submitted, 12 investigations were discontinued by the LGSCO and 2 were upheld.

These related to the following service areas:

- Highways: 5
- Planning: 5
- Building Control: 1
- Transport: 1
- Enforcement: 1
- Licensing: 1

## Compliments

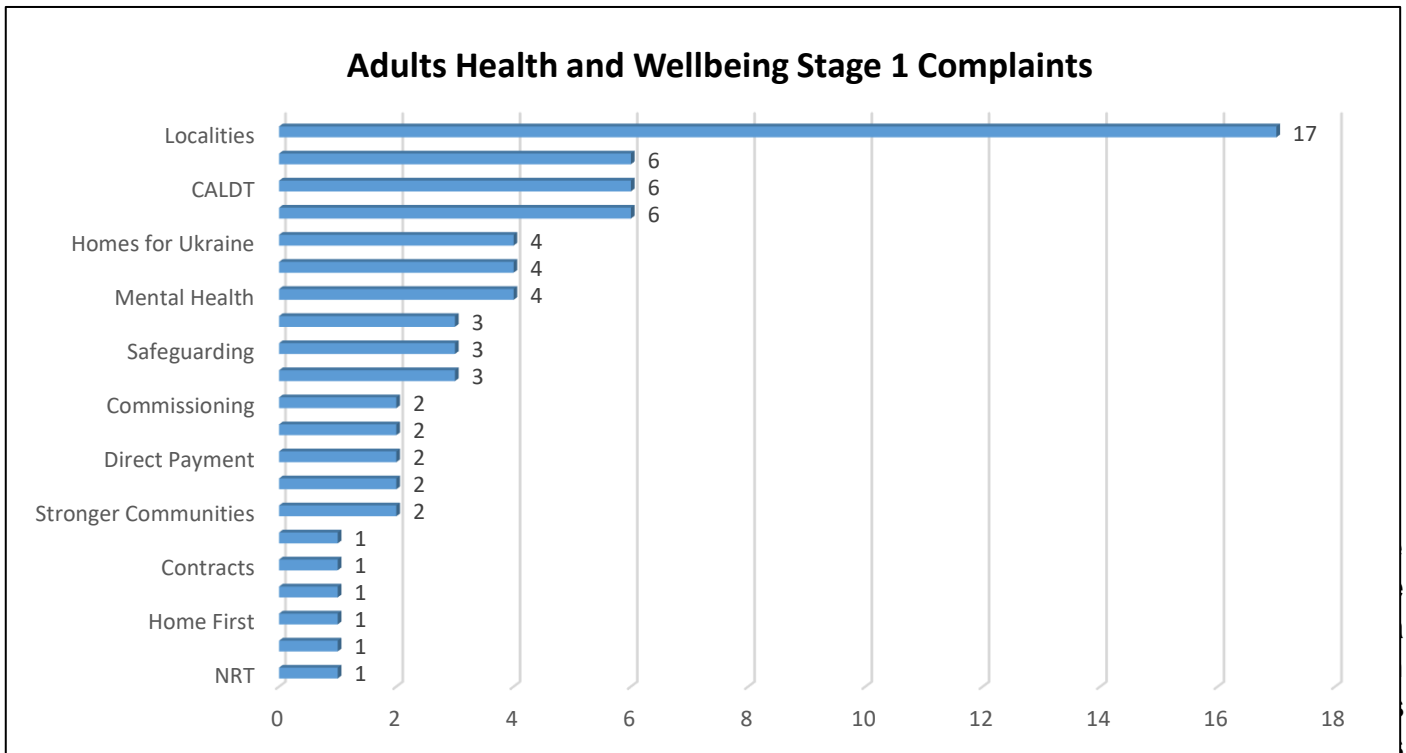
Doncaster Council have received in total 403 compliments, of which 184 were for teams across Economy and Environment. The breakdown of the directorate is below



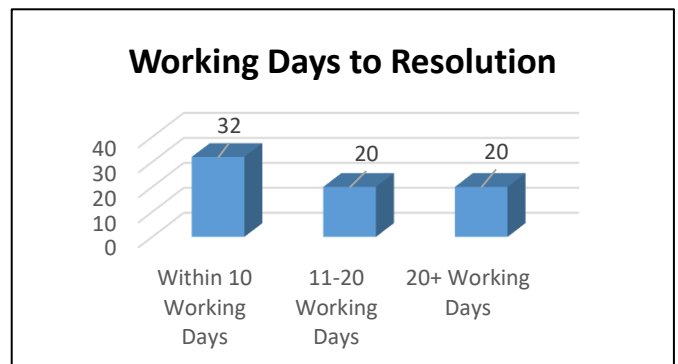
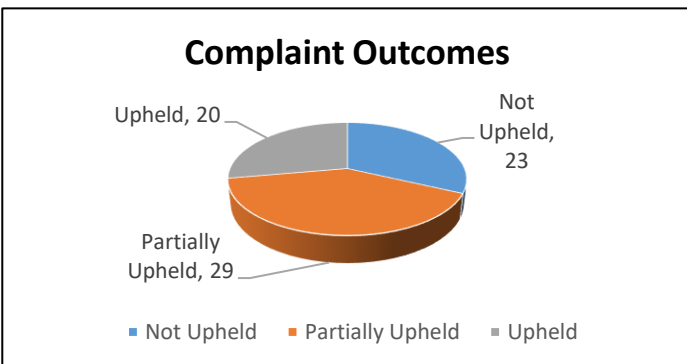
## Adults Health and Wellbeing (AHWB)

AHWB received 72 complaints in 2022/23, the departments which generated the majority of complaints throughout the year were, Locality Social Worker Teams: 17 and Community Adult Learning Disability Team (CALDT): 6.

Below is a full breakdown of all Adult Health and Wellbeing complaints received throughout 2022/23.



their requirements.



### Escalated Complaints

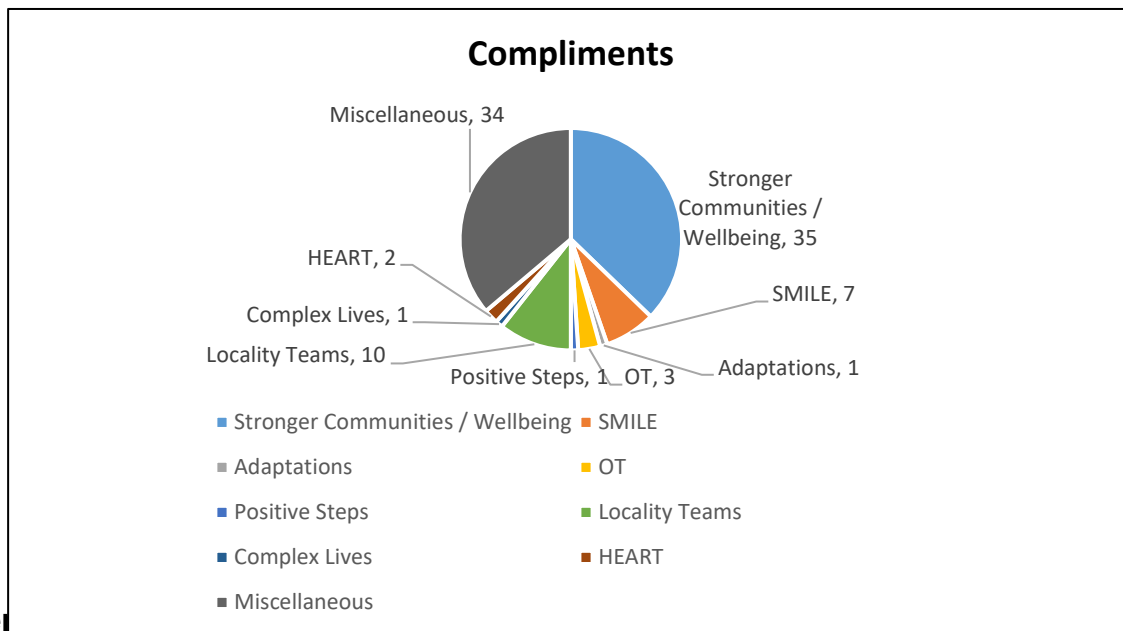
AHWB received 8 escalated complaints during 2022/23. Of these, 5 were either upheld or partially upheld following a further investigation.

Of all AHWB complaints that were received and responded to over the course of the year, just 5 customers' sought advice from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Of these 5 customers, 1 investigation was discontinued by the LGSCO, 1 was not upheld, 1 was upheld and 2 cases are still active with a decision yet to be reached by the LGSCO.

## Compliments

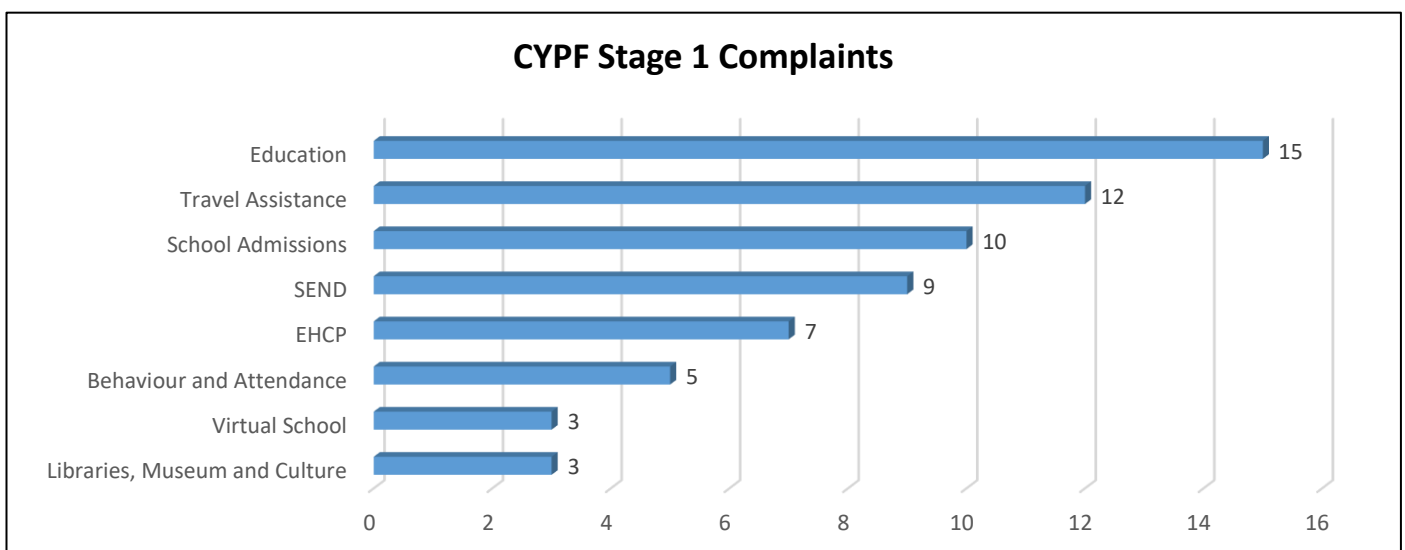
Doncaster Council have received in total 403 compliments, of which 94 were for teams across AHWB. The breakdown of the directorate is below:



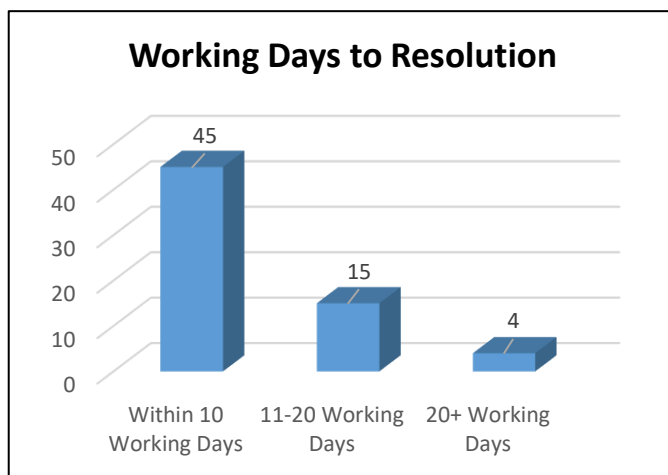
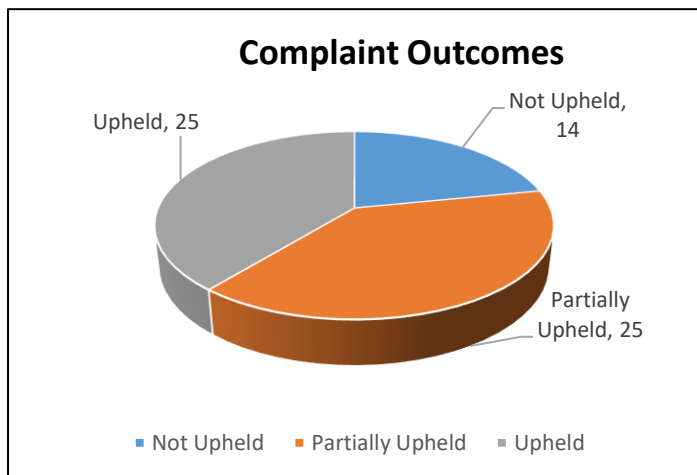
## Children

CYPF received 64 complaints in 2022/23, there were 12 complaints regarding the Travel Assistance Service around driver attitude, punctuality and staff training concerns when transporting children with additional needs. School Admissions received 10 complaints, where parents were concerned that their child had not been allocated a place in their preferred school or that their child had not received formal education for a period due to delays in processing. The Special Education Needs and Disability Service received 9 complaints, the main theme being delays in Education Health and Care Plans being finalised and issued and the affect this has on a child at school.

Although the education department received 15 complaints, this area covers a wide range of services and a common theme was not identified within these.



Across the Directorate, 70% of all customer complaints were responded to within the timescale of 10 working days. Complaints for this Directorate can be of a complex and sensitive nature and can be difficult to carry out a full investigation and respond within the 10 working days.



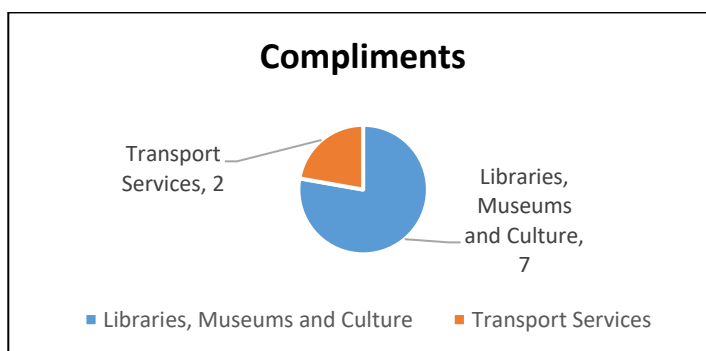
**Escalated Complaints**

CYPF received 8 Stage 2 escalated complaints throughout 2022/23. Of these, 5 were partially upheld, 2 were not upheld and 1 remains open.

4 customers sought advice from the LGSCO, of these, 2 were discontinued and 2 were upheld.

**Compliments**

Doncaster Council have received in total 403 compliments, of which 9 were for teams across CYPF.



**Children’s Social Care - Formerly Doncaster Children’s Services Trust (DCST)**

This section covers the complaints and compliments that were received by the areas formerly in DCST. Under statutory guidance Local Authorities must each year publish specific information in relation to Children’s Social Care complaints.

During the reporting year 263 contacts were received in 2022/23, a reduction of 40 compared to the previous year. The majority of complaints were received by the Area Child Protection Service teams, followed by the Assessment Service. As these teams deal with child protection matters, which is an emotive subject and will involve the need for difficult conversations with families, it is expected that these may result in complaints being received. These teams also hold the highest proportion of cases.

#### Total number of individual contacts received

	<b>2022/23</b>
Stage 1	40
Representations (Informal)	57
Withdrawn	90
Corporate Complaint	76
<b>Total Contacts</b>	<b>263</b>

#### Source of complaints

<b>Relationship to Young Person / Child</b>	<b>Statutory Complaints</b>	<b>Corporate Complaints</b>
Children, Young People and Care Leaver	14	4
Foster Carers	0	2
Grandparents	1	7
Legal Guardian	2	5
Parent	23	46
Other third Party	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>76</b>

The large majority of contacts received continue to be made by adults who were expressing their dissatisfaction with the service provided. There were 31 contacts received from young people whose ages ranged between 12 and 24. This is the highest number of contacts from young people since 2017/18. There were less than 5 contacts from children and young people who were of a black and minority ethnic (BME) background, which is a similar number to 2021/22.

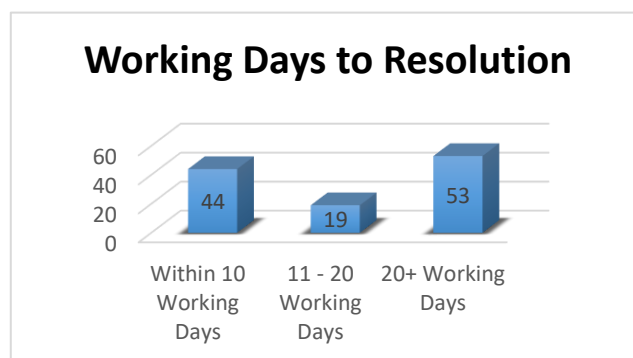
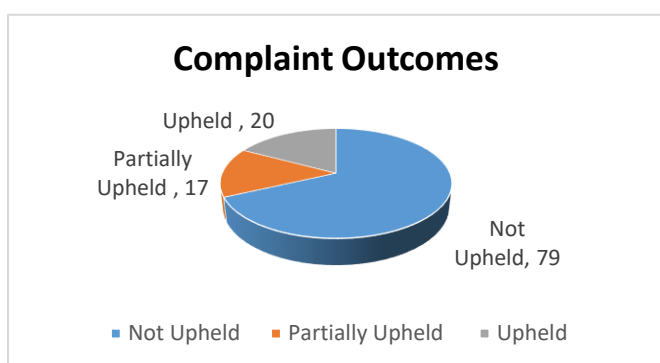
#### Child/Young Person's Contact Route

<b>Route</b>	<b>Child In Care</b>	<b>Care Leaver</b>	<b>Child in Need</b>
Telephone Call with Customer Experience Manager	1	1	
Service Area	3	2	1
Advocate	9	6	2

Feedback Form		1	
Email	3	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>

#### Route of how contacts have been received

Route	Number Received
Advocate	17
Email	85
Face to Face Meeting	9
Feedback Form	4
Letter	4
Local Government Ombudsman	1
Phone Call with Customer Experience Team	75
Service Area	46
Online	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>263</b>



#### Escalated Complaints

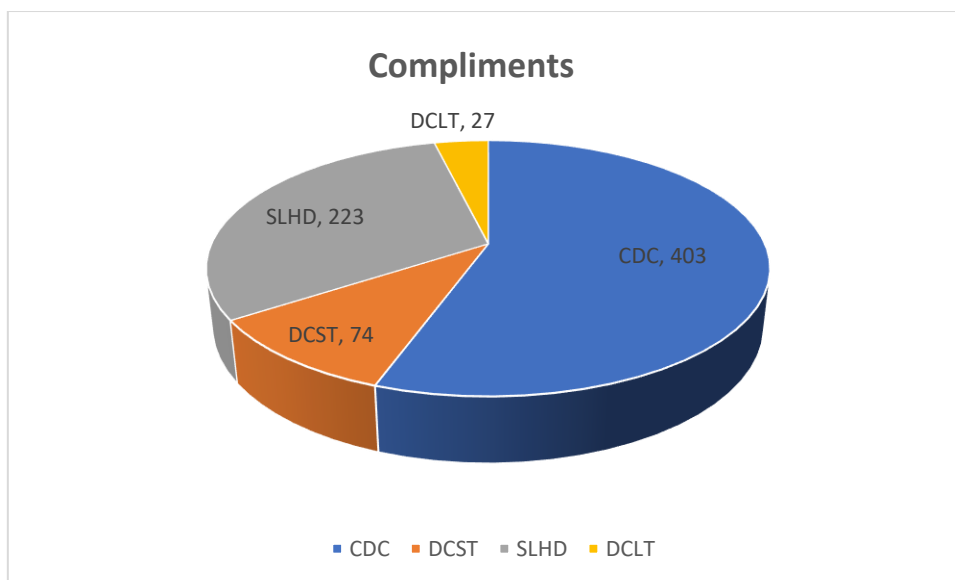
During 2022/23, 14 requests were made for the complaint to be escalated to Stage 2, of these only 1 was escalated. No complaints were escalated to Stage 3 during 2022/23.

There were 10 complaints raised with the LGSCO, 7 of which the LGSCO decided not to investigate. Of the 3 investigated, 1 was not upheld and 1 upheld and 1 is still outstanding. The LGSCO recommended that a compensation payment of £550 were paid to the complainant of the upheld case.

#### Compliments

There were 74 compliments received during 2022/23.

#### 8. Compliments Across all Organisations



## City of Doncaster Council

*"A happy customer just wanted to pass on her thanks to the wonderful bin men that are still doing collections even through the sweltering heat and a, "Good job!" to them too."*

*"xxx Road's alleys were cleaned and the people did a fantastic job at cleaning them, he was very happy with the work. He wanted to pass on his compliments"*

*"Tree surgeon came round, very good, kind and everything, explained that the item was a shrub and he would contact the shrub people and they would come and attend. This was on Tuesday and the customer wishes to express his thanks to the Tree surgeon. They came and done the job really quickly"*

*"Cusworth Park is a pleasure to walk in and enjoy. Well done to the staff who maintain the park and its grounds, the park is used and enjoyed by generations alike"*

*"I would like to compliment my green bin collection today. The bin should have been collected on Wednesday but due to extreme weather it didn't happen so my bin was returned to its designated spot on my drive. Today Friday my green bin team arrived and went above and beyond what was expected of them and retrieved my bin from the drive, emptied the said bin and returned it to its spot. Please convey my thanks to today's team. It means everything to me."*

*"I was served by xxx in the Civic Buildings digital area with a blue badge. He was absolutely brilliant very helpful and patient with me. I would just like to say a big thank you to xxx for all his help. I wanted to let you know how great the service was."*

*"I would like to say how helpful xxx in the Council Tax dept has been. Nothing has been too much trouble, she is friendly and very helpful."*

*"Customer has rung today to say she is so pleased and thankful for the quick attendance to her streetlight being out."*

*"Resident has rang to thank xxx and his contractors and staff who he said have done an excellent job of road re surfacing on xxx lane in xxx. Resident said is very happy with the work that has been done"*

*"I would like to thank xxx and xxx for helping me so much with my dumped rubbish request excellent customer service provided by them both and the other ladies on the reception :)"*



*"You will never know how much you have been appreciated by us over all these years, than you so much please keep in touch with us"*

## **St Leger Homes of Doncaster**

*"Customer called to say thank you so much to the man who has attended. He was lovely and professional and managed to save her as she had locked herself in the bedroom. The issue was handled quickly, and she can't thank us enough."*

*"Customer Access Officer did a great job, followed through with chasing up on an enquiry for the tenant and keeping her informed. The customer was very pleased and the Officer deserves the compliment."*

*"Customer called to give compliments and say thank you very much as we quickly sent someone to solve the problem with her heating"*

*"Customer called to compliment the operatives who came out to her property, a joiner and plumber. She said both did a great job, they were absolutely amazing! They were polite, pleasant and she couldn't fault them or their work."*

*"Compliment for the guys who carried out work to the chimney today - they have done a great job. Also thanked all who had been involved in helping, from reporting it, to the work getting done - it has been a very professional service."*

*"Customer called to give compliments to the Gas team operative who attended to a repair for the boiler. The tenants heating come back on 5 minutes before the trade staff arrived. The member of staff repaired the part and then checked over the complete boiler. The tenant commented that the trade staff has a "really nice way about her and goes out of her way, she was really lovely and her whole manner was brilliant".*

## **Doncaster Children's Services Trust**

*"Worker A is funny, she called me spiderman when I wanted her too. She made mummy put me on time out and i didn't like that so didn't like Worker A then. I like Worker A now she plays matching games with me at home. want to say thank you....."*

*"This letter is to say thank you for what you and the team have done for me and dad, I am so happy that I am living with him now. I am getting on with my schoolwork better, I am slowly but surely getting over the past but other than that me remembering things from the past I am doing amazing. Thank you so so so much for what you have done."*

*".....Thank you for doing the work with me and supporting me. Thank you for always talking to me and having the time. It was nice working with you and it was nice you helping me and my mum. .... It has been a pleasure seeing, knowing you and thank you for absolutely everything you have done, with all my heart."*

*"Overwhelmed that you'll be leaving us but happy because I know I'm good enough as a mum!! Thank you for everything you've done for us means a lot & I'll still keep you updated even when case is closed!!"*

*"Just felt the need to let you know that one of your team members Worker D, is not only an amazing, hardworking social worker but is also a pleasure to work with. She always listens and responds to concerns and makes us as a school feel well supported. Worker D is an asset to children's services . WELL DONE"*

*"I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you and everyone else that helping Person X and their family. They were genuine victims that really needed full support from all agencies involved. I must admit the response from all was great. Person X also appreciated all the help provided. .... Thank you so much for all your help and advice."*

## **Doncaster Council Leisure Trust**

*"Fantastic staff in the venue every single member of staff on duty in there this afternoon 4pm session was brilliant. In particular a gentleman named xxx, who when my nephew fell on the floor was straight down lying on the floor with him to make sure he was ok. Above and beyond belief."*

*“All leisure centres, splash parks, pools and other facilities would do well to see how professionally, compassionately, friendly and wonderfully the Dome pool facility is run. Your staff are truly excellent from the manager on duty on that afternoon and all the lifeguard and related staff”*

*“My son is currently having swimming lessons at Armthorpe leisure centre. During his sessions there was quite a bit of an issue with cancellations due to lack of swim instructors. However, they managed to get a new instructor for his class. I believe her name is xxx, I just wanted to say how wonderful she is. She always makes the sessions fun and had a laugh with the kids. My son started to really enjoy his lessons. I don't feel people praise others enough and I would say xxx definitely goes above and beyond for the children.”*

*“xxx and xxx in the bowling area are a credit to your team, both are such lovely and welcoming members of staff. They were both so happy and willing to help with any queries we had and certainly made me, and my husband feel welcome and very likely to return in the future. well done guys.”*

*“ Following the Captain's Day on Sunday (3rd), please pass on our massive thanks from all of the golfers competing. The feedback I received from golfers leaving the course was fantastic and the hard work they've done leading up to the day helped to provide the best conditions of the season so far. Please pass on our thanks to xxx, xxx and xxx, as well as xxx and xxx for their hospitality inside. It was well noted and recognised so I thought I should share the positive feedback with yourselves. Many Thanks”*

## **9. Unreasonable Behaviour Policy**

In a small number of cases, we experience service users acting in an unreasonable way when accessing Council services. This could be when they have a complaint, pursuing their complaints in a way that can impede the investigation of their complaint, or residents who have not made complaints but take up a disproportionate amount of Council time and resources sending in emails or making phone calls.

There are currently 16 individuals on the Unreasonable Behaviour register and the way in which their behaviour is being managed differs vastly, ranging from complete barring of attending the Civic Buildings One Stop Shop, due to acts of violence and aggression to appointing a Single Point of Contact to try to streamline communication from an individual in an effort to help them.

The Customer Experience Officers have a tracking system to record all residents whose behaviour is deemed unreasonable and they are responsible for reviewing this decision within a reasonable timeframe, which is always set out to the resident from the onset. They are also responsible for keeping a central record of all letters/emails and other communication sent out or received from those residents relating to the policy.