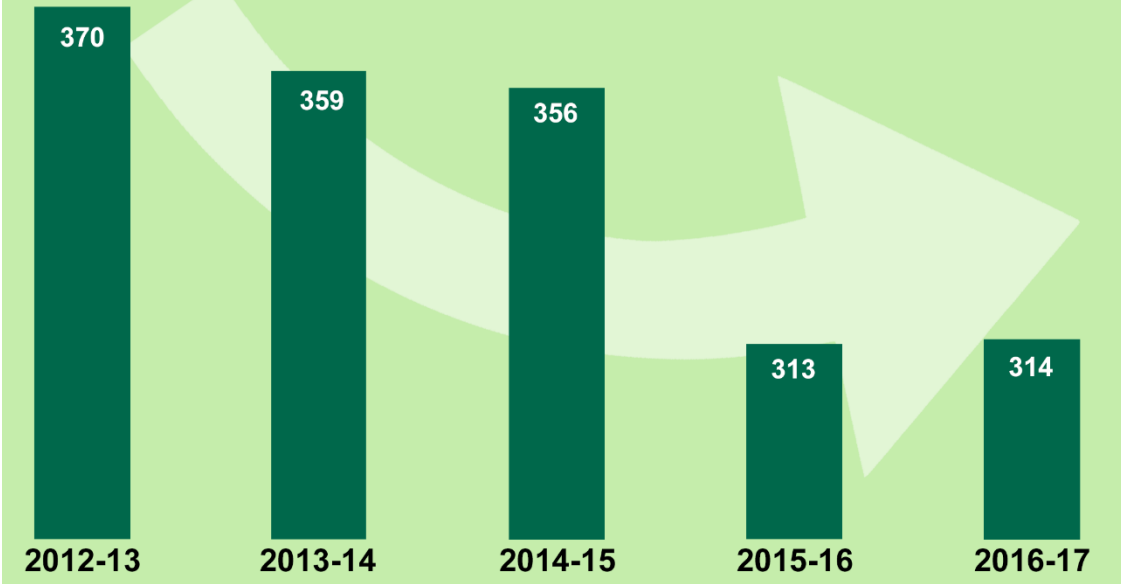
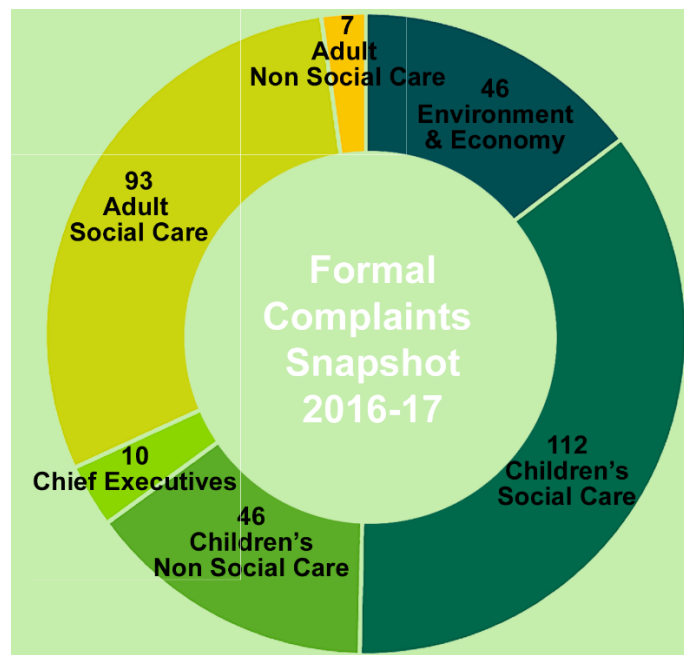




Number of Formal Complaints 2012 -2017



Environment and Economy 46 Stage 1	4 Stage 2	4 LGO (0 Upheld)	Chief Executives 10 Stage 1	0 LGO (0 Upheld)
Children's Social Care 112 Stage 1	4 Stage 2	1 Stage 3	Adult Social Care 93 Stage 1	7 LGO 7 (2 Upheld)
Children's Non Social Care 46 Stage 1	14 Stage 2	0 LGO (0 Upheld)	Adult Non Social Care 7 Stage 1	0 LGO (0 Upheld)



Welcome - *Complaints Annual Report for the period 2016-17.*

This annual report summarises Customer feedback for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

This report is for staff, Members, the relevant local authority committee and will be made available to regulatory bodies and general public. It provides information about numbers of feedback received, learning and service improvements that have been made, details of any that have not been implemented and why and any matters of general importance arising from complaints or the way in which they were handled.

Since the introduction of a central team in late 2015 we have been developing operations with a customer focused culture, one that works towards the best possible outcomes for our customers. We are committed to being a 'listening and learning organisation' that takes the positive steps to propose solutions to issues through review and development. If something does go wrong we need to be able to put it right quickly, and take action to ensure that it does not happen again. To this end, Dorset County Council's complaints process is designed to ensure transparency to the complainant, without losing the option of resolving matters swiftly and informally. (We will also be working to gather feedback from complainants after closure on their experience of the process and how it was handled.)

Perhaps the most important development in 2016-17 was the successful pioneering of a new database. This offers essential information at our fingertips by providing secure and easy access to dashboards summarising activity and key information to help managers to track and effectively manage complaints in the future. We would expect to see improved performance if managers have ready access to real time information.

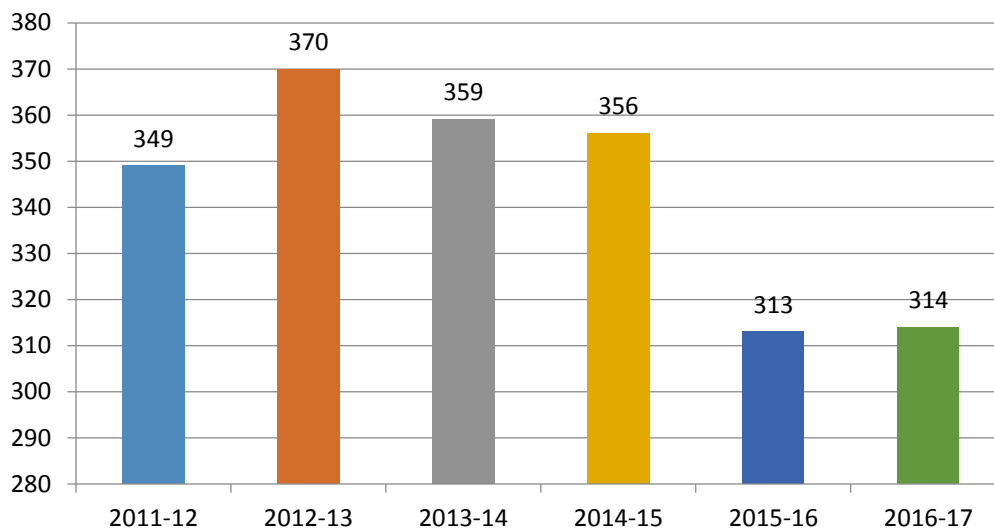
However, in 2016-17 the Complaints Team have faced significant challenges due to lack of resources due to staff absence. We are now rebuilding the team and have high hopes for a 2017-18. We are also confident we will be able to provide more support to managers across the directorates, through regular discussions of the complaints, outcomes, and learnings. Although proud of our achievements, we are aware that we will be able to achieve more in 2017-18 with a full complement of staff in the team. We received and managed 314 formal complaints during 2016-17. This represents a slight increase year on year, but includes a significant rise in children's services complaints that will be explained later in this report, countered by a reduction in Adult Services complaints.

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1 Formal Complaints 2016-17

1a – Stage 1 Complaints – 6 Year Comparison

The chart below shows a 6 year comparison of formal Stage 1 complaints received by the council.

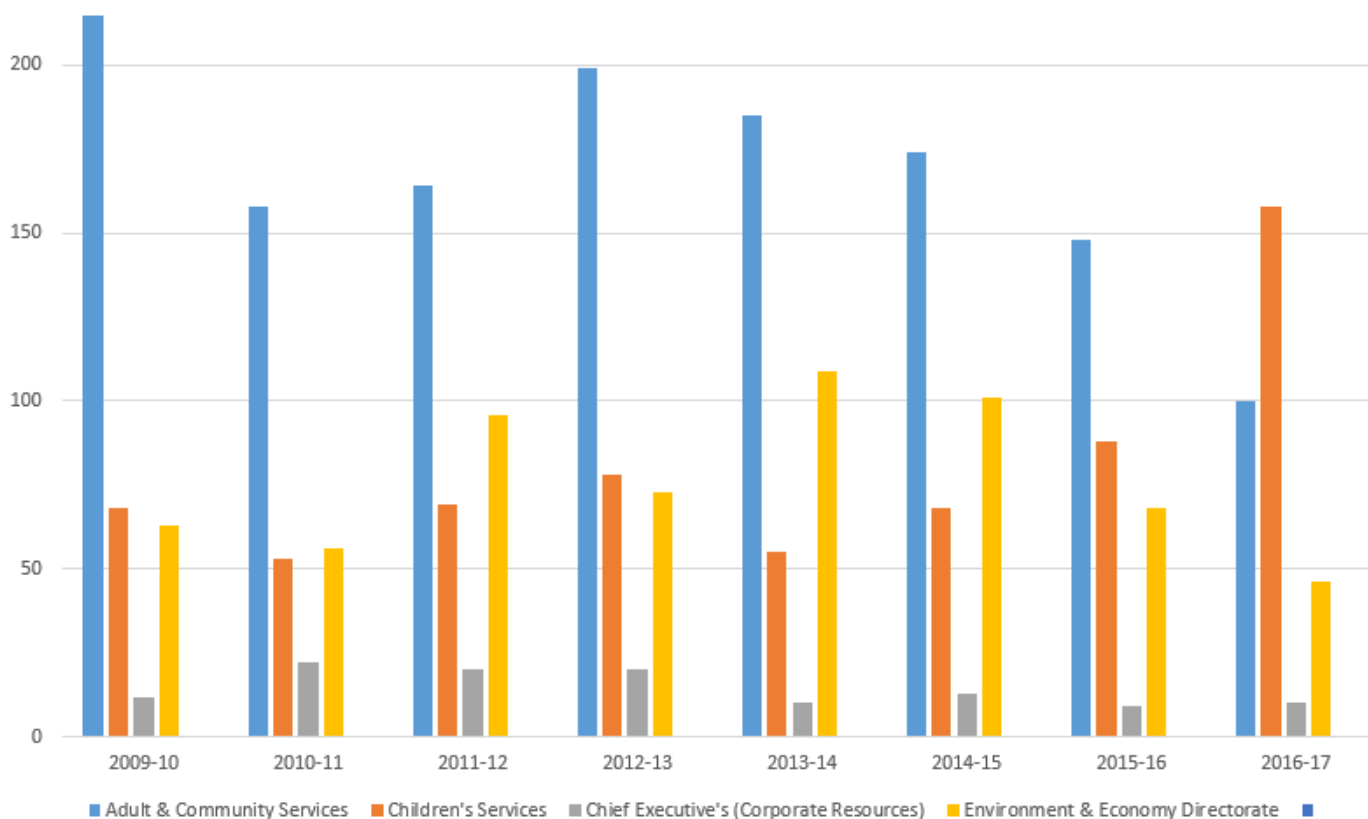


1b-Stage 1 complaints

See glossary (Appendix 1) for complaint definition

The 314 complaints for 2016-17 can be broken down into directorates as follows:

- 46 for Environment and the Economy Directorate;
- 158 for Children’s Services (112 social care and 46 non-social care);
- 10 for Chief Executive (Corporate Resources); and
- 100 for Adult and Community Services (93 social care and 7 non-social care)



1c - Stage 2 complaints

22 complaints were escalated to stage 2 during the period. This included 4 for Children’s social care, 14 for Children’s non-social care, 4 for Environment and the Economy Directorate, 0 for Chief Executive’s (Corporate Resources)

1d - Stage 3 complaints

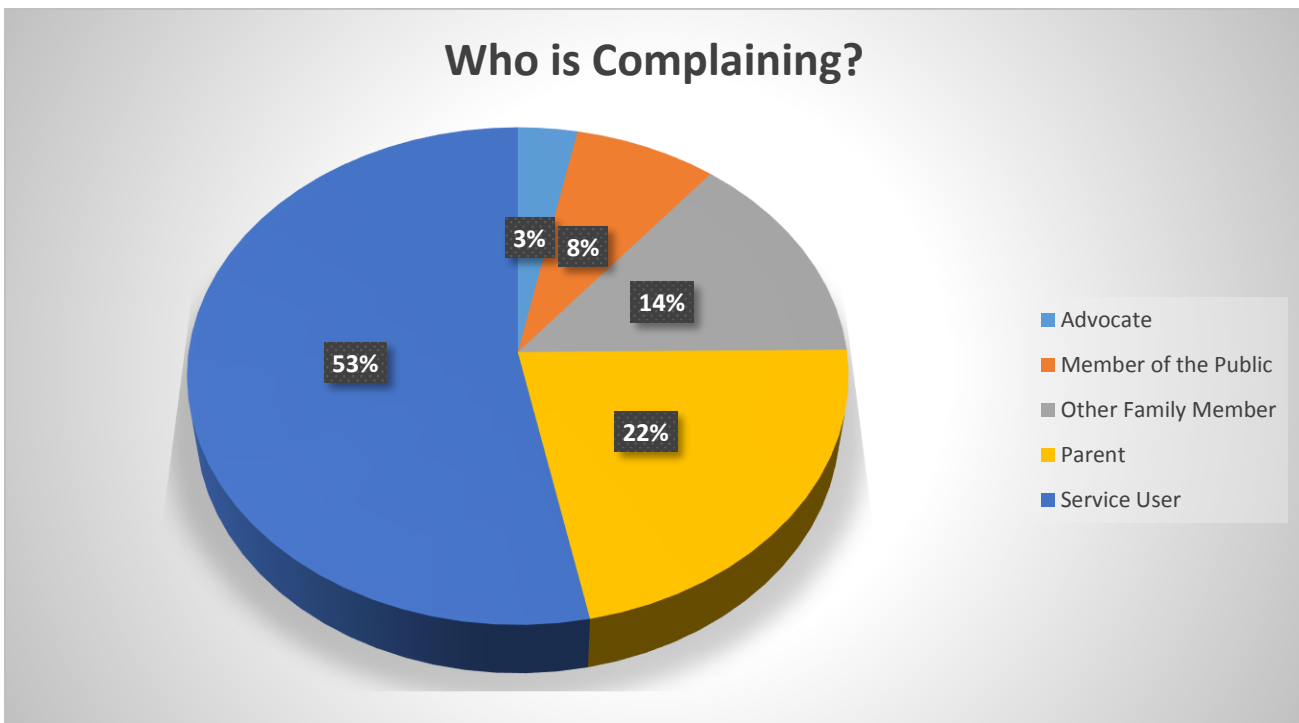
1 Children’s social care complaint was escalated from stage 2 to stage 3 during the period.

1e - Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

We received 20 decisions from the LGO during the period, a decrease of 28 when compared with the previous year’s figure of 48. Maladministration was identified in 4 cases, (2 Adult/2 Children’s) complaints, which is a slight reduction, (from 5) on last year.

2 - Who is Complaining?

It is important to ascertain who is complaining to Dorset County Council. The chart below clearly shows that service users represent the highest proportion with 53% of all complaints received in 2016-17



3 Compliments

Dorset County Council receive a large volume of positive feedback from a variety of sources including:

- In person
- Thank you cards
- Letters
- Conversations with Line Managers
- Dorset for You

Currently, Dorset for You have the only recording processes in place, and have recorded **128** compliment forms in 2016-17. We are hoping to improve the way we log and circulate compliments in 2017-18, as we are aware that this figure does not represent an accurate figure on positive feedback, merely a snapshot based on one avenue of contact.

3a - What People are saying in the Children's Directorate

"Yesterday I was involved in a difficult emergency involving a young teenager with complex learning difficulties. (2 named staff members) left the office and spent upwards of four hours with us at the patient's address (late into the evening at their own inconvenience) providing not only professional support to ourselves but emotional support to the family and the patient. I feel they deserve recognition for their commitment, compassion and desire to help in this difficult case. It was a pleasure to work alongside fellow Health Care Professionals that we so rarely get the chance to meet."

"I just wanted to write and let you know the positive feedback I received about your service from The Priory school in Christchurch. I was completing an SEND review and the SENCo spoke highly of your staff and how they work effectively in partnership with the school."

3b - What people are saying in the Adult's Directorate

"I don't know if our daughter realises what a fantastic team she has looking after her but Mark and I do, an absolute godsend, thank you all very much"

"As D S's oldest son I am writing on behalf of all the family to thank you for all you have done to make our mother's move today to a carehome possible"

"My sister Sarah has been particularly impressed by the caring and thoughtful contribution you have personally made. I know what enormous pressure all our public services are under with an ageing population and tight budgets"

3c - What people are saying in the Environment Directorate

"Just to say path in Langton looks super with great stone retaining wall. I know its difficult to control utilities. I should have done this a long time ago, as I don't think I had a chance to thank you for all your help. It has given everyone something to smile about. Probably just as well you and the chaps could not follow us in to the Pub, the party went on for a long time!"

"The work you have done, in cutting back the vegetation and overhanging tree branches, has improved the line of sight on Cobham Road [as you exit the Estate] tremendously. I now feel much safer cycling along this stretch of road. Not only do I not have to move out into the line of traffic now, but drivers coming round the bend get a better sight of me as they overtake"

"I just wanted to send a quick email to highlight the fantastic support I had yesterday when I was crossing this junction with my Guide Dog. One of the workman, guided me really well – let me take his arm (rather than pushing me along), kept up a good verbal commentary on what was coming up and where we were going and made sure I was on the side of the road I needed to be on to continue my journey. I said a thank you to him at the time, but felt that I needed to flag that it was apparent that he'd had some training and what a difference that made to my experience. My Guide Dog would never have worked out where we were supposed to go and so I wouldn't have managed it without assistance. "

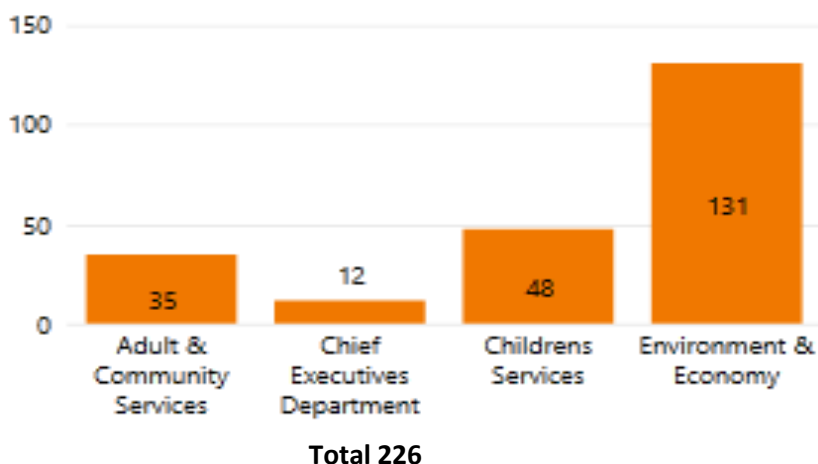
4 - Comments & General Feedback

We have added a feedback form to many of our online forms enabling customers to give their views on their personal experience. We analyse this feedback to adjust and improve our forms in response to customer comments.

For example; In relation to the Dorset for You website, a number of customers asked that a free text box be provided on the form used to report their bin collection had been missed. This adjustment was made together with a number of other small changes and satisfaction with the form has increased from 45% in April 2016 to 77% since April 2017.

A number of our forms, such as applications for free school meals and for adoption and fostering initial enquiries show 100% satisfaction rates month on month. The highways forms which is under constant review attracts the least satisfaction, particularly for those using the form on a mobile telephone where they find the use of the map very difficult.

4a - Representations – Informal Resolution by Directorate (see glossary for definition)



Of the 226 representations received across the directorates 130 relate to dissatisfaction with service provision – equating to 58% of the total.

4b- MP Representations

As well as direct approached from complainants, Dorset County Council receive contacts from members of parliament as representations. We are looking to improve the way in which we record and scrutinise these approaches, and react to any recurrent themes where possible.

This table shows 88 MP representation 2016-17, and who they split between the directorates

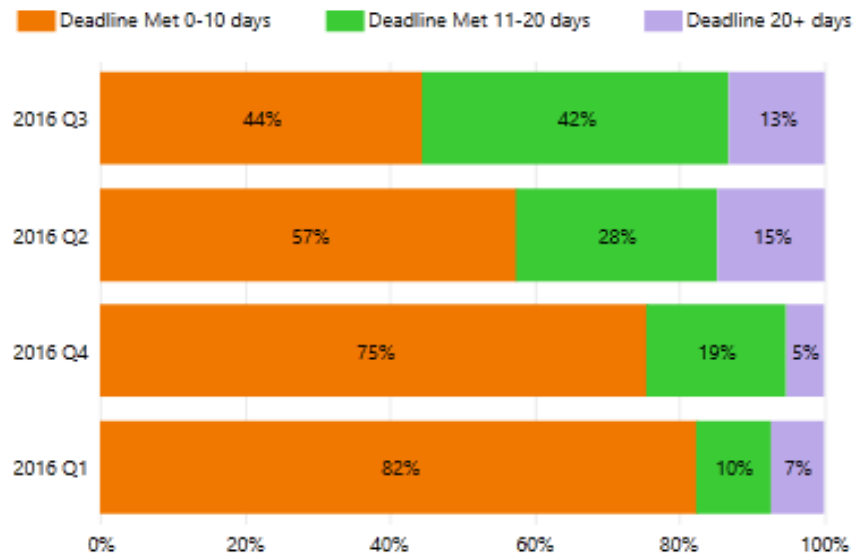
MP Representations/Enquiries	2016-17
MP/Member enquiries – Children’s Directorate	56
MP/Member enquiries – Adults Directorate	25
MP/Member enquiries – Environment Directorate	7
MP/Member enquiries – Chief Execs Directorate	0

5 - Timescales

The statutory guidance for complaints concerning social care prescribes timescales within which a response should be provided. An initial attempt to resolve matters must be made within 10 working days. The County Council has also adopted this timescale for the WA complaints procedure. This can be extended to 20 days depending on complexity. Adult services complaints have a 20 working day timescale.

5a - Representations & Informal Cases

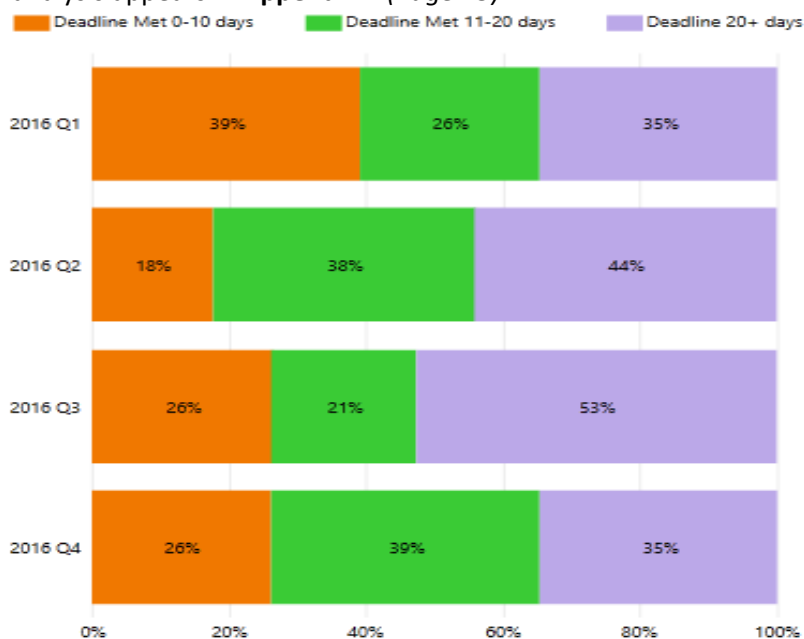
This graph demonstrates the percentage of representations that were met within timescales, across the directorates and those that were overdue – recorded by quarter



Those complaints responses that were overdue varied in duration, with the majority narrowly missing the deadline - but we must aspire to reducing the percentage of overdue responses, in an effort to ensure all timescales are met. In the case of any delays, we always endeavour to keep the customer informed.

5b – Adult’s Timescales

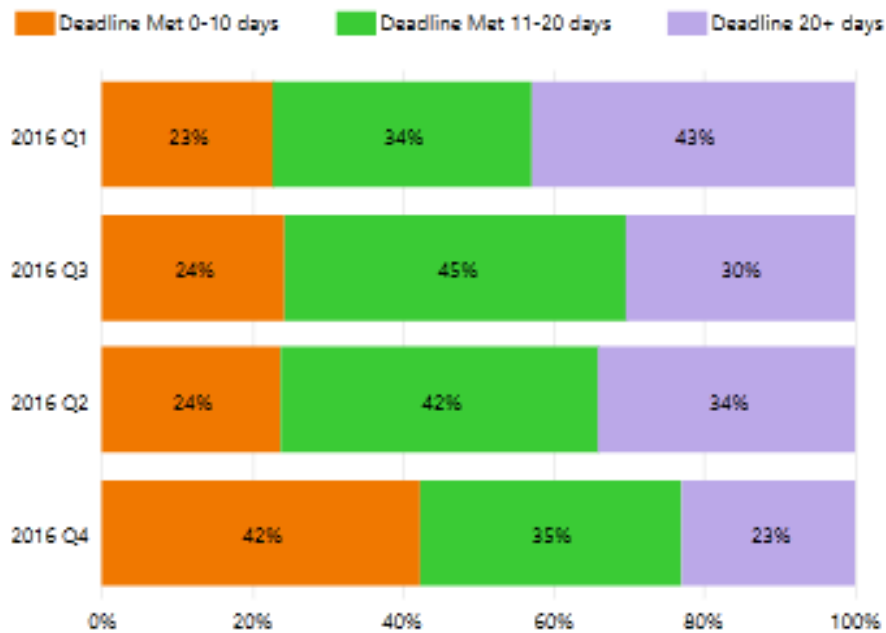
The graph below provides a quarterly snapshot of the success rate in meeting statutory timescales in the Adult’s directorate. Further analysis appears in **Appendix 2 (Page 15)**



Clearly there is a need to improve the successful delivery of timely responses in 2017-18 and we will be working with managers to achieve this

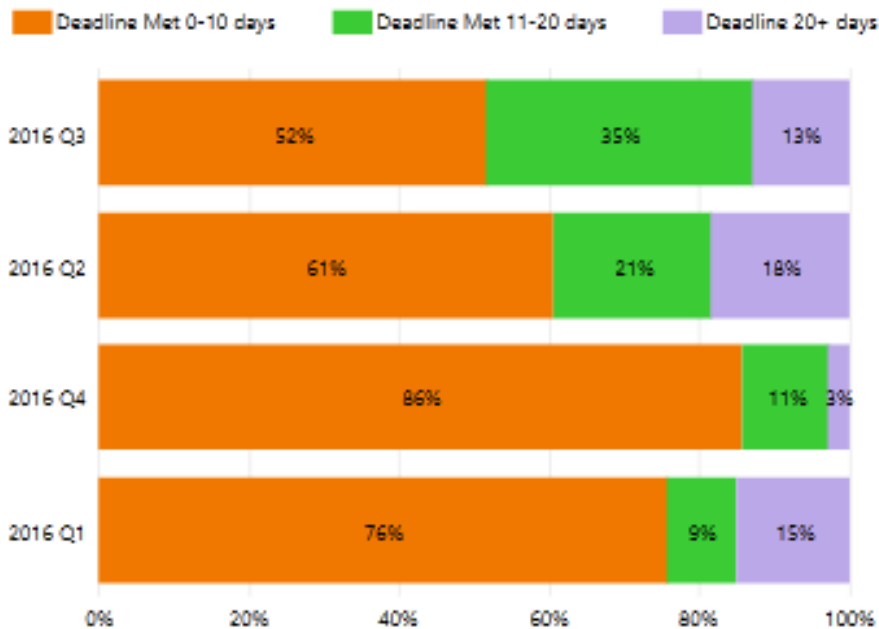
5c Children's Timescales

The graph below provides a quarterly snapshot of the success rate in meeting statutory timescales in the Children's directorate. Further analysis appears in **Appendix 3 (Page 16)**



5c Environment Timescales

The graph below provides a quarterly snapshot of the success rate in meeting statutory timescales in the environment directorate



6- Budget and investigation costs

In 2016-17 the total sum paid for independent investigations was £21,000 usually Children’s Social Care complaints with just £530 relating to a Corporate case. This compares to £22,950 in 2015-16.

7 – Complaints Advice Service

The Complaints Advice Service is for schools and academies who wish to purchase access to the model complaints policies, as well as the support, advice and training offered by the County Council through our Children’s Services complaints team. In total 27 schools purchased the core package. This service was also made available to academies in 2014-15.

Academies: Complaints core package £920.00

Schools: Complaints Core Package: £19,500

Totalling: £20,430

This is an area that the council is keen to explore further and we are looking to develop the traded service by introducing a mediation package. This will be dependent on the Complaints Team being fully trained in this area. Early indications are that such a service offer will be a benefit to external customers in attracting further buy-in.

8 – Report Requirements

Complaints about children's and adult social care services are considered under legal processes namely Children's Act 1989 representations procedure (England) 2006 and The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009. We have legal responsibilities to report on these procedures to staff, committee, the regulator, i.e OFSTED and CQC (Care Quality Commission). All other complaints are considered by the council's own complaints procedure.

These appendices include the information we need to make available about the operation of these procedures and to demonstrate learning from complaints closer working with relevant bodies including the NHS for example

9 - Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO operates a ‘council first’ policy and will in most cases expect a case to have been considered through the council’s procedures first, prior to any investigation by the LGO itself. Complaints considered by the LGO are therefore not in addition to, but are a further consideration of complaints already investigated locally. The Local Government Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2017 can be found at Appendix 2. The letter provides a summary of statistics on complaints made for the year ended 31 March 2017.

In 2016-17 the LGO made a decision on 26 complaints. Only 4 were upheld as detailed as follows:

LGO Actions	2016-17
Referred back for local resolution	5
Upheld	4
Not Upheld	6
Closed after initial enquiries	11

9a - LGO - Adult and Community Services – 2 Upheld

During 2016-17, out of the 20 complaints for Adult and Community Services that were decided on by the LGO, maladministration was identified in 4 complaints (details available in section 14)

9b - LGO - Children's Services – 2 Upheld

Out of the 8 complaints that were decided on by the LGO maladministration was identified in 2 complaints. (details available in section 14):

10 - Learning & Improvements

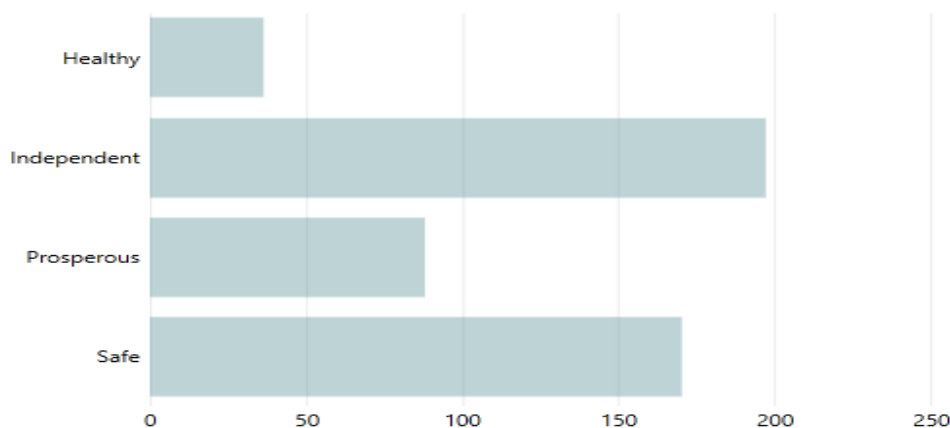
When taking complaints as a whole, analysis of 2016/17 data shows that the main reasons why people complain are:

- Poor communication
- Dissatisfaction with service provision
- Delay in communicating a response
- Disagreement with assessment of eligibility to service
- Behaviour of social worker
- Contact arrangements
- Delay in service provision

Please see improvements planned for 2017/18 (Section 11)

10b – Corporate Plan – Outcomes Focussed Monitoring of Complaints

It is our hope to provide comparative figures year on year going forward, but this is the first year we have a database that provides statistics on complaints themes and corporate outcomes.



11 - Developments for 2017/18

The Complaints Team are now working closely with services to address the following areas:

- Implementing a new system for recording, monitoring and managing feedback
- Improving timeliness of responses to complaints
- Improving standards of communication in DCC by informing service managers of issues in their teams
- Supporting front line managers to deal effectively with first stage complaints
- Intention for the complaints team to undergo mediation training to support early stage conflict resolution
- Building an infrastructure to ensure learning from complaints is captured and acted upon. This will include gathering feedback from complainants after closure on their experience of the process and how it was handled. In addition, dashboards will be available to managers so they can analyse their service area's complaints
- The Senior Assurance Manager is actually working with leadership teams to highlight areas of concern to enable them to identify and implement required improvements. This is particularly the case in highlighting and discussing recurrent themes and identifying solutions to avoid continuing issues.

Single stage process

In order to drive efficiencies and a more focussed approach to complaints, the council will be implementing a single stage process from 1 July 2017. This procedure allows 20 working days for a response from the operational manager and will be the council's final position on a complaint. The next step, if we are unable to anything differently for the complainant, would be referral to the LGO. This doesn't relate to children's social care complaints, who by stature, require a 3 stage process.

Database developments

Dashboards will be available to operational managers outlining numbers, themes and compliance to timescales. In addition, we will be looking at building in automated workflow to reduce the administrative burden on the team to free up time to support managers in the investigation and resolution of complaints.

Training

In October and November, we will be offering training to managers which will focus on effective handling of complaints at an early stage to prevent escalation wherever possible and to highlight the importance of learning from complaints so we have lessons to share across the directorates and organisation.

We will also be exploring mediation training for the complaints team to enable us to focus on complaints resolution within DCC. We will also be able to use this expertise to enhance the traded service to schools by offering mediation services which should increase revenue for the team Member champion As recommended in the complaints review report, we are looking for an Elected Member to champion the complaints function in the County Council. Their remit will be to explore members' roles in council complaints and how they can support the process.

12 - Equalities and complaints monitoring

We are required to collect information about complainants for our legal social care processes. We are currently working with IT to streamline arrangements and data will be available in next year's annual report to provide information on complainants and how their experiences of the complaints processes. This information will be useful for service directorates on issues with service provision for minority groups and also enable the complaints team to make improvements to the procedure in the light of customer feedback.

13 - Conclusions

Overall, the numbers of informal and formal complaints are increasing year on year. We are confident that we have a team that is able to manage, and advise operational managers in the effective handling of issues, resolving them wherever possible. From the representations we already manage, it is clear that matters are resolved before they become formal complaints. We hope to build on technological improvements and training to empower our staff to deliver and improve our services in Dorset County Council and to resolve issues as they arise with optimum outcomes for service users with lessons learned to inform service delivery.

Appendix 1- Glossary

What is a Complaint?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with the actions or inactions of the Council or staff which is not resolved immediately. The process begins when a complaint is received by the local authority, in accordance with policies already laid down, (and shared with the NHS in the Adult Directorate)

Children's social care complaints are considered under the Children Care Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006, and is a 3 stage process.

Stage 1 is to seek local resolution within 10 working days - Where a complainant is not satisfied with the Stage 1 response, the customer can request a;

Stage 2 where the complaint is investigated by an independent officer from a different service area or external to the authority and an independent person to the council. In Dorset we use external people to carry out the roles of investigator.

Stage 3 A panel hearing, to include the Chief Executive is convened to review the process and outcome reached. This applies to Children's social care only

The council's own procedure is currently a 2 stage process. Stage 1 as above, Stage 2: the Chief Executive determines whether an investigation is required. Complaints are managed and an appropriate investigation is undertaken. Adults Services complaints is already a one stage process.

If the customer remains unhappy with the outcome of their complaint they may escalate their complaint to, the Local Government Ombudsman (who is independent of the County Council) who will consider their complaint and decide whether to investigate.

MP Representations

MP and member representations are received on behalf of constituents. These are cases that are not considered under the formal complaints process but require a response or more importantly, can be resolved and closed quickly

Timescales

Adult social care complaints – No prescribed timescales as complaints are assessed on levels of seriousness. Usually complaints are responded to within 20 working days.

Children's social care complaints:

Stage 1: 10 Working days- extended to a maximum of 20 working days

Stage 2: 25-65 working days

Stage 3: Panel must be held within 30 days of the request. Report and minutes circulated within 5 days of the meeting. Adjudication sent 15 days after report circulation.

Whole Authority Complaints:

Stage 1: 10 working days with extension of 10 further working days

Stage 2: 28 working days from appointment of investigation

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

The LGO is the final stage for complaints about councils. DCC has a link officer complaints team who coordinate communication and information requests and investigations. The LGO can decide after making initial enquiries to either close after enquiries, or it investigate. After investigation it can:

- Uphold and agree actions, (including service improvements), and recommend financial redress.
- Not uphold

Maladministration – Something the council has done wrong or not done at all, that has adversely affected a member of the public. If the LGO finds maladministration it will seek to remedy the situation by use of redress for the individual(s) concerned.

Public Interest Report – Where complaints are upheld the LGO can publish a detailed report requiring the organisation involved to make a public announcement and the LGO will promote in the media. Further information available on www.lgo.org.uk

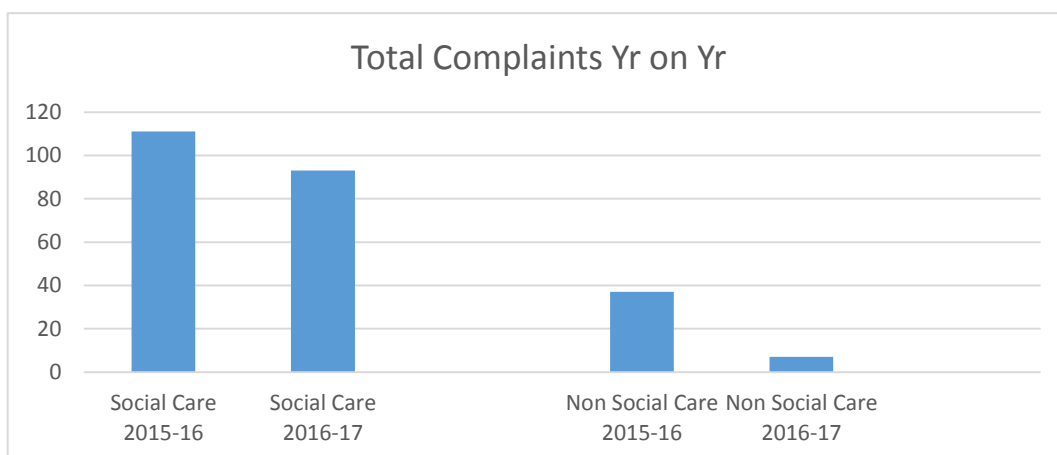
Annual Letter

The LGO produces an annual letter which is sent to councils every July. This letter includes a summary of complaints about DCC for 2016-17. A copy will be added to the background documents online once received.

Appendix 2 - Adult & Community Services – Executive Summary

The aim of the complaints process for adult social/non-social care is to seek local resolution usually within 20 working days.

During 2016-17 the Adult and Community Services Directorate received **100** complaints, with **93** relating to Adult social care, and **7** for non social care matters, (for services such as trading standards, libraries etc). This compares to 148 complaints received in 2015-16, with 111 relating to Adult Social Care and 37 relating to non social care matters.



In 2016-17 there were 17 fully justified complaints, 32 partly justified, 50 not justified, 1 complaint where justification was not set. Therefore 17% of complaints received by Adult and Community Services were justified which is a reduction from 48% in 2015-16.

The areas of concern for Adult Social Care in 2016-17 remain service provision 48% of the total volume of complaints. This includes assessment queries, staff attitude and behaviour, placement and disagreements with decisions. This is in-keeping with the findings in 2015-16

24% of Adult Social Care complaints refer to financial issues, disagreements with decisions and delays. The table below identifies the number and themes of complaints recorded within the complaints procedure for adults during the year, with comparative figures for the previous year.

Appendix 2b – Learning from Complaints – Adult’s Directorate

We learn from complaints by classifying in 5 general categories: Finance, Data, Service Provision, Policy and Communication:

Adult Social Care– Themes				
	2016-17	%	2015-16	%
Finance	24	25	10	10
Data	1	1	0	0
Service Provision	48	51	71	63
Policy	10	11	23	21
Communication	11	12	7	6
Total	93	100	111	100

Please see improvements planned for 2017/18 (Section 11)

The table below identifies the number and themes of complaints recorded for Community Services during the year, with comparative figures for the previous year. Some financial matters appear to have been included in Non Social Care 2015-16 in error, distorting the year on year analysis.

Adult Non Social Care– Themes				
	2016-17	%	2015-16	%
Finance	See SC		17	46
Data	1	14	0	0
Service Provision	4	57	20	54
Policy	2	29	0	0
Communication	0	0	0	0
Total	7	100	37	100

Please see improvements planned for 2017/18 (Section 11)

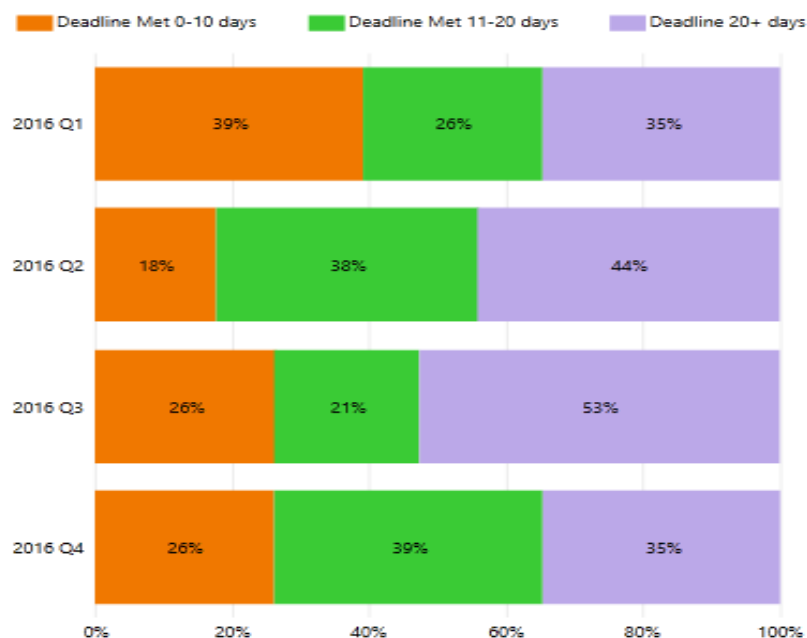
Of the 100 formal complaints received regarding the Adult Directorate, 17 were Fully Justified, representing 17% of the total received. An additional 35 cases were investigated and resolved informally.

Appendix 2c Timescales

The table below demonstrates that there has been difficulties in meeting deadlines in 2016-17. This is perhaps of particular concern in quarter’s 2 & 3 where 44% & 53% of cases respectively were overdue, based on 20 working days. We are working with managers in an effort to improve this performance.

Timescales per quarter

This graph demonstrates the percentage of formal complaint that were met within timescales, and those that were overdue – recorded by quarter. You will note the overdue figure is very high, especially in comparison to the representations chart. This is probably due to demands on resources across the directorates, and the complexities of the formal complaints, as opposed to the early resolution that is sometimes available with informal matters.



Appendix 3 - Children's Service Directorate - Executive summary

The tables below provide the figures for complaints recorded during the period. The figures for social care relate to complaints recorded within the statutory social services procedure unless otherwise stated. All complaints for other services are recorded within the Whole Authority (WA) Procedure. Further details relating to complaints from each service will be reported separately.

Formal Complaints – Year on year comparison

		2016-17	2015-16
Social Care - Family Support Services	Stage 1	112	72
WA Complaints Procedure	Stage 1	46	16
Schools		28	11
Representations – Social Care		28	1
Representations – Whole Authority		20	0
Stage 2 – independent investigation (social care)		4	12
Stage 2 – Independent investigation (non social care)		18	5
Stage 3 – review panel		1	3

Justification

Managers investigating and responding to complaints are required to complete a record of each complaint they investigate and included within this record is their judgement about whether the complaint is justified. Each situation will be unique and there will be mitigating factors to bear in mind. Managers have therefore been asked to identify four possible levels of justification as follows:

- Fully justified
- Mostly justified
- Partly justified
- Not justified

	Social Care		Whole Authority	
	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16
Fully	19	8	12	2
Mostly	0	2	0	2
Partly	52	25	15	6
Not	37	35	16	5
No further action*	0	2	1	1
Not complete	4	0	2	0
TOTAL	112	72	46	16

**includes cases that have started the stage 1 process, but have not completed it.*

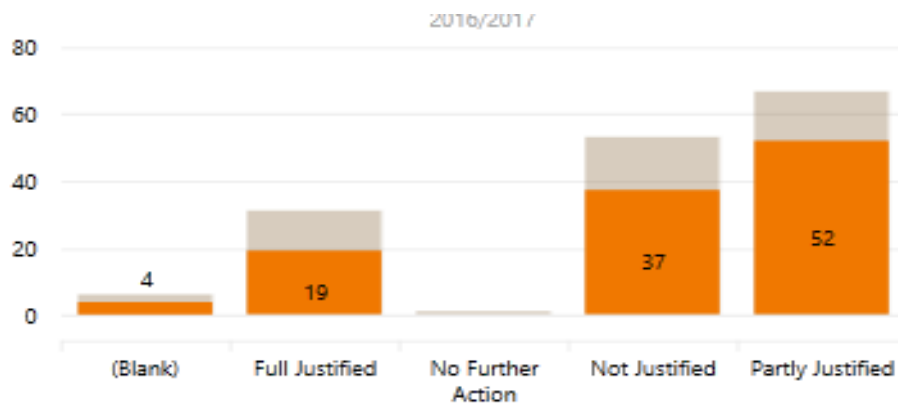
Appendix 3c - Justifications - Social Care

This graph demonstrates:

19 Fully Justified cases of the 112 – representing 17%

37 Not Justified – representing 33%

52 partially Justified – representing 46%



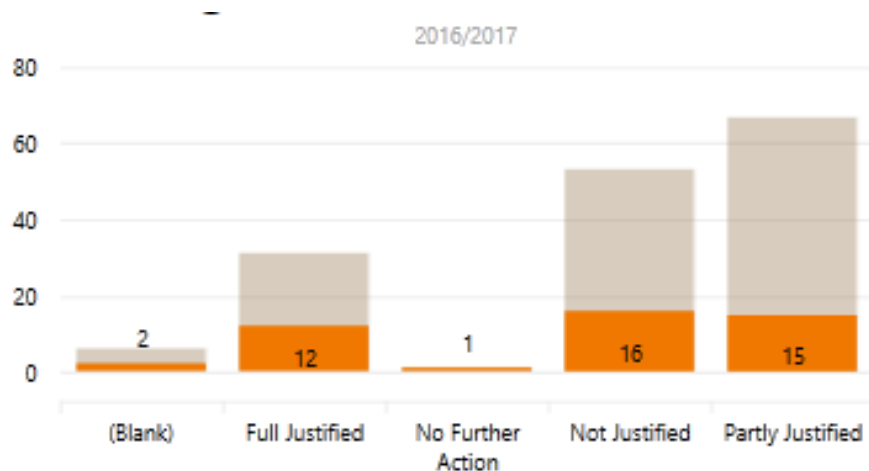
Appendix 3d - Justifications - Non Social Care

This graph demonstrates:

12 Fully Justified cases of the 46 – representing 26%

16 Not Justified – representing 35%

15 partially Justified – representing 33%

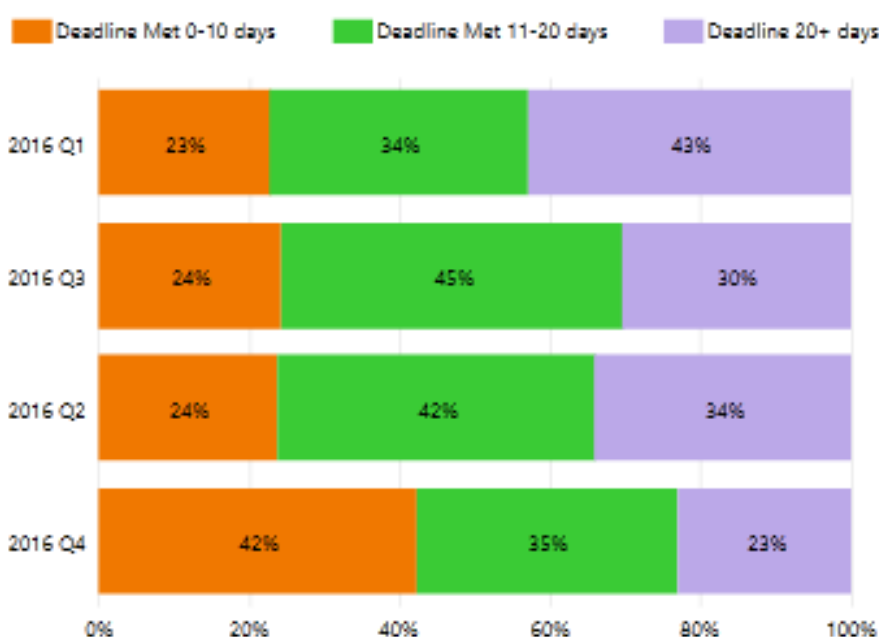


Appendix 3e - Timescales

This table shows the number and percentage of complaints meeting, or exceeding statutory timescales

Children's Services Complaints	Timescales			
	Social Care		Whole Authority	
	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17	2015-16
Within 10 working days	29 (26%)	23 (32%)	10 (22%)	4 (25%)
11 – 15 working days	39 (35%)	10 (14%)	16 (35%)	2 (13%)
16 – 20 working days	0	16 (22%)	0	3 (19%)
More than 20 working days	44 (39%)	21 (29%)	20 (43%)	6 (38%)
Withdrawn/no further action/incomplete	0	2 (3%)	0	1 (5%)
TOTAL	112	72	46	16

The graph below shows the statutory timescales for 2016-17 by quarter and there is some room for improvement in 2017-18. We hope that additional support from the complaints team will assist in ensuring timely responses



Appendix 3f - Stage 3 panels

There was only 1 Stage 3 panel held this year for Children's Social Care, relating to alleged service failings and poor communication.

Appendix 3g - Children in Care

Of the 112 Stage 1 complaints 17 were concerns raised by children in care via their advocate.

This represents 15% of children's social care complaints. The Complaints Team work closely with advocates, (such as Action for Children) to ensure the swiftest possible outcome and that the child's voice is heard. The themes for children in care complaints are as follows:

Service Provision	10
Communication	5
Policy/ Procedure	3

Most service provision concerns related to perceived levels of support from social workers & delays in providing a service.

Appendix 3h - LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS - Children's Directorate

Themes

The table below identifies the issues raised from the complaints received regarding Children's Social Care.

Themes	2016-17	2015-16
Communication	22	16
Data	7	6
Finance	1	0
Policy/Procedure	9	17
Service Provision	73	34
TOTAL	112	72

Please see improvements planned for 2017/18 (Section 11)

The table below identifies the number and categories of complaints recorded within the WA complaints procedure for Children's non social care services, during the year, with comparative figures for the previous year.

Themes	2016-17	2015-16
Communication	11	1
Data	1	2
Finance	1	1
Policy/Procedure	5	3
Service Provision	28	9
TOTAL	46	16

Appendix 4 - LGO Maladministration Case Details

(LGO Ref: 16008618) Adult

This case was in relation to the care of a parent and the poor handling of her case which led to their care home requesting they be moved. DCC did not ensure continuity of care, which is required by government guidelines when transferring them to another area and have repeatedly failed to respond to request regarding their care and finances.

What was the outcome?

There is fault, causing injustice in the way the Council dealt with Mr X's concerns about his mother's care. This caused him avoidable distress and inconvenience. This complaint is upheld.

There is fault, causing injustice in the way the Council delayed in completing Mrs Y's FA. This caused Mr X avoidable distress and inconvenience. This complaint is upheld.

There is fault in the Council's failure to have proper communications between its teams. This complaint is upheld.

There is fault in the Council's failure to ensure it meets the requirements in The Care Act and the Care and Support Statutory Guidance when placing service users 'out of area'. This complaint is upheld.

There is fault in the Council's failure to ensure it completes FAs in a proper timeframe. This complaint is upheld.

There is fault in the Council's failure to ensure service users, or their representatives, are properly told about benefit rights. This complaint is upheld.

(LGO Ref: 16004736) Adult

The Council (i)failed to act on the best interests decision to move complainants adult son closer to is family, (ii)failed to involve them in discussions about the suitability of accommodation before rejecting them, (iii)failed to act on inadequate care provided by his current accommodation provider and (iv)held a review without them, despite the fact complainant being is her son's representative.

What was the outcome?

LGO have completed investigation and found fault by the Council in part of the complaint which caused an injustice to complainant. They are satisfied the action the Council will take is satisfactory remedy for the injustice caused.

(LGO Ref: 16002699) Children

Mrs C complains that The Council has taken too long to assess and finalise an Education, Health and Care plan for Ms B's son. This impacted on planning for his post-16 education and caused him and his mother distress and uncertainty. The Council has taken steps to improve its service. It has agreed to finalise the Plan and make payments to Ms B and her son.

What was the outcome?

The Council had taken too long to assess and finalise an Education, Health and Care plan for Ms B's son. It has agreed to pay Ms B £200 and her son £300 in recognition of the distress, frustration and uncertainty its shortcomings caused them.

(LGO Ref: 16004809) Children

Mrs N, wanted to apply for a school place for her son C under the category of 'exceptional medical and social needs', which is the second oversubscription criterion. This means that if there were more applicants than places at the school, C would be very likely to get a place. Although she provided information from appropriately qualified medical practitioners, the Council did not accept the information met the requirements given for C's entry into that category. It refused C a place on the grounds of his distance from the school. The Council then asked Mrs N to go to appeal.

What was the outcome?

The Council should apologise to Mrs N for the fault identified in this statement and arrange a fresh appeal with a new clerk and panel as soon as possible. The Council should ensure the school is listed as being subject to an infant class size appeal for the future. There was evidence of fault by the school admission appeal panel. A remedy has been agreed.