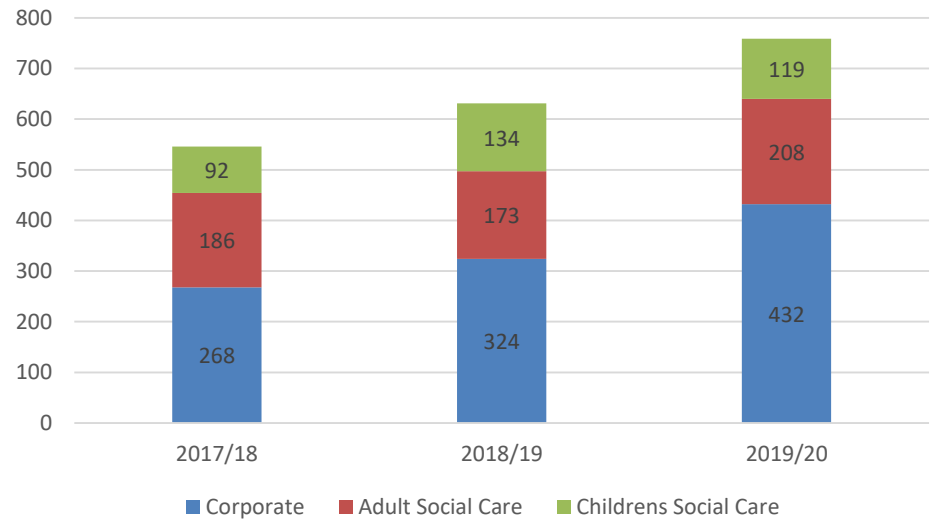


Scrutiny Commission  
02 September 2020  
Complaints Update

# All Stage 1 Complaints – Headline Statistics

- 39% increase over last 3 years  
Total of 759 complaints across all types
- Some success in reducing Childrens Social Care complaints following fresh guidance from the Ombudsman in 2019. Doesn't reduce volume but helps control costs

Last 3 years overall number of complaints



- 83% of all complaints resolved at Stage 1 were resolved within 20 working days (9% improvement from 2018-19)
- 9 complaints over 65 working days (1.3%)
- Both Adults and Corporate Complaints have also seen a “Review” step added this year

Number of Days to Respond

	<=10	11-20	21-40	41-65	66 or mo..
A&C	44%	36%	15%	3%	2%
CEX	100%				
CFS	39%	34%	22%	4%	1%
CR	79%	11%	11%		
E&T	71%	19%	8%	1%	1%
Not Set					
PH					
<b>Total</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>1%</b>

## 38 Final Decisions (up from 26 in 2018/19)

- 16 findings of maladministration (up from 8 in 2018/19)
- £28,000 Financial settlements recommended by the Ombudsman. Significant increase from £1.1k in 2018/19
  - £21.5k Education
  - £4k Adult Social Care
  - £2.5k Childrens Social Care
- 10.5k local pro-active payments made
- 1 Public Report issued on Free Nursery Hours – first time for 5 years – though currently being challenged.

## Non Statutory Complaints – Most common themes

- **Special Educational Needs & Disability** **58 complaints**  
Uphold rates of 57% (33 cases)
- **School, SEN and Adult Social Care Transport** **48 complaints**  
Uphold rate of 40% (19 cases)
- **Highway and Footpath Maintenance** **38 complaints**  
Uphold rates of 50% (19 cases)
- **Environmental Services** **36 complaints**  
Uphold rates of 35% (13 cases)

## Other Complaints Reports and Scrutiny

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- 3 Separate annual reports are produced each year.
- Both Adults and Childrens social care have statutory duties to produce an annual complaints report.
- Each of the above are presented to the respective Overview and Scrutiny Committees each year prior to publication.
- This year, the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also receive a report focused on complaints in that area.
- Finally, a report is taken annually to Corporate Governance Committee which focuses on the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual review letter and governance arrangements for complaints.

# SEN Complaints – Principal Issues

Repeated themes included

- Poor Communication
- Quality of EHCP plans
- Fulfilment of Annual Reviews in all instances

There has been significant resource added to this area which is starting to translate into fewer complaints. This is however unlikely to lead to a significant reduction in 2020/21 as older cases are responded to.

There have also been a number of financial settlements with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman this year principally relating to gaps in education provision.

There are wider linkages to other areas within CFS (Inclusion Services, Admissions) and work has been carried out to improve how these teams collaborate

## Transport and Travel Services – Principal Issues

- The bulk of the complaints were around delay in sourcing and commissioning SEN Transport in time for the start of the Autumn term
- This was the result of a pause to the usual planning whilst outcome of a Judicial Review.
- Although there has since been clarity on this policy issue, there are likely to be different challenges this year with CO-VID 19 requirements around transport

# Highway and Footway Maintenance – Principal Issues

- Difficult to spot any clear trends in this category.
- Themes recorded as follows

DELAY	13
DECISION MAKING	10
QUALITY OF WORK	8
CUSTOMER CARE	6
COMMUNICATION	1

Repeat areas of delay are low category road repairs and other maintenance.

The issue here is being able to commit to dates and manage expectations. Recent re-prioritisation of resources linked to CO-VID 19 continue to impact on this.



## Environmental Services Complaints

- This is quite a broad category and not one that is considered to be an area of significant weakness.
- Complaints in this area range from Grass Cutting to Drainage in roughly an equal split.
- The biggest complaint is delay in attending to less urgent reports. This can also be quite difficult to manage customer expectations where we cannot provide any certainty of timescales
- Grass cutting complaints are always likely to be generated but what is emerging is a more equal split between those complaining of inadequate cuts and those seeking a reduction particularly in the rural areas.

## **Service Improvements – Examples of Process Change**

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- **Establishment of new Post Adoption support unit to reduce delays in families accessing Adoption Support Fund**
- **New controls to ensure senior management of cases where LA is aware child not in education.**
- **Changes to triaging of Childrens Social Care complaints and improved escalation pathways**
- **Increased capacity of case officers within SEN team and improved workflow system**
- **Improved information and advice around Dropped Kerbs**
- **New joint complaints handling for OT and Lightbulb**

## Impact of CO-VID 19

- Since April worth highlighting the principal impact of CO-VID on Complaints
- The biggest area of increase has been around Waste Management. A significant amount of complaints and enquiries continue to be received about the suspension and gradual re-opening of Waste sites
- In addition to the above “policy” complaints, there have been issues with the customer experience in using the booking system. These are good examples of where we record as “fix and solve” informal resolution through the Customer Service Centre
- Most recently, Local Lockdown has generated a significant amount of complaints and comments. These are difficult to resolve as not entirely within the Council’s remit.
- The Social distancing and shielding requirements also impact significantly on many areas of work such as Forestry

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