

<b>DECISION-MAKER:</b>	<b>GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL COMPLAINTS REVIEW 2018/2019		
<b>DATE OF DECISION:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> November 2019		
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>SERVICE DIRECTOR; LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE</b>		
<b><u>CONTACT DETAILS</u></b>			
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<b>STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY</b>			
N/A			

### **BRIEF SUMMARY**

This report summarises the type and number of complaints received from the 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2019 together with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman annual review for the same period. Overall complaints registered with the council have decreased by 13%.

Corporate complaints	22.7% decrease
Adult Services complaints	14.7% increase
Children and Families complaints	4.3% decrease

The Complaints Resolution Team (CRT), based in Legal and Governance, administers complaints independently from all areas within the Council (stage 2) that the service area has been unable to resolve at initial point of contact (Stage 1), alongside and responsible to the Service Lead: Legal Services Partnership who acts as the Council's single point of contact for Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO) complaints.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

	<b>(i)</b>	That the report be noted and to offer any feedback on governance or performance relating to the complaints function to inform future service delivery.
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### **REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1.	To update members of this Committee on performance trends and any learning points arising out of complaints made by the public via the Council's complaints procedures during 2018/2019. Identifying these issues assists the Council in understanding where things have "gone wrong" in the past year in order to improve service delivery.  This report is presented to Governance Committee for information and feedback purposes.
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<b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED</b>						
2.	N/A. The LGSCO requires the Council to report and consider complaints trends and outcomes annually with members and senior management.					
<b>DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)</b>						
3.	The effective and responsive management of complaints is a vital part of the Council's overall approach to customer care. In addition, the customer feedback, that valid complaints provide, can be used to improve service delivery, facilitate council wide learning and demonstrate continuous improvement.					
4.	At the conclusion of a complaints investigation, the complainant is advised that if they are not satisfied with the outcome, they may pursue their complaint to the LGSCO or the HO. This provides the customer with an entirely independent source of redress if they remain aggrieved. The Council works closely with the LGSCO or HO to resolve outstanding complaints where appropriate.					
<b>Corporate Complaints (1 April 2017 and 31 March 2018)</b>						
5.	From 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 the council recorded 201 corporate complaints. This represents a 22% decrease on the 260 complaints recorded in 2018/19. 49 Complaints (24%) required investigation at stage two of the process, compared to 45 (17%) in 2017/18.					
6.	Continuing with an "immediate service recovery" ethos adopted three years ago, customer facing areas have been able to decrease the number of complaints recorded by taking immediate effective action on receipt of an issue from a member of the public. Where immediate action is not possible or the issue is identified as a continuing failure within the service area, matters are recorded as complaints and enter the complaints procedure and therefore recorded as such. By adopting this approach, members of the public are receiving an immediate resolution to the issue, which is generally what is required.					
7.	<b>TABLE 1</b>					
	<b>Rank of 5 Areas with the highest proportion of complaints</b>					
	<b>2018/2019</b>		<b>2017/2018</b>		<b>2016/2017</b>	
	Housing Services	90 (44.7%)	Housing Services	111 (42.7%)	Housing Services	35%
	Capita delivered	80 (39.8%)	Capita delivered	54 (20.8%)	Libraries	21%
	Planning (incl. enforcement)	15 (7.5%)	City Services (Parks and open Spaces)	34 (13%)	Capita delivered	18.5%
	Infrastructure (Transport)	8 (4%)	Highways	5 (2%)	City Services (waste management)	12.5%
	Legal and Governance	3 (1.5%)	Libraries	2 (0.8%)	Planning	5.9%

It is not unusual for the largest service area involved in direct delivery (usually housing) to feature high in the percentage of complaints received due to the sheer number of customers they interact with. This is broadly comparable to the picture nationally and as is noted in the LGSCO Annual Letters to all councils.

Waste Services, Highways Partnership, Parking Services nor certain areas of Housing recorded any stage one complaints on the Lagan system in 2018/19. Either the Service areas are resolving matters within 48 hours as business as usual requests under their service record systems or they are failing to record complaints. This is a matter for the relevant service area Director to follow up following receipt of this report in order to determine the assurance levels for these services.

Complaints are recorded into one of a number of categories. The table below indicates the percentage of complaints within each category and compares this with figures for the previous two years.

**TABLE 2**

Category	2018/2019	2017/2018	2015/2016
Discrimination	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%
Misinformation	3.6%	3.5%	4.2%
Charges	5.5%	1.9%	6.2%
Speed	1.5%	4.2%	3.3%
Behaviour	11.9%	11.9%	16.3%
Performance	63.9%	56.9%	53.2%
Avoidable Contact	0	1.9%	0.2%
Disagree with Decision	11.4%	10.3%	7.6%

Complaints which cover more than one category are not included (therefore, total not 100%)

8.

Table 3 below provides a breakdown of this Council's performance in relation to complaints compared to statistical neighbours (as used for formal audit purposes). This helps the Council compare like for like in terms of type of authority, geographical area within the country and broadly similar population sizes and make-up. The Corporate Complaints policy is not a statutory requirement. The systems and processes that individual councils have in place are based on LGSCO/HO guidance and are tailored to individual council structures. Comparison is therefore difficult.

**TABLE 3**

Authority	Corporate Complaints	Corporate Complaints	Corporate Complaints	Population
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		received 2018/2019	received 2017/2018	received 2016/2017		
	Southampton	201	260	312	249,500	
	Portsmouth	531	494	489	207,100	
	Brighton	1628	1431	1500	277,500	
	Plymouth	6869	5340	2169	258,808	
	<p>Table 4 below shows the number of complaints responded to at each stage of the procedure. Those complaints that cannot be responded to within the target period are frequently those that are more complex, and can involve investigating actions across more than one service area. Where this situation occurs the complainant will be contacted and a revised completion date agreed.</p>					
	<b>TABLE 4</b>					
	<b>Overall Performance Report - 1/04/2016 to 31/03/2019</b>					
	<b>Response within 20 days</b>					
		<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>		
	Stage 1	<b>50%</b>	79%	78%		
	Stage 2	<b>100%</b>	93%	98%		
	<b>Children and Families (Social Care) complaints 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019</b>					
9.	<p>Children and Families complaints are classified according to the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social care complaints are those investigated under the Children and Families Social Care Complaints Policy (which reflects statutory regulations);</li> <li>▪ All other Children and Families complaints are investigated using the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy (mainly Education and some Early Years areas);</li> </ul>					
10.	<p>The Council recorded 66 complaints regarding Children and Families. This represents a 4.3% decrease on the 69 received in 2017/2018 and reflects a continued body of work undertaken by Children and Families working through a single point of contact (SPOC) complaints officer to improve front line and service manager's ability to resolve matters earlier, at point of initial contact.</p>					
11.	<p>The majority of those going on to be registered as complaints continue to be resolved at the first stage of the procedure through work by managers and staff in the service supported by advice and guidance from the CRT as required. Where resolution is not possible at stage 1 (statutory), the Council's Complaints Resolution Manager A) commissions an Independent Investigator (external to the Council who is responsible for investigating the complaint) or B) allocates the investigation to a member of the CRT under the guidance of the Complaints Resolution Manager and C) an Independent Person (whose role is to oversee the investigation to ensure fairness and that the children involved in the process are represented), to look into complaints at Stage 2 of the procedure.</p>					
12.	<p>20 (30%) complaints required investigation at stage two of the process, compared to 11 (16%) in 2017/2018.</p>					
13.	<b>TABLE 5</b>					
	<b>Investigation of complaints</b>					

	Year	No of Stage 1 complaints	Percentage (number progressing to Stage 2)
	2018/2019	66	30% (20)
	2017/2018	69	16% (11)
	2016/2017	84	9.5 % (8)
14.	<p>If the complainant still remains dissatisfied after Stage 2 completion they can request a Stage 3 Independent Review Panel or, if both the Local Authority and the complainant believe the dissatisfaction that remains is not resolvable at a stage three panel, the matter can be referred directly to the LGSCO.</p> <p>There have been no Stage Three panels held in the last three years.</p>		
15.	<p>Table 6 shows a comparison in the total number of contacts (complaints, representations, comments and compliments) received over the last three years. This is unlikely to be a true reflection of the number of compliments received by staff but recording is historically an issue. All staff are encouraged to send copies of compliments they receive to the Children and Families SPOC in order that they can be recorded and reported to the Service Director so that good service can be recognised. Professional to professional compliments are not recorded, in line with professional to professional complaints non recording under the complaints policy For example where a Head Teacher complains regarding a persistent delay in providing documents for a meeting for example, the matter will be referred directly to the Service Director of the area concerned. It will not be recorded as a complaint</p>		
<b>TABLE 6</b>			
	<b>2018/2019</b>	<b>2017/2018</b>	<b>2016/2017</b>
<b>Record Type</b>			
Complaints	66	69	99
Comments	0	0	0
Referrals	0	0	0
Compliments	0	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>102</b>
16.	<p>Table 7 provides a breakdown of complaints by complaint issue and type. As most complaints relate to more than one issue, this approach to breaking them down allows us to maximise our learning from them. The majority of complaints relate to either service provision, individual staff or poor communication. The high staff turnover in this service area may be a contributing factor.</p>		
<b>TABLE 7</b>			
<b>Complaint Reason / Issue</b>		<b>2018/2019</b>	
Discrimination		1.5%	
Misinformation		7.7%	
Charges		1.5%	
Speed		1.5%	
Behaviour		3%	
Performance		80%	
Avoidable contact		0	

	Disagree with decision	4.5%		
17.	Table 8 shows an overall decrease in compliant response rates (within policy timescales) to complaints in Children and Families in 2018/2019.			
<b>TABLE 8</b>				
<b>Overall performance report - 1/04/2016 to 31/03/2019 Response within(&lt; 10/20 days as appropriate)</b>				
	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	
Stage 1	56%	37.5%	55.2%	
Stage 2	80%	76.5%	86.7%	
<b>Complaint outcomes 2018/2019</b>				
	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Stopped / Withdrawn</b>
Stage 1	22 (33%)	15 (23%)	24 (36%)	5 (8%)
Stage 2	4 (20%)	1 (5%)	13 (65%)	2 (10%)
18.	<b>Adults Services (Social Care) complaints 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019</b>			
	Adult Care complaints are dealt with under the standard complaint procedure. The Council recorded 75 complaints regarding Adult Social Care. This represents a 14.7% increase on the 64 complaints received in 2017/2018. 9 complaints (14 %) required investigation at stage two of the process, compared to 9 (14%) in 2017/2018.			
<b>TABLE 9</b>				
<b>Investigation of complaints (Stage 2)</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>No complaints</b>	<b>No progressing to stage 2</b>	<b>Percentage progressing to stage 2</b>	
2018/2019	75	9	12%	
2017/2018	64	9	14%	
2016/2017	59	8	13.5%	
19.	Table 10 provides a breakdown of complaints by complaint issue and highlights some of the major themes contained with the complaints received. The issues raised can be classified in ten specific ways. NB. Some complaints cross over one or more categories which explains why the total number of complaints received differs from the total in the below table.			
<b>TABLE 10</b>				
	<b>Reason / Issue for complaint</b>	<b>2018/2019</b>		

	Discrimination	0			
	Misinformation	0			
	Charges	8.7%			
	Speed	17.4%			
	Behaviour	26%			
	Performance	26%			
	Avoidable contact	0			
	Disagree with decision	17.4%			
20.	<b>Complaint Outcomes 2018/2019</b>				
	<b>TABLE 12</b>				
	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>Partially Upheld</b>	<b>Not Upheld</b>	<b>Stopped / Withdrawn</b>
	Stage 1	27	7	26	15
	Stage 2	1	4	3	1
21.	Under the complaints procedure, the council aims to send complainants a full reply within 20 working days, or if the matter is more complicated, this can be extended and the complainant kept informed of the reasons for delay.				
	<b>TABLE 13</b>				
	<b>Overall performance report – 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019</b>				
	<b>Response within 20 days</b>				
		2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	
	Stage 1	47%	65.3%	50%	
	Stage 2	100%	80%	83%	

	<p><b>CONCLUSIONS</b></p> <p>Overall the total number of complaints recorded by the council in 2018/19 decreased by 13%. It is believed that a more robust and immediate response to complaint issues by members of the public, when they first contact the council, is responsible for the overall decrease in recorded complaints.</p> <p><b>Corporate</b></p> <p>Recorded complaints decreased by 22.76 %</p> <p>Stage 1 response within target time (20 days) has increased to 56% compliance rate.</p> <p>Stage 2 response within target time (20 days) has increased to 100% compliance.</p> <p><b>Children and Families</b></p> <p>Complaints decreased by 4.3%</p> <p>Stage 1 response within target time (10/20 days) has decreased to 50% compliance.</p> <p>Stage 2 response within target time (20 days) has increased to 80% compliance.</p> <p><b>Adults</b></p> <p>Complaints increased by 14.7%</p> <p>Stage 1 response within target time (20 days) has decreased to 47% compliance.</p> <p>Stage 2 response within target time (20 days) has increased to 100% compliance.</p>
22.	<p><b>Learning from complaints</b></p> <p>Whilst many issues are unique to a particular complaint, some highlight deficiencies in policy and process. They also highlight good or poor practice within individual teams or services.</p> <p>In stage two of all complaints processes complaints recording system generates an improvement plan for the investigating officer to complete when the complaint is finalised. This improvement plan is then used to drive change. Implementation is monitored by service managers in the particular service.</p> <p>In all other areas of the Council, the complaints are recorded on the Lagan system. This does not generate an improvement plan and service areas are relied upon to follow through on investigator recommendations.</p>



During 2018/19, all Council policies in relation to complaints have been reviewed and updated where necessary as part of the annual review of the CRT service provision. The updates have attempted to reflect the change in council structure and process (as the transformation project continues) and also reflect findings by the LGSCO and HO in respect of both Southampton related complaints referred to them and also generic National learning as a result of cases from other areas of the country.

Manager / Team Leader training in complaints handling has been completed again in 2018 to update existing Manager / Team leaders and provide guidance for new staff in the area of complaints. E-learning packages are available and scenario based workshops were delivered.

### **Overall feedback and learning**

The most common issue recorded as cause for complaint continues to be communication, especially with individuals but also to a lesser extent, with individual departments. Other than communication and contact issues, there were no identified themes running through any Service within the council as a result of complaints.

### **Adult Social Care**

The majority of complaints within Adult Social Care continue to be regarding withdrawal of some services that were traditionally delivered by ASC and matters surrounding change in the Charging Policy.

### **Housing**

Despite the number of complaints recorded in the Housing area of business, the findings of complaints remain in the area of communications and interpretation of policy in a number of the public's unique complaint circumstances.

Delay and sometimes failure highlighted in a number of complaints are in the area of initial contact and then the subsequent deployment of staff for repair and annual servicing issues

A number of changes to back office process have been implemented and improvements to call handling and subsequent transfer of information and requests processes are now underway following the cessation of the Capita contract.

### **Waste Management**

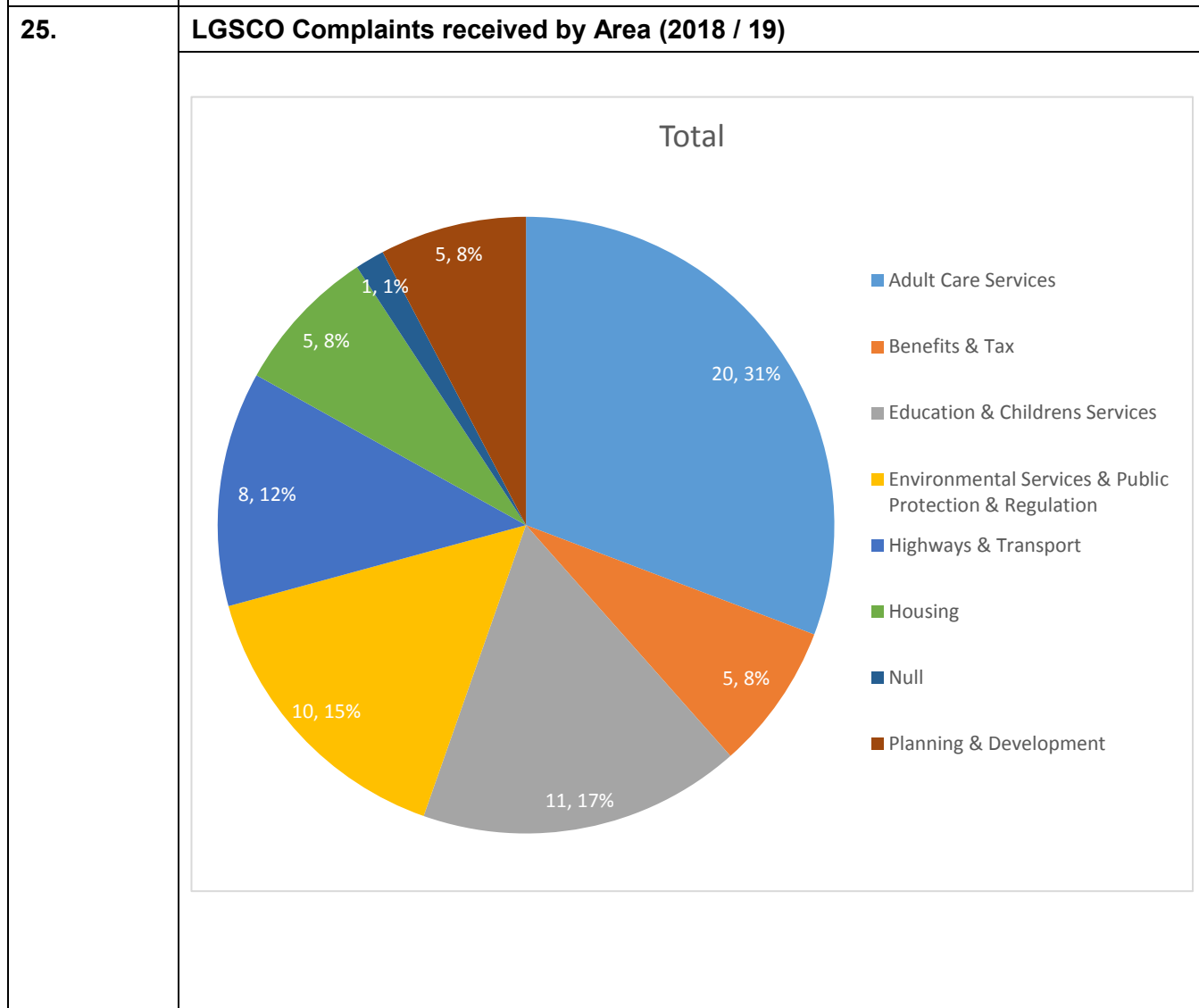
Waste management continue to be proactive in response to issue raised in regards to missed bin collections and fly tipping (where this falls under their remit). Processes are in place to deal with missed bin collections and where matters are correctly notified to the Council missed bins and the like are collected within two working days. As previously advised "missed bins" are not recorded as complaints unless there is a systematic or persistent failure. There are no recorded complaints regarding missed bins.

### **Children and Families**

The number and type of complaints with regard to C and F vary. The theme with complaints is very strongly associated with timeliness and communications.

	Complaint investigation outcomes continue to identify high workload, staff retention and interim agency staff as the catalyst of many C and F complaints. Themes include continuity of key workers in children's lives and issues missed in handover between cases causing delay to process.			
23.	<p><b>Complaint process changes</b></p> <p>A CMT driven project is underway to ensure that the Lagan complaints system is used as the only complaint recording system for all services. This will address the current issue of a number of services using local or no system to record complaints.</p> <p>The project to update the existing Customer Relationship Management ( CRM ) system (extend the MySouthampton account system) continues to be implemented in stages. The segment regarding complain submission and tracking through the MySouthampton account process has commenced in October/November 2019 and although full functionality will not be achieved until all segments of the CRM project are complete, the system is designed for members of the public to raise complaints, automatically register them and be able to track progress as matters are dealt with. This will allow better understanding for the Local Authority of complaints and feedback and will also provide members of the public with information in real time regarding their complaint.</p>			
24.	<p><b>Local Government &amp; Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) complaints</b></p> <p>LGSCO (formerly LGO) complaints, the final 'independent' stage for all complaints processes, are dealt with by the Service Lead: Legal Services Partnership on behalf of the Council. The LGSCO (the Commission for Local Administration in England) provides an independent review of all complaints falling within their jurisdiction. In an effort to simplify outcomes for complainants the LGSCO has in recent years moved from findings of 'Maladministration' and 'Injustice' to a more commonly understood term 'fault'. If 'Fault' is found a complaint is recorded as upheld, even if the Council has already taken steps to remedy that fault and the LGSCO is satisfied with the remedy offered by the Council. All findings are now reported on the LGSCO website within 3 months of the decision being published.</p> <p>Statutory reports still remain the highest 'fault' finding the LGSCO can make. These require the Council's Monitoring Officer to prepare a report for consideration at full Council following a period of statutory publication of the findings. None have been prepared in recent years. Council's that fail to co-operate with the LGSCO or any of their findings may be subject to Judicial Review.</p>			
		<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
	<b>Complaints received</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>60</b>
	<b>Decisions made</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>58</b>
	<b>Statutory reports</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Upheld</b>	<b>12 (70%)</b>	<b>7 (50%)</b>	<b>5 (50%)</b>

	<b>Not upheld</b>	<b>5 (30%)</b>	<b>7(50%)</b>	<b>5 (50%)</b>
	<b>Closed / invalid etc.</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>
	<b>Premature referrals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>30</b>



**26. Details of complaints upheld**

Of the 12 complaints upheld by the LGSCO last year, 9 related to Adult Social Care, 5 related to Education & Children’s, 1 related to Housing, 1 to Benefits and Taxation and 1 to Environmental Services and Public Protection.

The statistics show a demonstrable jump in both the number of complaints being received about Adult Social Care and Education & Children’s services matters and, significantly, the number not being resolved by the service area prior to referral to the LGSCO.

8 of the Adult Social Care matters specifically related to the closure of the Kentish Road respite centre and were the subject to a separate report to Governance Committee earlier this year due to the nature and significance of the findings. The detail is therefore not replicated in this report but Members may wish to review that earlier report which was presented to Governance Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. That report can be found at:

<http://www.southampton.gov.uk/modernGov/documents/s40215/LGO%20Kentish%20Road.pdf>

The remaining Adult Social Care matter related to the processes followed in a residential care setting when making a DoLS (Deprivation of liberty & safeguarding) referral for an elderly resident lacking capacity to make their own decisions and failures in communication with the client's family through the process. As a result of the findings reminders were issued to nursing homes regarding the process for making DoLS referrals and training recommended for staff in those homes.

The Education & Children's Services matters related to:

- Reviewing procedures and staff training on the completion of annual review statements for Education & Health care plans (EHCP's).
- As above but in circumstances when a Council makes a decision outside of an Annual Review where alternative action is required urgently as a result of a child illness.
- The process for amending EHCP's to be brought in line with the 2015 edition of the Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice.
- The need for Children's Services managers to properly follow internal complaints processes and, in particular, to communicate how to escalate complaints from stage 1 to stage 2 of the statutory process and to action such requests in a timely manner in accordance with the statutory requirements.

The housing matter related to an individual bidding on the Homebid system. The Council was found to have failed to provide sufficient information about an individual's ability to bid against age restricted properties and was ordered to amend its advice to clients and pay compensation of £1,000. To reflect the time the individual had been bidding on, and being rejected for, unsuitable age restricted properties.

The Environmental Protection matter related to a failure to keep a complainant informed of the actions the Council was taking to investigate an allegation of breach of planning controls at a restaurant property. The Council took appropriate enforcement action but the complainant was not advised and therefor continued to make complaints without understanding what action the Council had taken / could take in the circumstances.

Excluding the Kentish Road complaints, the total compensation paid by the Council following LGSCO enquiries was £1000. The majority of complaints were remedied by the offer of an apology and the provision of advice, guidance and training to staff or a review of Council procedure.

With the compensation paid in relation to Kentish Road matters (£40,375), the total compensation paid at LGSCO stage of the complaints process in 2018/19 was £41,375.

The Housing Ombudsman service operates separate from the LGSCO (who now only deals with limited policy matters relating to Housing) with that body dealing with 'landlord' related tenant complaints. There remains a significant backlog of complaints with that service with many months delay before complaints reach the Council for either mediation through the Ombudsman or investigation by their service. The figures in relation to Housing Ombudsman complaints and the true picture in relation to those that remain outstanding is in significant doubt as it was last year and the year before with no perceived improvement in response times or resolution outcomes.

	<p>The LGSCO nationally has raised their concern with the operation and effectiveness of the Housing Ombudsman service and remains of the view that regulatory change is required to reintegrate the services. It is not known at this time whether that is likely to be accepted by Parliament.</p>																								
<p><b>27.</b></p>	<p><b>So how does Southampton compare?</b></p> <p>The table below shows how Southampton performs against key local and unitary comparators (complaints received and overall % upheld). This is an edited snapshot of total number of complaints and is not intended to give more than a brief overview of comparative pressures / performance. More detail, and statistics for all other Councils, is included in the LGSCO Annual Report referred to above.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2018/19 (% Uphold rate)</th> <th>2017/18</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Bournemouth</b></td> <td><b>42 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>58</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Bristol</b></td> <td><b>124 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>133</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Brighton &amp; Hove</b></td> <td><b>87 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>124</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Hampshire</b></td> <td><b>111 (64%)</b></td> <td><b>118</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Plymouth</b></td> <td><b>107 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>121</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Portsmouth</b></td> <td><b>43 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>46</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Southampton</b></td> <td><b>74 (55%)</b></td> <td><b>68</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Full details of both the Council's annual performance letter and the LGSCO Annual Review can be viewed on <a href="http://www.LGSCO.org.uk">www.LGSCO.org.uk</a></p>		2018/19 (% Uphold rate)	2017/18	<b>Bournemouth</b>	<b>42 (55%)</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>Bristol</b>	<b>124 (55%)</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>Brighton &amp; Hove</b>	<b>87 (55%)</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>Hampshire</b>	<b>111 (64%)</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>Plymouth</b>	<b>107 (55%)</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>Portsmouth</b>	<b>43 (55%)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>Southampton</b>	<b>74 (55%)</b>	<b>68</b>
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<b>Portsmouth</b>	<b>43 (55%)</b>	<b>46</b>																							
<b>Southampton</b>	<b>74 (55%)</b>	<b>68</b>																							
<p><b>28.</b></p>	<p><b>Learning from complaints</b></p> <p>Steady and sustainable reduction in complaints for the last four years has been centred on trends within individual service areas. The Council has been able to identify common themes in respect of service area delivery. However, as numbers or recorded complaints have reduced it is much more difficult to identify any common themes due to such low numbers. However, underpinning virtually all complaints, is the missed opportunity to resolve issues at an early stage, usually initial contact. Matters appear to get to formal complaint stage where communication (or lack of it) tests the patience and adds to the frustration of members of the public wishing to deal with an issue with the Council. The adoption of the "Immediate Service Recovery" ethos saw a decrease in matters that need to go through formal complaints process. The subsequent introduction and then improvement in the web based service has contributed to another drop in recorded complaints. A more robust approach, when matters are not resolved at stage one and matters are requested to proceed to stage two of the complaints process, to return the issue to the service area through mediation are proving effective.</p> <p>The Council's vision and implementation of a Restorative Practice approach across all council services, together with partner agencies, is now being rolled out. The ethos is of early communication and intervention thus preventing issues growing into more unmanageable forms. Therefore it is envisaged that complaints recorded in the 2018/19 period will hold at present level or see another small decrease.</p>																								

	It must be noted however that the percentage of complaints not responded to within the policy/legislation time frames is giving cause for further frustration to members of the public. New and updated guidance with regard to process and investigation of complaints, together with advice and guidance from the LGSCO is now published on the SCC "staff stuff" site to aid managers and others tasked with resolving complaints to do so at the earliest opportunity even when the formal complaints process has started.
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**RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

**Capital/Revenue**

29. None

**Property/Other**

30. None

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:**

31. S.111 Local Government Act 1972 and s.1 Localism Act 2011.

**Other Legal Implications:**

32. Individual complaints touch on a wide variety of Council duties and powers which are taken into account (alongside pervasive legislation such as the Equalities Act 2010) when reviewing and responding to customer complaints and areas of service recovery or improvement.

**RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

33. None in relation to this report. No major issues or areas of concern for the Council as a whole highlighted in this year's review however individual complaints are risk assessed on a case by case basis.

**POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS**

34. The complaints function is exercised wholly in accordance with the Council's Policy Framework.

<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	No
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<b>WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:</b>	N/A
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**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices**

	None
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**Documents In Members' Rooms**

	None
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**Equality Impact Assessment**

<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and</b>	No
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<b>Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.</b>		
<b>Privacy Impact Assessment</b>		
<b>Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.</b>		No
<b>Other Background Documents</b>		
<b>Other Background documents available for inspection at:</b>		
<b>Title of Background Paper(s)</b>	<b>Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)</b>	
	None	