



Customer Feedback Annual Report

Children's Services

Shropshire Council

2021/22

Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council



1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Services formal feedback and representations for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022. The report details the comments, compliments and complaints formally recorded by Shropshire Council. The annual report is designed as a public document, and in addition to annual reporting, regular internal reporting is carried out. This regular monitoring of formal feedback enables any issues to be addressed early and focuses attention on ongoing improvement.

The Children's Act 1989 and NHS and the Community Care Act 1990 require all local authorities with social services responsibilities in England and Wales to have a complaints procedure. 'Getting the Best from Complaints' provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the Children's Act. This report is produced in line with national guidance.

Statutory complaints relate to the provision of social care and are handled in line with the national regulations referred to above. These statutory complaints follow the Council's Statutory Complaints Procedure for children's services, the key stages of which are set out in section 2 of this report: stage 1 - local resolution; stage 2 – investigation; stage 3 - review panel and section 4 - referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Few complaints progress through multiple stages of the procedure, and Shropshire Council aims to provide thorough investigations and responses at stage 1 and 2.

The remainder of complaints for Children's Services fall under the Council's corporate complaints procedure, for example these may be complaints about educational improvement services, a support service or administrative process rather than social care. Corporate complaints are investigated at stage 1, reviewed at stage 2 and customers may choose to progress their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as a final stage. You can find out more in the Council's Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report.

You can give us your views in several different ways. Please use the one that suits you best. If you are a child you can make the complaint yourself, request an advocate or ask an adult you trust to make a complaint on your behalf. You can:

- Speak to a member of staff
- Telephone 01743 256188
- Email: customerfeedback@shropshire.gov.uk
- Fill in the form on the Council's website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback>

Complaint

We aim to make it as easy as possible to make a complaint. A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided. Family members and advocates may also make a complaint on behalf of one of our customers. We will ask for consent to ensure that the complaint is not being made against the customer's wishes.

Compliment

Many people get in touch with a compliment when the information or support they have received has exceeded their expectations. It is helpful to learn when a service has been provided well or when a member of staff has done a great job. We like to recognise compliments alongside any complaints. It is good for us to say 'thank you' to our teams and staff members too.

Comment

Feedback about a service could be:

- a suggestion to improve it.
- a question as to whether something could be done differently.
- an idea for delivering a service differently.

2. The Children's Complaints Process (Statutory)

Feedback Received

Shropshire Council encourages children, parents, carers and others to give feedback and highlight any concerns so that they may be addressed as quickly as possible. Children can speak to someone they trust such as a social worker, teacher or other adult. Support is also available from complaints officers based within Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team.

Telephone: 0345 678 9000

Email: customerfeedback@shropshire.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback/children-and-young-peoples-complaints/>

Online: Log into the My Shropshire portal

Acknowledgment

Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of being received and we let the complainant know how their complaint will be handled.

STAGE 1

The Statutory Complaints Officer or a colleague will contact the appropriate team manager within Children's Services and ask them to investigate the complaint. The complainant will be provided with a written response within 10 days for statutory complaints (sometimes we may have to ask for longer if the issues are more complex and may need 20 working days to complete the investigation). If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint response, they may request to go to stage 2.

STAGE 2 - Review

If a complaint is not resolved at Stage 1, and the complainant or their representative remains dissatisfied with the investigation or response, an external Independent Investigating Officer and an external Independent Person are commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint.

The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 days in which to produce their reports. Once the reports have been finalised, they are sent to the adjudication officer (usually the Head of the Service) who will, after careful consideration of the reports, provide the complainant with a written response to the complaint.

STAGE 3 - Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the decision/outcome following the independent investigation, they can ask to have their complaint reviewed by a Complaints Review Panel. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.

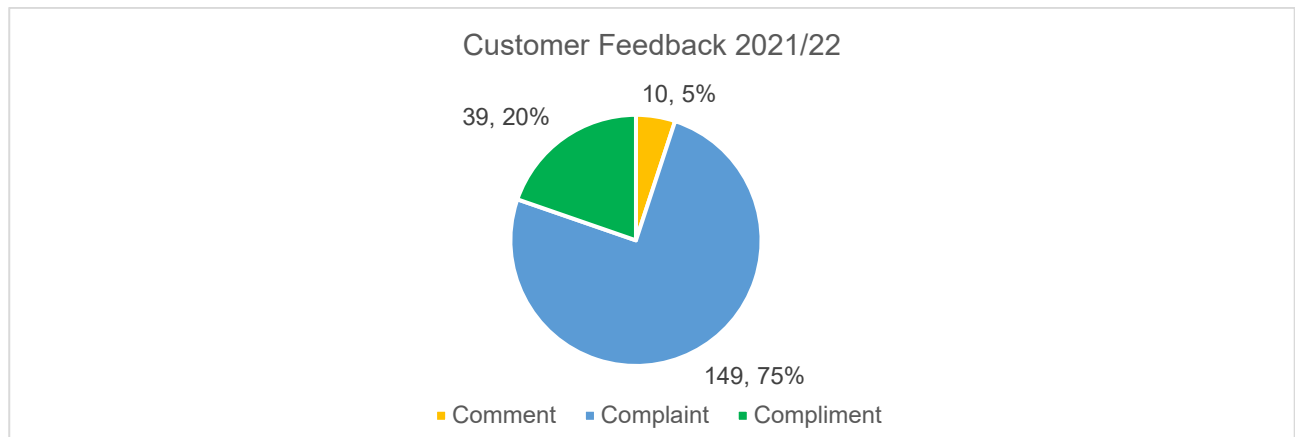
Ombudsman If a complaint cannot be resolved locally it can be investigated by the Ombudsman. The Council has a timescale of 28 calendar days to provide a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). Responses are often complex, lengthy and require a large volume of appendices to be collated, catalogued and returned to the LGO. Complainants can request to go to the Ombudsman after stage 2.

The Shropshire Council Annual Customer feedback report includes a similar diagram to outline the corporate complaints process: stage 1 - investigation, stage 2 – review, final stage - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

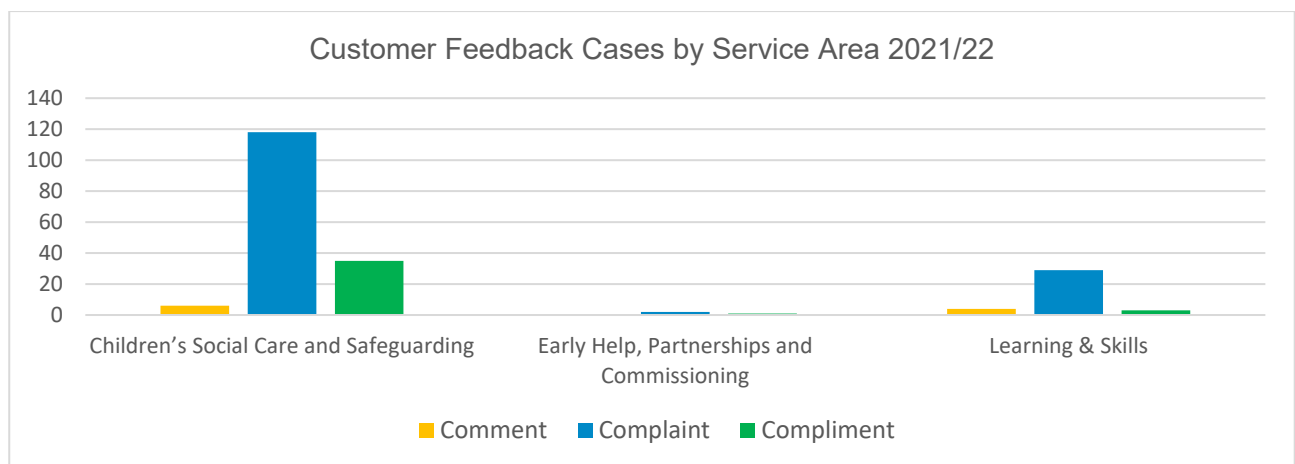
3. Customer Feedback 2021/22

In 2020/21 there were 198 cases of feedback recorded for Children’s Services. There were:

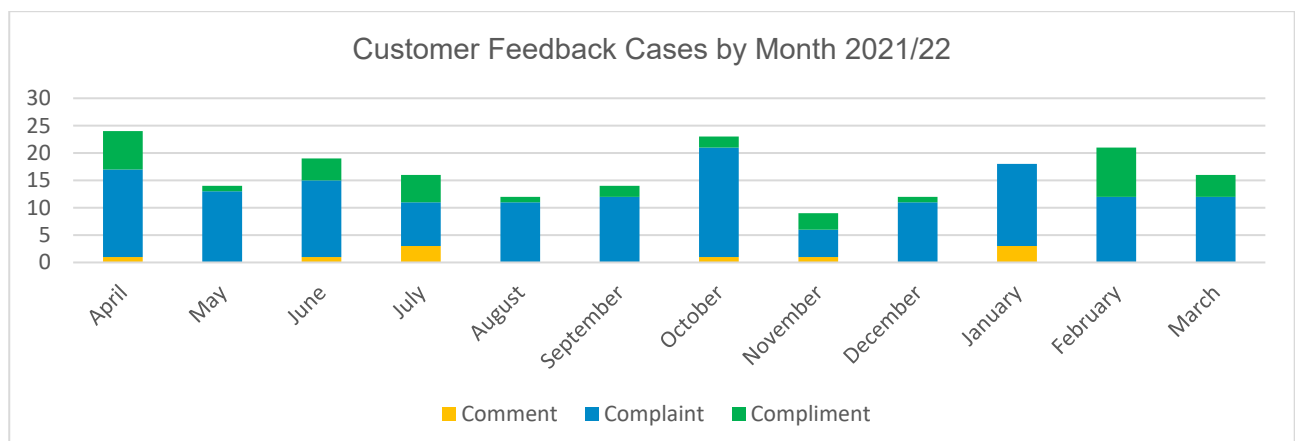
- 39 compliments
- 10 comments or other types of enquiry
- 149 complaints



The chart below illustrates how this feedback was spread across service areas.



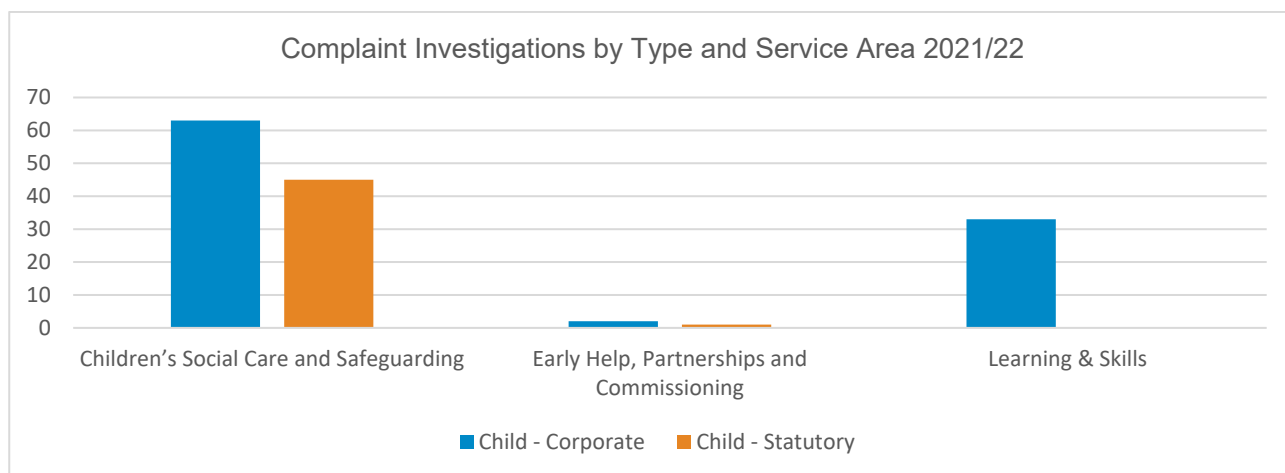
The average number of customer feedback responses recorded per month during 2021/22 was 16 (the same average as 2020/21). April and October saw higher than average cases of feedback. November was the month with the least feedback. Monthly feedback volumes were greater in quarter 1 and 4 (quarter 4 is often the quarter with the greatest volumes of feedback).



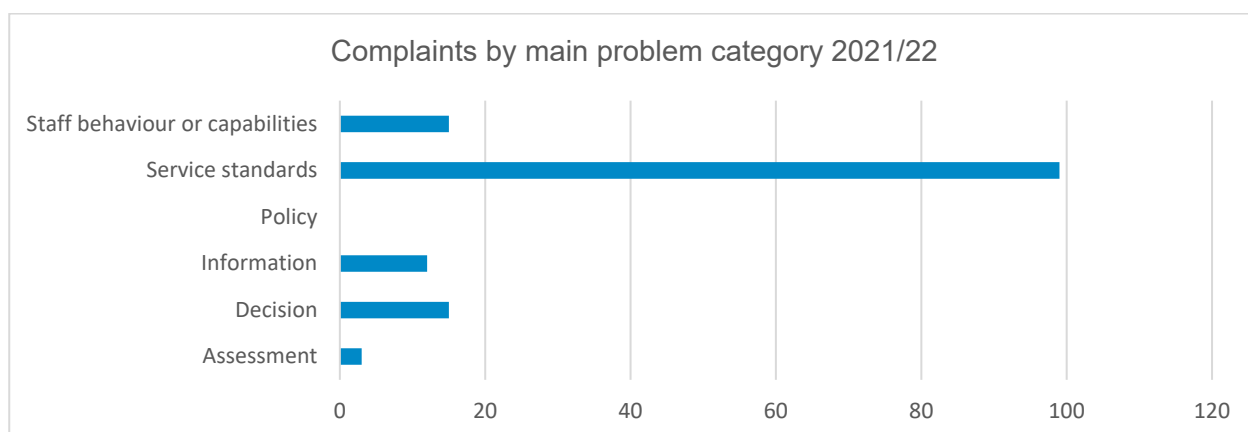
Most customer feedback recorded takes the form of complaints rather than comments or compliments (this may be due to recording practice, with staff members less likely to more formally report a compliment). Of all the customer feedback recorded, 75% of cases were complaints.

Complaints are considered in more detail at the investigation stage and the data we use to consider performance is based on information captured within complaint investigations. There were 149 complaint cases and 144 complaint investigations (a small number of complaints were withdrawn or closed prior to investigation).

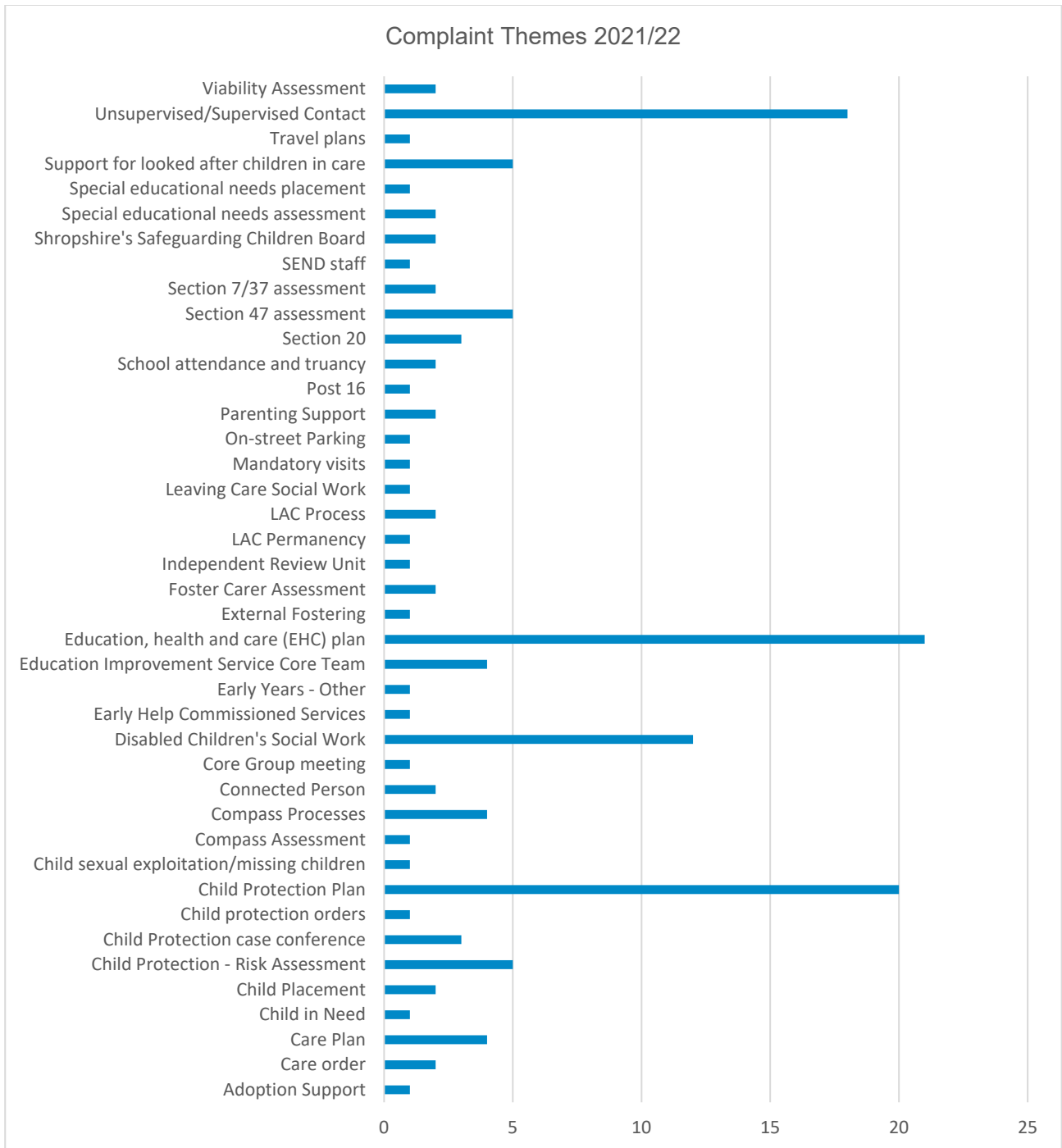
Of the 144 complaint investigations carried out within the year, 98 were corporate cases (68% of all complaints investigations) and 60 were statutory complaints (32%). The process on page 3 highlights the statutory complaints process and timescales for children’s services.



The main problem category for complaints received during 2021/22 were concerns relating to service standards, this includes sub-categories covering a failure to provide a service/take action, lack of/poor communication, concerns about quality of service and concerns over inappropriate/incorrect action. However, despite complaints falling within these overarching categories, there were few patterns or common themes within the complaints made (complaints were spread across teams and it was difficult to determine many areas of performance in need of attention). There weren’t any complaints related to policy during the year, and very few complaints related to assessment. This suggests good performance in these areas.



In addition to ‘problem category’ recording, work also takes place to try and determine themes within complaints. These themes can support proactive work to address concerns early and try to minimise numbers of complaints on similar topics. There are a large number of different themes due to the huge range of different services offered by Shropshire Council. The chart on the following page displays the themes recorded for Children’s Services complaints in 2021/22.

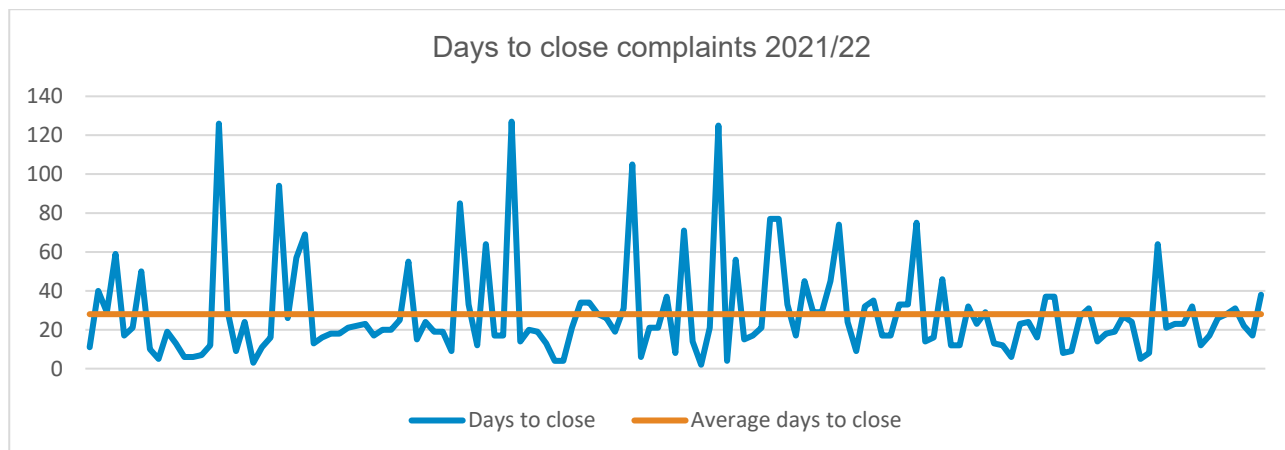


The main complaint themes recorded within the year were related to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, Child Protection Plans, arrangements for unsupervised/supervised contact and disabled children's social work. These themes will be considered as a focus through the coming year (see recommendations for more detail).

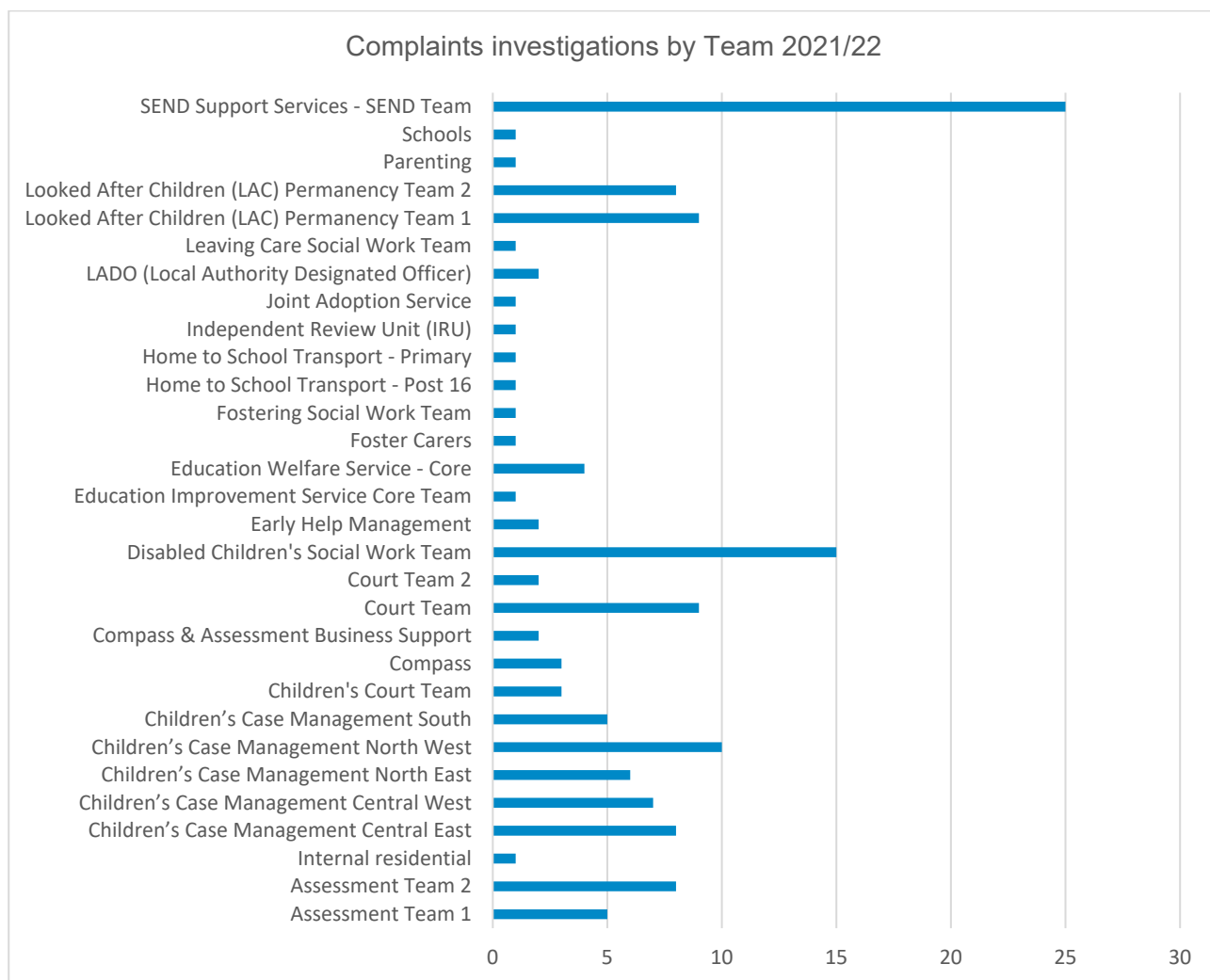
The data highlights that there are repeat complainants making regular complaints and remaining in touch with Shropshire Council over long periods of time. There can be challenges managing these cases when customers have been responded to but remain persistent on the same/similar issues. 26 of the complaints were made by customers with more than one complaint made during the year.

During 2021/22 Children's Services took an average of 28 days to close stage 1 complaints. Corporate complaints took an average of 29 days to close (just within the 30 working days timescale). Statutory complaints took an average of 25 days to close suggesting that a number of

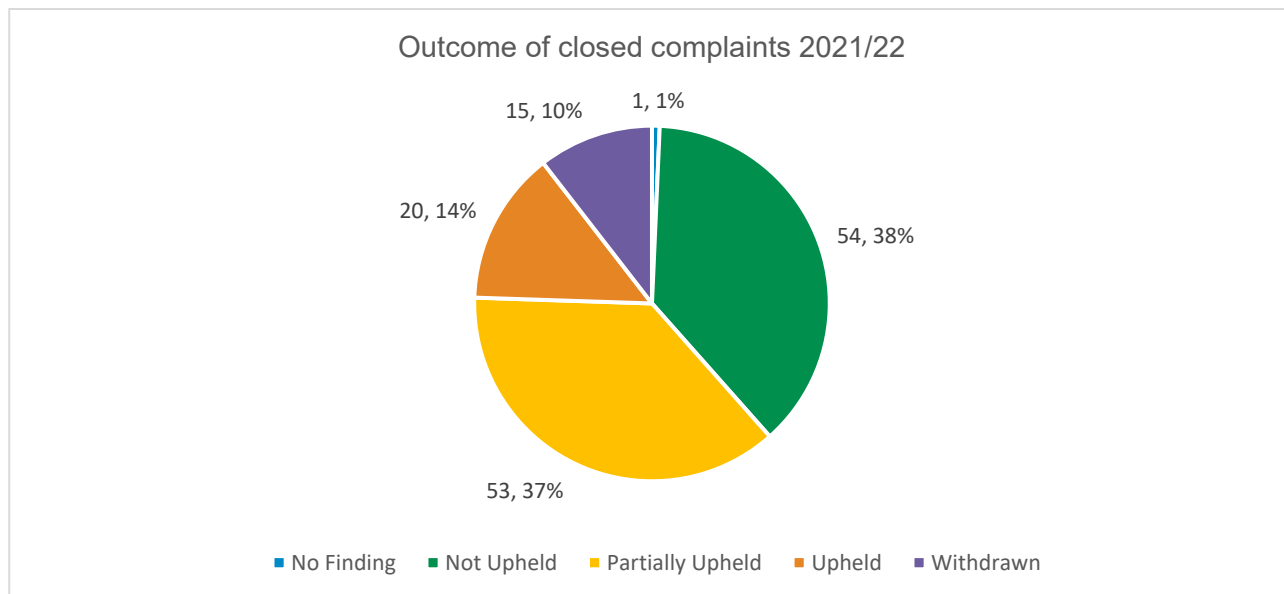
cases extended beyond the initial 10 working days timescale. Over the last year, days to close performance has been an area of focus within regular performance monitoring. Performance has improved compared to the previous year but will continue to be monitored.



The analysis of complaints by team highlights that complaints are largely spread across teams (as are compliments) but some service areas (perhaps those with more complex services and policy) do see more complaints, including SEND Support Services, the Looked After Children Teams and the Disabled Children’s Team. Children’s Case Management teams also receive more complaints, and this is influenced by the nature of the services provided, and numbers of children supported.



In addition to numbers of cases and time to respond, it is very important to consider the outcome of the complaints made. Of the 143 complaint investigations closed within the year 14% were upheld, 37% were partially upheld and 38% were not upheld. Other complaints were withdrawn or resulted in no recorded outcome. This performance is similar to previous years.



Shropshire Council’s data shows that during 2021/22 there were 23 complaints relating to looked after children. During the year 2 complaints were made by children themselves.

In addition to understanding the outcome of stage 1 complaints it is important to consider how many complaints progress beyond stage 1. During 2020/21 few complaint cases progressed beyond stage 1. This suggests effective stage 1 handling. In total 8 progressed beyond stage 1 within the year. 1 case was raised with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman within the year and 7 cases progressed to stage 2.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman’s report for 2021/22 considers complaints referred to the Ombudsman within the year (so this will include complaints referred to Shropshire Council in 2019/20). Of the 79 complaints the Ombudsman received and considered for Shropshire Council, 14 were for Education and Children’s Services, 1 was not upheld, 3 were upheld and the remainder referred back to Shropshire Council for local resolution or closed after initial enquiries.

The Ombudsman has expressed concerns at the national level about the pressures on complaint handling functions in councils expressing concerns for the second year in a row. In 2021/22 the Ombudsman, Michael King wrote “It is my continued view that complaint functions have been under-resourced in recent years, a trend only exacerbated by the challenges of the pandemic. Through the lens of this recent upheaval and adjustment, I urge you to consider how your organisation prioritises complaints, particularly in terms of capacity and visibility. Properly resourced complaint functions that are well-connected and valued by service areas, management teams and elected members are capable of providing valuable insight about an organisation’s performance....” The issues raised by the Ombudsman are reflected on in the recommendations.

4. Annual Comparisons

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<p>Number of compliments – similar</p> <p>In the last financial year (2021/22) Shropshire Council received 39 compliments for Children’s Services. This marks a reduction compared to the previous year, but numbers are higher than 2019/20. Compliments were greater in 2020/21 overall due to the recognition public services gained in their response to the pandemic.</p>	25	46	39
	Performance has dropped compared to the previous year but remains better than 2019/20.		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<p>Number of complaints investigations – similar</p> <p>The number of complaint investigations for Children’s Services was 152 in 2020/21 with a slight reduction in 2021/22 to 144. Overall performance around numbers of complaints remains steady. Numbers will continue to be monitored regularly, through the year and through quarterly reporting.</p>	119	152	144
	Although slightly fewer complaints were received in the year, overall numbers are in line with previous years.		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<p>Days to close – similar</p> <p>The average number of working days taken to respond to stage 1 complaints during 2018/19 was 15 working days and in 2020/21 that average had increased to 33 working days. 2021/22 shows a decrease and improved performance. However, it should be noted that Complaints investigators increasingly report concerns about their ability to meet complaint timescales as a result of workload and service pressures. In-year reporting will monitor this as a priority measure.</p>	26 working days	33 working days	28 working days
	Days to close performance improved compared to last year but remains similar (with a slight upward trend) overall.		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<p>Outcome of complaints – upheld rate similar</p> <p>In 2021/22 14% of complaints were upheld compared to 10% in 2020/21 but that previous year was slightly unusual due to the pandemic so 2021/22 suggests a return to more average performance. In 2021/22 37% of complaints were partially upheld compared to 41% in 2020/21. This performance overall is relatively steady and suggests that standards are being maintained and quality of service has not declined despite the pressures being experienced within services.</p>	16%	10%	14%
	Performance has fluctuated slightly but remains in line with average performance.		
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<p>Cases progressing beyond Stage 1 – similar, low number</p> <p>Good performance has been maintained and only small numbers of cases progress beyond stage 1. With the numbers so small it is difficult to draw any firm conclusion other than reporting that numbers remain in line with previous totals. There were 14 children’s services cases considered by the Ombudsman in 2021/22 and of those 3 were upheld.</p>	4	7	8
	Numbers of complaints progressing beyond stage 1 remain small and the 2021/22 total is very similar to the previous year.		

5. Example Compliments

Shropshire Council's Children's Services received 39 compliments in 2021/22. Examples of the compliments recorded are shown below.

Compliment for [name removed] and the COMPASS/ Assessment Team. *"Just a quick note to say thank you all your help and the help from your amazing team in helping to keep our children safe. They are always on hand to offer advice, expertise and offer guidance to us."*

Compliment for the Leaving Care Team: *"Thank you for all the help over the past few years. It hasn't gone unnoticed that you've gone out of your way to help me the past few years - so seriously and honestly thank you."*

Compliment from the Midwifery Service to the Court 1 Social Work Team: *"I wanted to write to you to let you know how impressed my colleagues and I were regarding your care and compassion in the case of Baby X. It has been evident to me and my colleagues you absolutely put the needs of the child first. ... these times are unprecedented, in the terms of workload and stress, however you both have supported Baby X, and the staff in a professional and caring manner which is really heart-warming. The postnatal staff were extremely grateful for your support..."*

Compliment for Supervising Social Worker: *"We appreciate the time and effort you gave to pursuing our eligibility for payment in regards care and travel for X. We have both enjoyed working with you. The support and guidance you have given us helped so much. It's always been easy having discussions with you whether a phone call, video call or a home visit. You've always been friendly and approachable and that has made such a difference, thank you."*

Compliment for Disabled Children's Team: *"I just wanted to say a massive thank you. Since X's transition you have been heavily involved in ensuring a smooth and well-planned transition. Not only did you engage well with X yesterday, you interacted well with all of the children which was really refreshing to see. Thank you [name removed], you have been a pleasure to work with. You have a wealth of skills and knowledge, and this is evident in all the contact we have had with you."*

Compliment for Social Worker - Assessment Team South: *"I just wanted to say thank you for yesterday. For the first time in almost 9 years I feel someone really cares and understands X's best interests. I can't ever thank you enough."*

Compliment for Social Workers - Looked After Team and Placements Team: *"I have just been involved in a meeting where we were discussing the process [finding] ...a safe home for X. We have been really impressed by such a 'painless' experience..."*

Compliment for Social Worker - Looked After Team: *"Your kind words and guidance these past few months have been invaluable and I am truly grateful for all of the support you have given me, and the care that you have taken over my children's placements and contact. I'm absolutely thrilled that we can have contact that the children are going to love. Thank you for the trust that you have placed in me. I hope to continue to build upon that moving forward. Thank you so much."*



6. Example Complaints

Shropshire Council's Children's Services received 149 complaints and carried out 144 complaints investigations during 2021/22. Some example complaints have been included to illustrate the way complaints are received and the nature of the issues raised. All complaints have been anonymised and personal details removed. In some cases, wording may have been changed very slightly to ensure anonymity (with steps taken not to alter the point being made within the complaint). Please note that sometimes complaints arise due to a lack of understanding and not all of the examples below will have been upheld after investigation.

The customer's complaint is regarding a social worker. The customer's daughter lives with the customer's ex-husband. Whenever the customer emails the social worker, she *"does not receive any response. There is lack of communication"*. She reports that if she *"raises any issues or concerns with her, she receives nothing back"*. The customer also reports that her own social worker and the mental health team are also not getting any responses back. There is a *"lack of family contact"* and the customer *"feels like she is not being listened to"*. She says that her daughter wants to see her, *"but the social worker does not seem interested in this fact"*.

Mr and Mrs [name removed] wish to make a complaint as they say that they are *"at the point of crisis and family breakdown due to no support being provided at home for their daughter"*. They wish to complain about their social worker. They say that service [name removed] has withdrawn its support. The customers say that they *"need immediate help with her ongoing care"* and that they are *"unable to continue caring for her as parents"*.

A mother complains that she has waited weeks for another Social Worker to be allocated to her son. She explains that she has had numerous conversations saying that someone will be in touch. She *"had to wait to have confirmation about seeing her son this year and this has only just been done"*. The customer says she has *"no input about her son's school or an invite to the parents evening"*. She feels that she is *"being pushed out of her son's life"*.

Customer wishes to raise a complaint in respect of the delay in securing a suitable setting for [name removed] meaning he is currently not attending school. The complainant writes: *"He is not only missing out on his education but the social side, which is affecting him, as he has gone backwards"*.

The customer wishes to complain about social worker [name removed]. She feels the social worker who removed her baby was *"uncaring and unsympathetic"*. The customer reports that *"she never said that she was turning up to remove the baby and never explained why. The whole situation was made much worse by her behaviour and uncaring attitude"*.

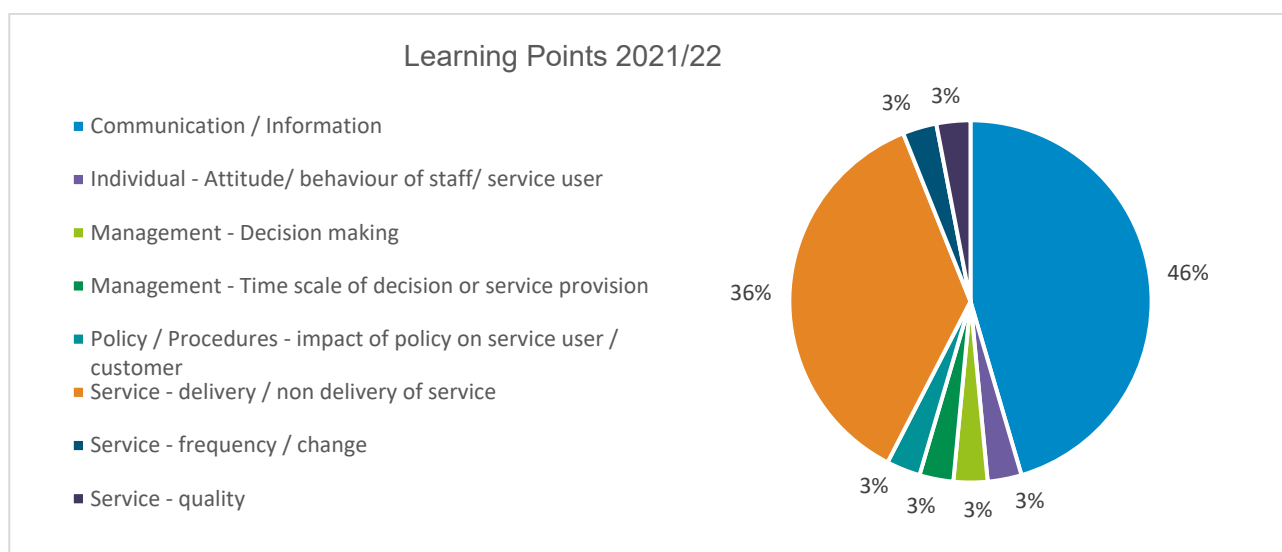
The customer wishes to complain that the *"Education Welfare Officer (EWO) was judgmental and patronising"* and she *"often felt intimidated and vilified by her."* The customer says that she left messages for the EWO but she never returned her calls. Customer obtained a copy of her son's school records and reports the EWO stated that she felt she was *"trying to identify a special learning need to justify his behaviour"*.



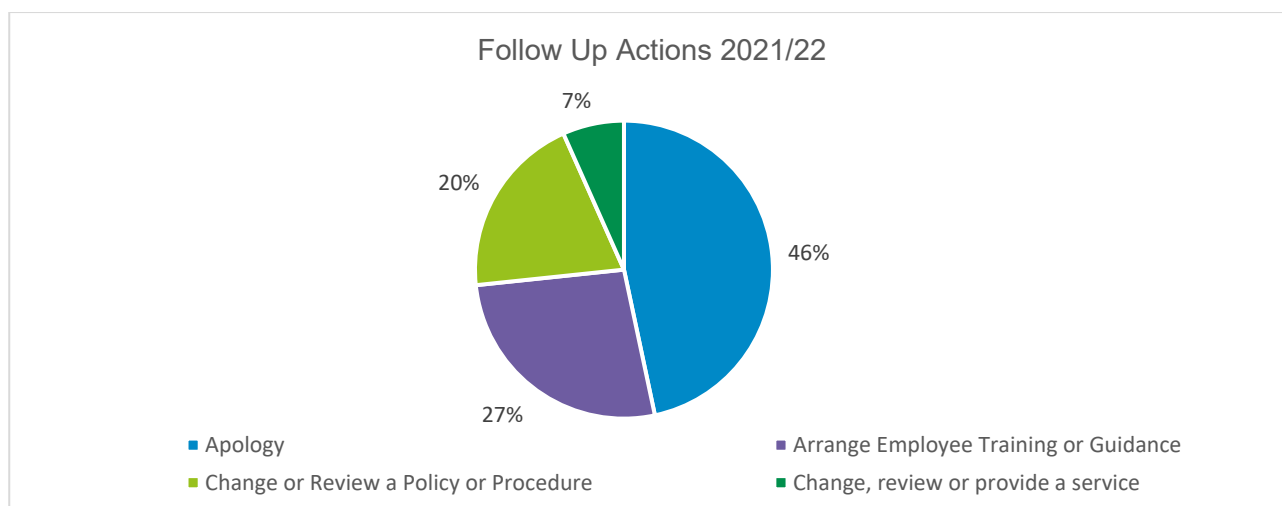
7. Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council's Children's Services recorded learning and/or actions against 34 cases (47%) of closed cases that were upheld or partially upheld in 2021/22. Learning and actions should be recorded when a case is upheld or partially upheld and some fault can be found. For many cases not upheld there will not be any learning or actions to implement. This is included in the recommendations for 2022/23.

Of the learning points recorded in 2021/22, 46% related to learning concerning communication and/or information provided and 36% were linked to the delivery or non-delivery of a service (e.g. delays).



Very few complaints cases required follow up actions. Of those where actions were needed 46% were to provide an apology and 27% to arrange training or guidance for employees.



Complaints performance monitoring considers the main problem experienced, but this does not do justice to the complexity of issues that can be raised within a complaint and investigated. Reading complaints in detail highlights that although a complaint may relate to a specific service or concern about lack of a service, there may be other issues such as lack of communication, the way someone felt or perception of someone's attitude towards them.

8. Example Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council's Children's Services maintains a focus on complaints reporting and each quarter customer feedback data is provided to assist with learning and a focus on improvement. There are some examples of learning below. These examples may appear out of context because they are not provided with the original complaint, but they do highlight how the Council responds to complaints without sharing confidential information. These examples are mainly from upheld and partly upheld cases. Complaints that were not upheld may occasionally include some learning within notes on the case and often this can relate to misunderstandings of how the Council has delivered a service or what to expect from a service.

Following learning from the complaint there has been a recognition that it would be beneficial to consider commissioning a specialist training provider and support for families, young people and workers in relation to CAPVA (Child and Adolescent to Parent Violence Abuse).

The complaint highlighted concerns over changes in social worker. Children's Services can learn from the case, the comments made about consistent workers and the impact. The Service Manager will ensure that until new staff are employed, this is closely monitored.

The complaint highlighted the importance of offering a reassessment of need and to update the social work assessment in respect of the child. The customer has been written to following the complaint with suggested actions, and asked to confirm if she wishes to progress with the assessment.

In respect of learning and improvement resulting from the complaint, the manager will be speaking to her social workers to ensure that they are effectively managing child protection plans robustly and in a timely way that can avoid drift and any delay for children.

The complaint highlighted difficulties that families and the team experience in securing agency support in more rural areas of the county. The issue has been raised with the Assistant Director of Children's Services and the team is also liaising with the Adult Services Direct Payments Team regarding recruitment processes.

As a result of the complaint an apology was provided for some of the issues raised in relation to the work of Shropshire Council. The complaint also highlighted an area of need currently outside of the scope of the service. Shropshire Council cannot offer a specialist mental health crisis drop-in service but there is a recognition that this is an issue that the local authority can pursue with its partner agencies. Recognised needs can be communicated, and the suggestion made for consideration by partner organisations.

The complaint highlighted learning and actions from the case link to continued focus on improving practice when working with families with court cases. Further training has since been provided by CAF/CASS and this also forms part of a workforce plan to ensure social workers and managers understand the complexity and sensitivity of supporting families in the private and public law arena.

9. Progress Update

Progress achieved since the recommendations made in 2020/21 is summarised below:

	Action	Progress Made
1	The recommendations for 2020/21 included the action to encourage informal, early feedback across services.	Providing the opportunity for people to informally feedback can be very valuable and where customers are able to feed in comments or suggestions and feel listened to, this often prevents issues from escalating into formal complaints. Early resolution of any concerns can address issues before they develop further. There has been some focus on engagement within Children's Services through a variety of methods and although not a recommendation for the next year, it is something that can be considered as an ongoing action.
2	Focus on improving performance for days to close.	The 2020/21 report highlighted that 'days to close' performance should be a priority for the year. Too many cases were exceeding the timescales set for statutory and corporate complaints and there was a concern that performance would continue to decline without action. This focus through the year has seen some reduction in average working days to close complaints. Although this remains a key performance measure there are signs that improvement has been achieved.
3	Make use of escalations process.	Where complaints are overdue and complainants have a negative experience of the complaints system as a result of repeated or long delays, there can be a need to refer cases to more senior managers. This process needs to be adopted consistently and was used within the year, as recommended. There are now plans to take further steps to support this work (see recommendations below).
4	Address quality within some complaint responses.	Quality is not a concern across all teams and services (many responses are of a very high standard) but there are some concerns that occasionally complaint responses do not meet expected standards. This has been highlighted with managers and the Feedback and Insight Team has offered complaint templates and quality checking support. This remains a concern for a small number of cases and suggestions will continue to be fed back on a case by case basis. This should remain an ongoing priority for 2022/23 (see recommendations below).
5	Complaints investigators to report pressures and delays.	Over the year stage 1 complaints investigators (service managers) have been asked to report pressures and delays as early as possible within complaint allocations so that delays can be reduced and communication with complainants improved. Although service pressures remain, pandemic related pressures have eased, and the close focus on this work can now be reduced.
6	The actions for 2020/22 included the need to address repeat and persistent complainant behaviour.	Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team has reviewed the Council's Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers Procedure and will be publishing changes for 2023. There are plans to build on that work further (see recommendations below) recognising that the number of repeat complainants is particularly high within Children's Services. Support will continue to be made available by complaints leads within the Feedback and Insight team to address identified concerns.
7	The 2021/21 annual report highlighted the need to focus on IT systems and data retention issues.	Statutory complaints processes and national data retention periods need to be closely followed. For this reason, the Feedback and Insight Team have been working with IT colleagues to ensure the IT system for complaints can effectively deliver future data retention periods for a range of case types and different needs for different children's cases. New processes have been designed and tested over the last year.

10. Actions and Recommendations

Complaints performance for Shropshire Council's Children's Services remains good overall, with little change compared to the previous year. Recommendations for 2022/23 are:

1. The number of compliments being recorded for Children's Services have reduced over the year and there are concerns that the importance of recording compliments has been forgotten as focus is on improvement and addressing concerns and complaints. It is recommended that staff within Children's Services are reminded of the importance of reporting all compliments for recording on the customer feedback system so there is a robust understanding of what is working well.
2. Days to close complaints performance must remain a priority in 2022/23 despite some improvement over the last year. If timescales are missed for statutory stage 1 complaints, complainants may request escalation to stage 2. This increases costs for the organisation. It is recommended that internal communications are used within Children's Services to remind all complaints investigators of the need to respond to complaints within the allocated timescales.
3. Building on the actions over the last year, it is recommended that work continues to implement the complaints escalation process and further work takes place to increase awareness of repeat delays and overdue cases among senior managers. The feedback and Insight Team will recommend a new reporting process. It can feel uncomfortable escalating issues when staff members are under pressure, but it is important that those in positions of responsibility are made aware of the challenges being faced and the potential impact when timescales are not met.
4. Quality of complaint responses was a focus for the last year and it is recommended that this remains a focus for the coming year. Support will continue to be offered by the Feedback and Insight Team on a case by case basis but it is also recommended that training and guidance is developed further to promote the whole range of complaint investigation methods that can be implemented to ensure responses are robust and all evidence available is reflected upon and used effectively for complaint findings.
5. Linked to the recommendation above, it is recommended that 2022/23 includes a focus on complaint learning and the recording of all learning and actions. Learning and actions should be clearly communicated within all upheld and partially upheld complaints responses. Managers are encouraged to support staff to ensure this is a clear feature of all complaints where elements of fault have been highlighted.
6. The main complaint themes recorded within the year were related to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, Child Protection Plans, arrangements for unsupervised/supervised contact and disabled children's social work. These themes will be considered as a focus through the coming year (see recommendations for more detail). It is hoped that it may be possible to identify learning locally, and from Ombudsman reports, to take a proactive approach and work to minimise further complaints on these themes.
7. Across the council there are concerns with the number of repeat complainants, persistent or vexatious customers (but this is particularly clear within the complaints data for Children's Services). Following work on the Council's Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers Procedure in the last year, there are plans to further address this issue and build on progress made, through the development of new staff guidance during 2023.

Feedback and Insight Team,
Communications and Engagement, Resources
Shropshire Council

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