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Compliments and Complaints

Annual Report 2024



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

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Introduction

The Council Plan for 2021-2025 sets out the council's priorities and the outcomes we want to achieve for people who live and work in West Sussex.

Its four priorities, underpinned by a cross-cutting theme of protecting the environment are:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations.
- A sustainable and prosperous economy.
- Helping people and communities to fulfil their potential.
- Making the best use of resources.

The effective handling of complaints and compliments from service users contributes to the delivery of these priorities. Addressing complaints offers a valuable source of learning to help improve services. Good complaints handling provides a direct and valuable connection between those who provide services and those receiving or relying on them.

This is the annual report for 2024 on complaints and compliments about County Council services. It also covers decisions of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and acts as the statutory reports for Adults' and for Children's Social Care.

The report contains data and analysis for a review of the complaints processes and the services to which they relate over a calendar year. It informs the Council about complaint themes and how effective the arrangements are for handling customer complaints.

The Council has three complaints procedures: the Adults' Social Care statutory procedure, the Children's Social Care statutory procedure and the Corporate Complaints procedure.

The terms stages 1, 2, and 3 are used for all but each procedure works in a different way and stage 3 is only found in the statutory children's procedure.

This report also makes reference to learning from complaints. Systemic and operational changes resulting from complaints investigations are recorded by the Complaints Team.

Where a complaint is upheld (in full or in part) the Complaints Team identifies the remedies requiring action, formally logs the learning stage and monitors the completion of all related remedies. The range of remedy actions are broad, ranging from individual officer learning/improvement to broader service-wide changes or improvements.

A formal action plan is produced for each complaint that is upheld and actions are allocated to senior staff to ensure the learning (presented as remedies) are completed, implemented and signed-off by a senior manager with operational oversight of the recommended changes resulting from the complaints investigation.

Where learning is referenced within this report, this is the monitoring model the Council employs to ensure that complaints matter in the context of affecting change.

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How West Sussex County Council Handles Complaints

The Council's definition of a complaint is:

"A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the County Council or its staff, affecting an individual customer or group of customers"

The Council's aim is to resolve complaints as quickly and simply as possible. The initial stage is for the manager responsible for the service to seek a resolution. If resolution is not reached, the customer has the right to escalate to the next stage, where the complaint is looked into by a more senior person not previously involved.

Full details of the procedures can be found on the [council's website](#).

1 The overall picture

1.1 Complaints against the County Council from 1 January to 31 December 2024

The complaints data reported on reflects the complaints *closed* during the year not complaints *received* during the year. The numbers reported for the LGSCO reflect the number of *decisions received* from the LGSCO in the reporting period.

The table below summarises the complaints and compliments recorded as closed by directorate or service unit in 2024.

Directorate	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
Adult Services	258	75%	28%	73	41%	29%	-	27	314
Chief Execs Office	7	86%	14%	2	50%	-	-	12	2
Children First Transformation	-	-	-	1	100%	-	-	-	-
Children Services	183	79%	33%	45	67%	42%	13	13	223
Communities	30	93%	53%	4	75%	50%	-	1	964
Digital Infrastructure	1	100%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Education and Skills	277	73%	49%	101	53%	63%	-	47	308
Environment and Public Protection	46	100%	57%	-	-	-	-	-	30
Finance Procurement and Business Support	121	40%	50%	33	18%	21%	-	7	17
Fire and Rescue Service	3	67%	-	1	100%	-	-	-	14
Highways Transport and Planning	252	82%	20%	20	55%	35%	-	20	145
HR and Organisational Development	5	100%	40%	-	-	-	-	-	2
Law and Assurance	16	81%	31%	3	67%	-	-	3	12
Property and Assets	1	100%	-	3	33%	-	-	1	-
Social Care Joint Commissioning	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Whole Council	1	100%	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Total	1201	75%	36%	286	49%	42%	13	132	2033

Explanatory notes: Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) direct referrals.

The Adults' Social Care appeals process offers customers direct recourse to the LGSCO for review, as do the process for applying for a Blue Badge (reported within Highways, Transport and Planning) and the Schools Admissions Appeals process. The LGSCO figures reported in relation to these processes do not reflect a failure to resolve issues locally through complaints processes but represent the numbers of *appeals* that have been referred direct to the LGSCO.

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2 Analysis of overall figures

The number of complaints closed at the first stage reduced from 1584 in 2023 to 1201 in 2024.

A decrease in complaints closed in period was recorded against Highways, Transport and Planning (down 249); Children's Services (down 108); and Adults' Social Care (down 34).

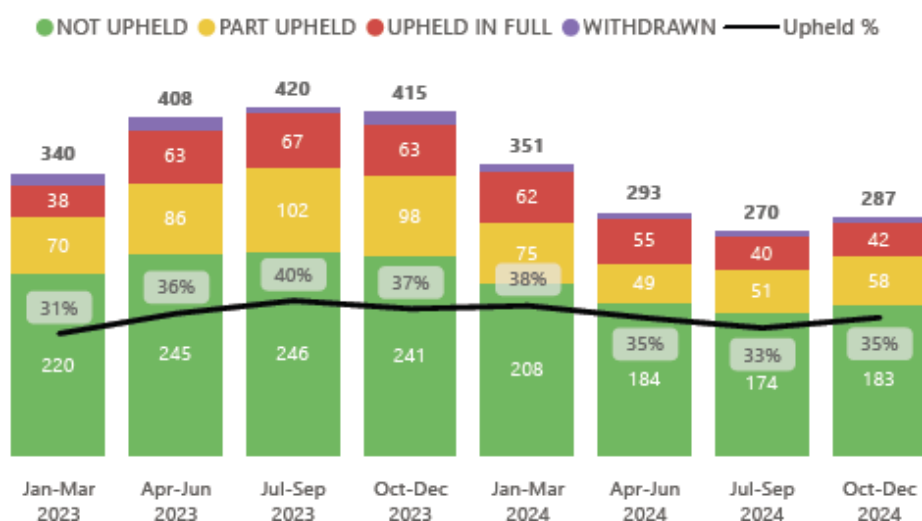
The number of complaints investigated and closed in 2024 relating to services provided by Education and Skills increased by 52.

The number of complaints represents a very small proportion of the number of customer contacts and provisions of services, suggesting that most customers are satisfied. The Council aims however to avoid any customer seeking to complain and treats every complaint as an opportunity to learn and to implement changes where needed to avoid future complaints, improving our customers' experience and satisfaction levels.

432 stage one complaints (36%) were upheld in 2024 almost replicating the figure reported in 2023, when 589 complaints (37%) were upheld. These figures include complaints that were *partially upheld*.

The graphic below sets out complaints closed by outcome in 2024 when compared with 2023; the data is set out by quarter.

Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



If a complainant is not satisfied with the response at the first stage, they can escalate their complaint. Complainants are advised of their right to escalate with clear guidance provided with every stage one response. It is important that complainants are provided with this guidance on how to pursue their complaints at all stages of the procedures to ensure integrity in the complaints process.

There are different names for the escalated stages under the various statutory and corporate procedures, but this report describes them all as 'stage 2' for ease of comparison.

The number of complaints considered at stage two of the Council's complaints processes in 2024 was 286, a significant increase from the 194 recorded in 2023.

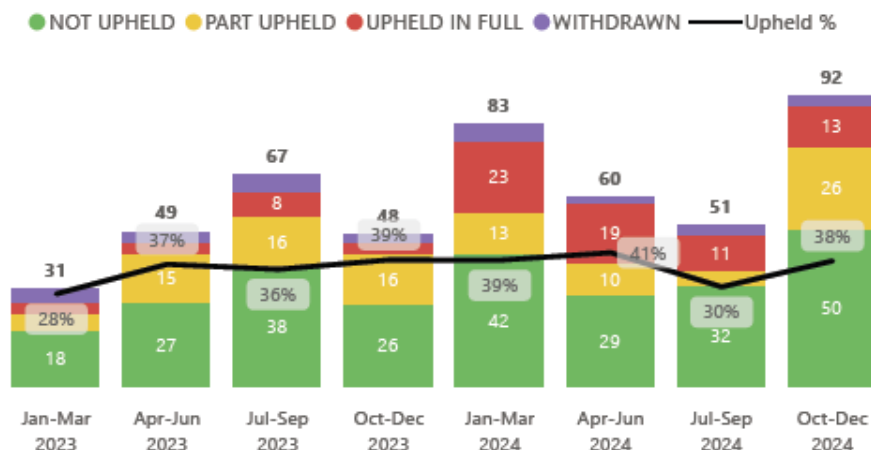
As a percentage this represents 23.5% of the total number of complaints closed at stage one, meaning almost 1 in 4 complainants asked the Council to have a second look at the complaint.

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The ratio of complainants dissatisfied after stage one has increased from 12.2% reported in 2023.

The graphic below sets out stage two complaints closed by outcome in 2024 when compared with 2023; the data is set out by quarter.

Stage 2 complaints closed by outcome



When a customer has exhausted the Council's complaints procedures, they may ask the LGSCO to consider their complaint. The data in this report focusses on the number of LGSCO *decisions reached* in the reporting period, as it is from these decisions that meaningful data and learning can be analysed.

The number of *decisions reached* by the LGSCO increased for the fourth year in a row, with 132 decisions received compared with 99 in 2023; 82 in 2022; and 69 in 2021.

Local resolution is key to improving the customer experience, and escalations to the LGSCO will remain a focus for continual monitoring and review, as we try to resolve complaints for customers as quickly and simply as possible.

The Council's performance with LGSCO referrals is reported directly from the Ombudsman's office in July of each year. You can access the [2023/24 Annual Letter online](#).

2.1 Timescales for Responses

In 2024, the Council responded to 75% of stage one complaints within the published timescales (including those where the customer is notified that the response will take longer than the original expectation) compared with the same percentage (75%) in 2023 and 74% in 2022.

Compliance in this space is historically strong, and the statistics for 2024 reflect a consistency in response rates across the whole Council. However, it is recognised that 1 in 4 complaints were *not* responded to within the set timescales without the customer being notified of the delay, which is something that the Council will seek to improve on in 2025.

The Complaints Team holds weekly face to face meetings with senior managers within Adults' Services; Children, Young People and Learning; Finance Procurement and Business Support; and Highways Transport and Planning to identify potential drift in complaints handling. These focussed meetings are designed to ensure senior managers are consistently sighted on complaints within their directorate and are able to take action when potential to miss a deadline is identified.

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The meetings with senior managers within the major directorates commenced in 2023 and have yielded a positive effect on improving the compliance with published timescales in the areas of the Council with the highest turnover of complaints. Where the need for support was identified in this space for Finance Procurement and Business Support colleagues, the same support was introduced in 2024.

In addition to the focus meetings, the Complaints Team presents quarterly reports to leadership and quality assurance meetings throughout the year to ensure that compliance with published timescales is considered by management frequently and in detail.

Complaints Officers reach out to all directorates on a weekly cycle to ensure that any potential drift is addressed directly with the manager responsible for responding to the complaint in question.

The Complaints Team also provides training to all social care staff, which further impresses the importance of adhering to statutory timescales and the potential negative effect of failing to respond to complaints on time.

The introduction of a complaints focussed self-serve tool for managers (Power BI) enables managers across the Council to review performance at any point of the year, without the requirement to wait for compliance focussed reports from the Complaints Team.

It is hoped that this improved accessibility to compliance data, along with the hands-on support provided by the Complaints Team will improve compliance statistics as there is evidence to suggest that the Council's performance has stagnated somewhat in this space.

2.2 Financial implications

The complaints process is not a vehicle for facilitating compensation payments. The Council will sometimes offer financial remedies in recognition of identified fault, but this is rare. The LGSCO has published guidance on remedies for complaints scenarios, and this guidance is used when payments are considered as a result of a complaint being upheld.

Financial remedy payments are not 'compensation' but are a method recommended by the LGSCO for resolving complaints where the Council has been at fault, and it is considered appropriate to recognise this in a tangible way.

A total of 56 payments were recorded as paid or offered to complainants as financial remedies following the conclusion of complaints investigations in 2024, up from 38 recorded in 2023. This figure includes all LGSCO recommended financial remedies.

In 2024, the LGSCO awarded approximately £1000 in symbolic payments to complainants in recognition complaint investigations which had been subject to avoidable delay.

Symbolic payments ranged between £100 and £300 per case, depending on the length of delay and the injustice caused (if any) to the complainant.

In all cases the LGSCO's instruction to make a symbolic payment was accompanied with a further instruction to formally apologise to the complainant for the identified fault in the timely processing of the complaint. The Council complied with all such remedies set out by the LGSCO in this space.

The total of financial remedies awarded was £57,748.00 (£33,042.33 in 2023).

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When a complaint under the Children's statutory complaints procedure is escalated to stage two, the Council must commission an investigating officer or use an operational manager to investigate the complaint; the Council must appoint an independent person to oversee the investigation of the complaint (no Council officer can take the role of independent person).

Costs for these services are in line with general rates paid by neighbouring local authorities. In 2024 the cost of investigations was approximately £110,000.

Following a review, the Council has decided to change the way Children's statutory stage two reviews are undertaken whilst maintaining the appropriate level of independence.

In January 2025, the Council moved to a model whereby the investigating officer is appointed from a pool of senior managers within Children, Young People and Learning. The change in process is focussed on improving the quality of stage two reviews and reducing cost to the Council.

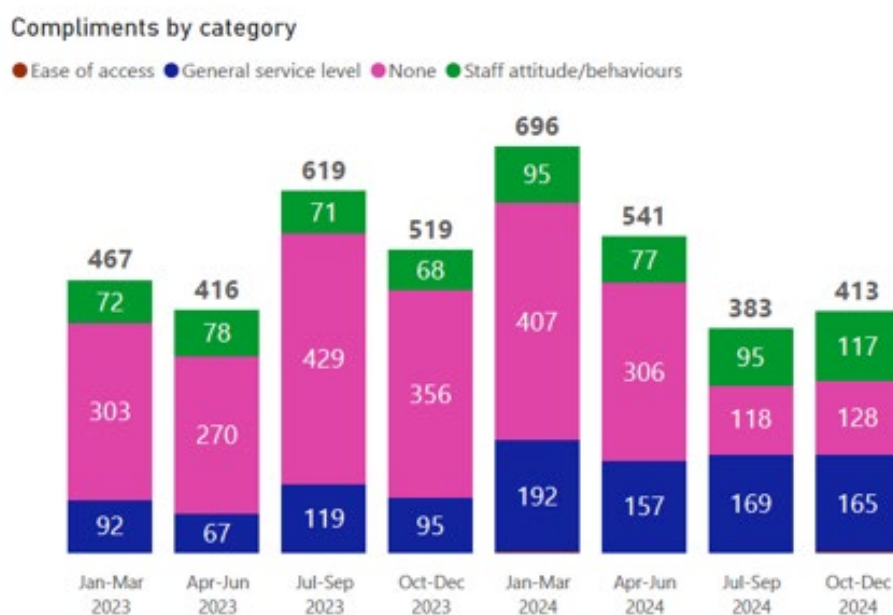
This shift in process is considered to present an opportunity to improve the Council's learning from complaints by enabling service experts within the organisation to undertake investigations and make effective and informed recommendations resulting from their investigations.

2.3 Compliments

When a customer is so pleased with the service, they have received that they make a special mention of it, the Council records this as a compliment.

The number of recorded compliments remained similar with 2033 recorded in 2024 compared with 2131 in 2023. This does not include the 1750 compliments generated for the Library Service by the Summer Reading Challenge. This number is always reported separately both to highlight the popularity of this event and to avoid distorting other reported figures.

The graphic below sets out the number of compliments received by the Council in 2024 and the category of compliment, excluding the Summer Reading Challenge data.



3 Look ahead to 2025

The major development in the complaints space in 2025 will be the implementation of the new national Complaints Handling Code.

In February 2024 the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman launched a refreshed Complaints Handling Code, which has been issued as advice and guidance for all local councils in England under section 23(12A) of the Local Government Act 1974. The LGSCO's expectation is that the new Code will be implemented by April 2026.

Recognising the importance of handling complaints effectively, West Sussex County Council volunteered to be one of two pilot County councils the LGSCO worked with to understand the impact of the new Code to inform the LGSCO's work with Councils across England and Wales.

The Council worked closely with the LGSCO and Staffordshire County Council throughout 2024 as part of the pilot process and will adopt the Code operationally well in advance of the LGSCO's formal roll out in 2026.

The implementation of the Code will change the way in which the Council consider any complaints that do not fall within the scope of the Children's and Adults' statutory complaints procedures. The Code will be operational before the end of 2025.

It is unlikely that the change in process will be noticeable to anyone other than the operational staff facilitating the investigation into complaints, but it is worth taking the opportunity to summarise the current process and to set out the difference when considered in the context of the Council's interpretation of the Code.

Currently, the corporate complaints model works to a two-stage model with stage one providing a manager within the operational service the opportunity to respond to the complaint directly, and stage two requiring an independent review of the substantive complaint by a member of the Complaints Team.

The current model requires the Complaints Team to conduct a more forensic review of the complaint at stage two of the process. The new model under the Code will require the *operational service* to provide that forensic review at stage one, setting out an expectation that operational experts will be making full and considered evidence-based decisions at the earliest stage of the process. Furthermore, the requirement that a senior manager within the operational service undertakes a review of any escalated complaints inserts direct line management accountability in relation to the position and findings set out in responses at stage one. The intention is to ensure that complainants received the Council's formal position at the earliest opportunity, without the need to navigate stages in pursuit of an independent view.

The Council's interpretation of the Code allows for a more robust quality assurance function prior to issue of complaints responses. The Complaints Team will agree a formal statement of complaint with the complainant prior to the matter being allocated for investigation. The agreement of a stand-alone statement of complaint will strengthen the Complaints Team's ability to robustly quality assure draft responses to complaints, enabling staff to ensure that all elements of the agreed complaint have been considered and addressed.

4 Major Service commentaries

4.1 Adults' Services

Adult Services - Summary

Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	258	75%	28%	73	41%	29%		27	314
2023	293	65%	41%	76	49%	25%		32	259

Adults' Services has the highest customer demand into the Customer Service Centre. Historically, it is also one of the services with the highest numbers of complaints and compliments.

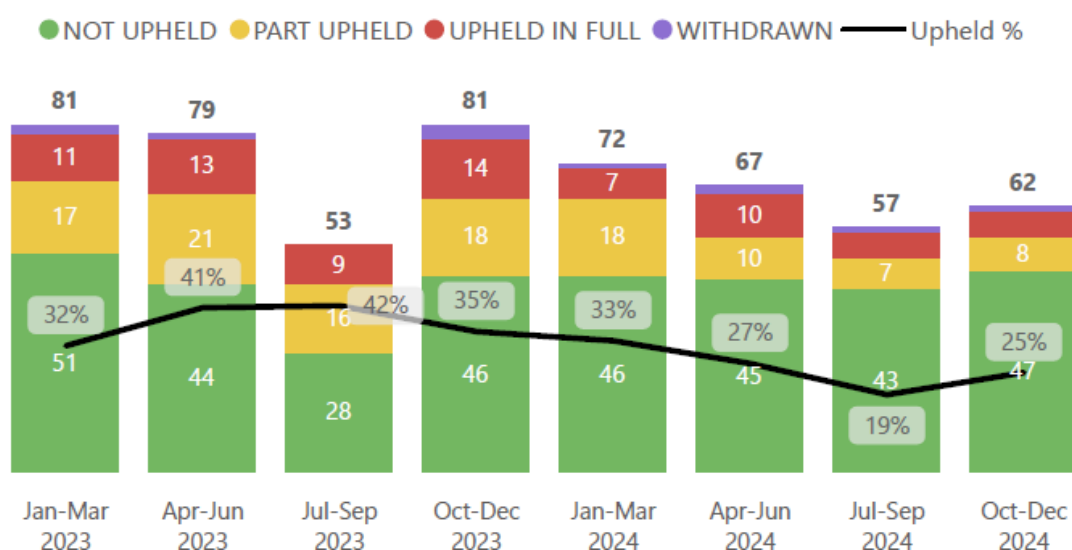
The number of complaints against Adults' Services reduced in 2024, with the number of stage one complaints closed (258) representing a 11.5% decrease when compared with the number of complaints closed in 2023 (293).

The reduction in complaints is likely to be related to improved performance in timeliness of financial assessments and wait list management. The weekly meetings between operational management and the Complaints Team have enabled improved compliance with response timescales and better oversight of complaints.

As well as the number of stage one complaints responded to during 2024 decreasing, the number of complaints that were upheld or upheld in part also decreased from 41% in 2023 to 28% in 2024.

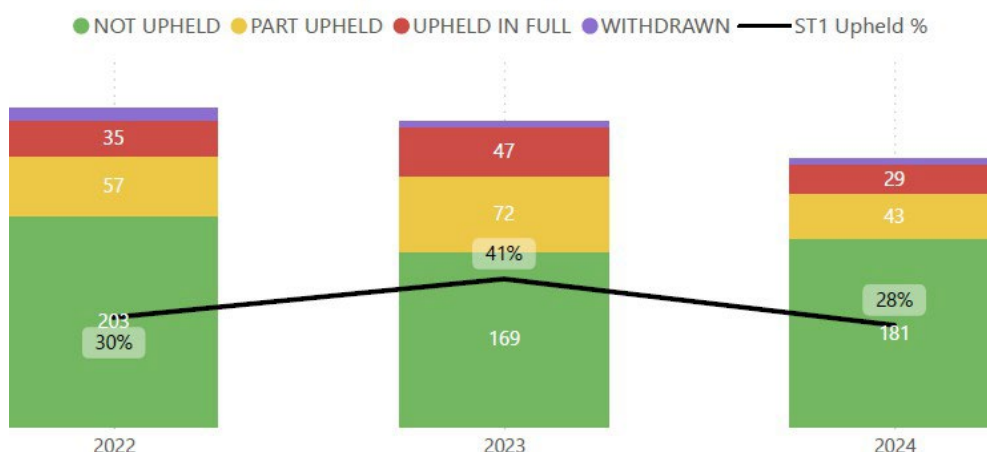
The graphics below set out the number of complaints received and the outcome recorded against them. The data includes 2023 figures to enable comparison.

Adult Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



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Adult Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



The number of customers who escalated their complaint beyond stage one decreased slightly from 76 in 2023 to 73 in 2024. This figure represents 28% of total complaints responded to in the period, meaning that just over one in four complainants remained dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage one response, exercising their statutory right to escalate to the second (and final) stage. In 2023, 25% of complainants exercised that right.

Of the 73 complaints that were escalated to stage two of the Adults' statutory complaints process, 29% were found to be upheld, or upheld in part upon review.

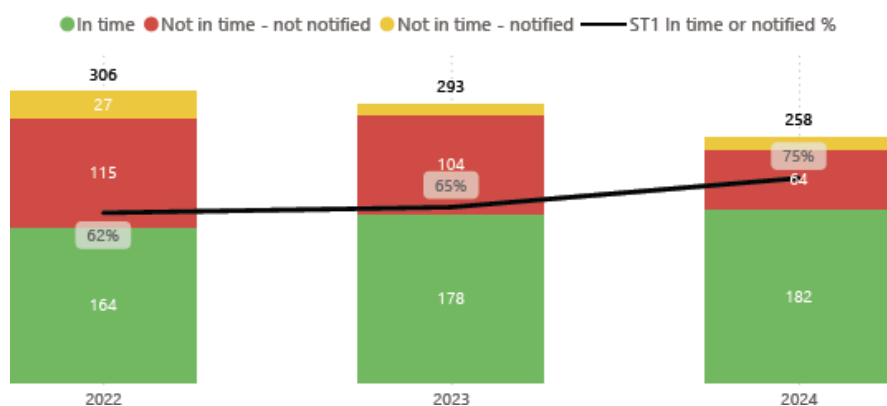
The review of stage one complaints at senior level is indicative of the Council's commitment to ensuring complaints are considered within a robust, two-tiered model, providing complainants with an assurance that each decision can be reviewed by a senior manager.

4.2 Timeliness of Responses

The Council's target for complaints responses at stage one is ten working days, with a maximum target of twenty working days unless an extension is agreed, or the complainant is notified. The graphics below show the percentage of complaints responded to within agreed timescale in 2024 (or as extended and notified) has increased significantly (75%) when compared with 2023 (65%).

The percentage of stage one complaints responded to in time is exactly in line with the Council average of 75%. The Complaints Team held weekly compliance meetings with senior management in an effort to drive compliance rates up in 2024; section 2.1 of this report refers. In 2025, the weekly compliance meetings will continue to ensure statutory deadlines remain in focus and are reviewed frequently.

Adult Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales

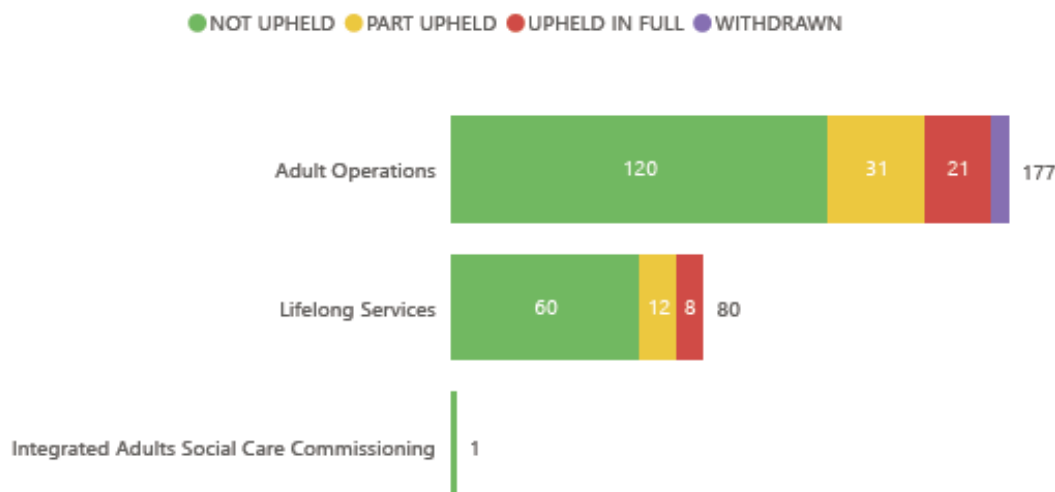


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To better understand the figure of 258 complaints recorded against Adults' Social Care, it is necessary to drill down into the data for context.

The graphic provides an overview of the complaints received across the service areas. They are dominated by the number of complaints about direct operational services such as Lifelong Services and the geographical operational areas (Community Teams).

Adult Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Service and Outcome

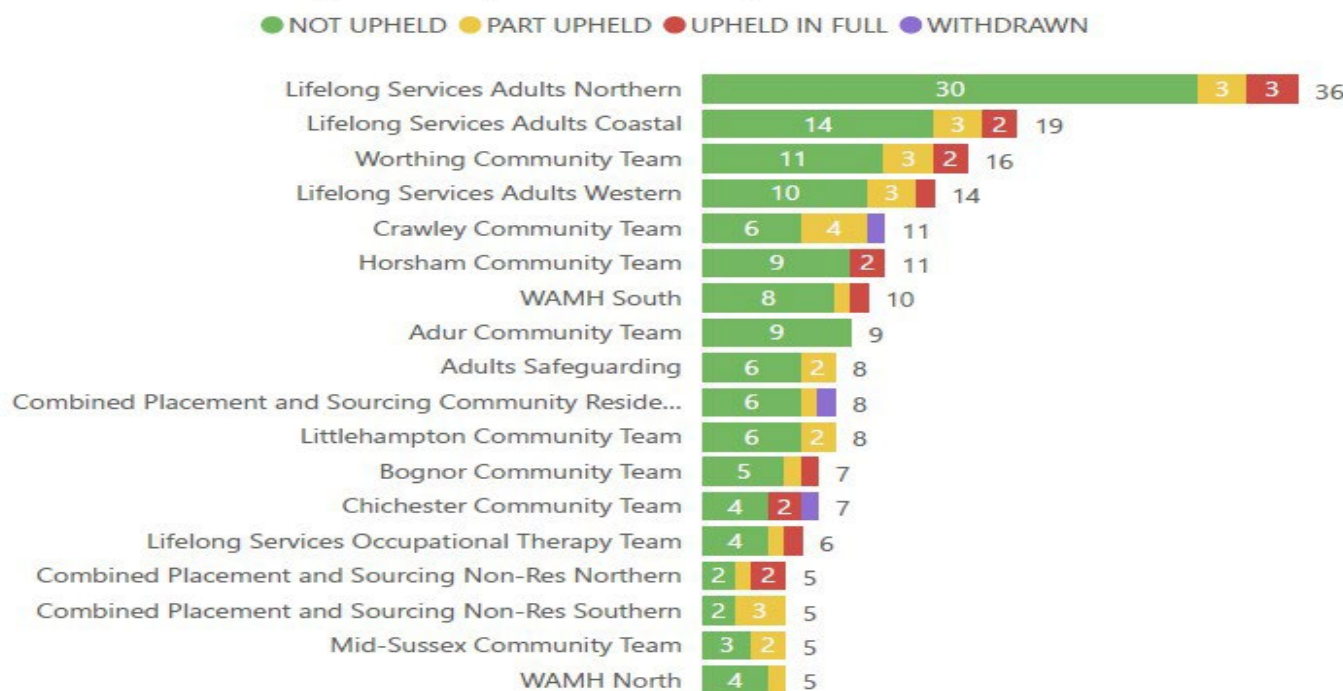


4.3 Complaints by Team (5 and Above):

The chart below sets out the complaints recorded against individual teams where 5 or more complaints were investigated. The table also tracks the outcome of complaints raised against the named team.

The graphic also shows how many complaints were upheld in each area as well as how many were withdrawn.

Adult Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Team and Outcome

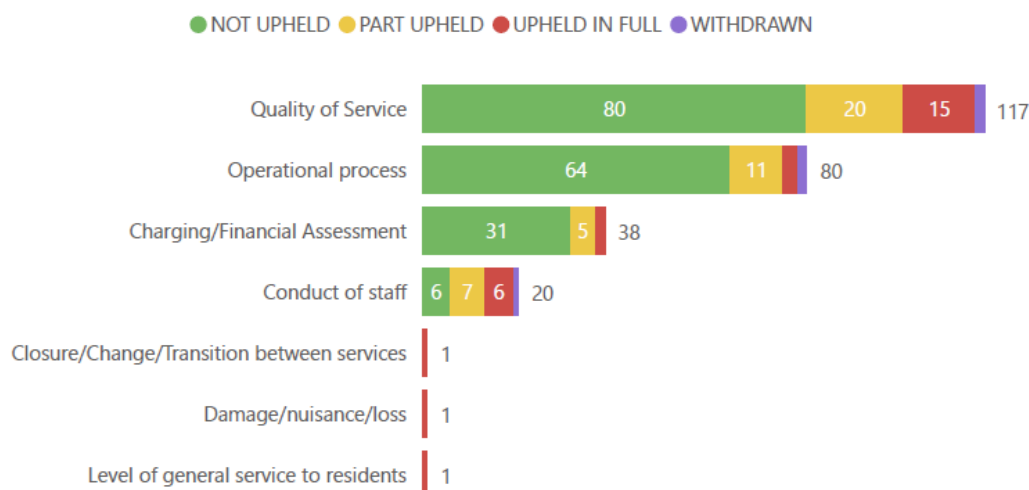


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At 28%, the percentage of upheld stage one complaints in Adults' Social Care is lower than the Council average of 36% but remains within the expected range.

The graphic below shows the categories of complaints about Adults' Social Care. For reporting purposes, the categories try to capture the *substantive* issue complained about.

Adult Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Theme and Outcome



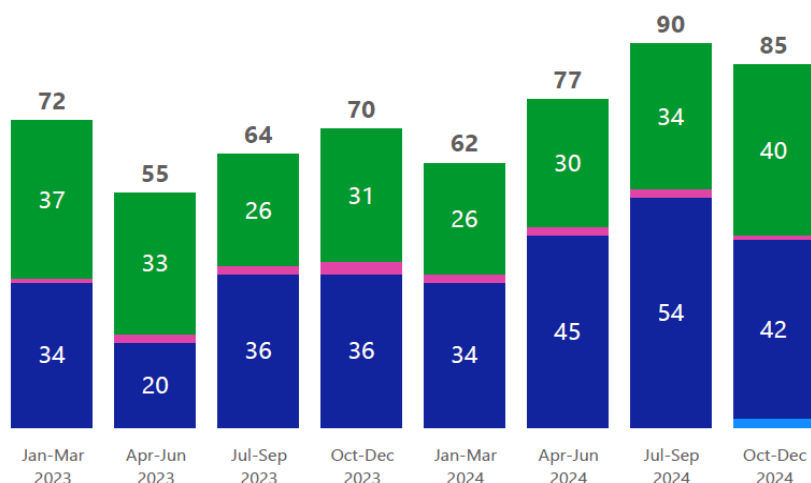
The majority of complaints received relate to complainants' expectation that the service provided to them by the Council ought to have been better or that the processes followed have not been applied correctly. Complaints about the quality of a service include issues such as the standard/level of service provided to a customer; the quality and timeliness of communication; and 'failure demand' (where someone has promised an action and failed to follow this up).

The number of formal complaints logged in relation to the quality of service provision and the application of process should be read against the number of contacts with more than 12,000 adults receiving a direct or commissioned service in 2024.

The graphic below shows in 2024, Adults' Social Care received a total of 314 formal compliments.

Adult Services - Compliments by category

● Ease of access ● General service level ● None ● Staff attitude/behaviours



5 Children, Young People and Learning

5.1 Children's Services

Children Services - Summary

Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	183	79%	33%	45	67%	42%	13	13	223
2023	292	72%	29%	40	73%	48%	11	18	97

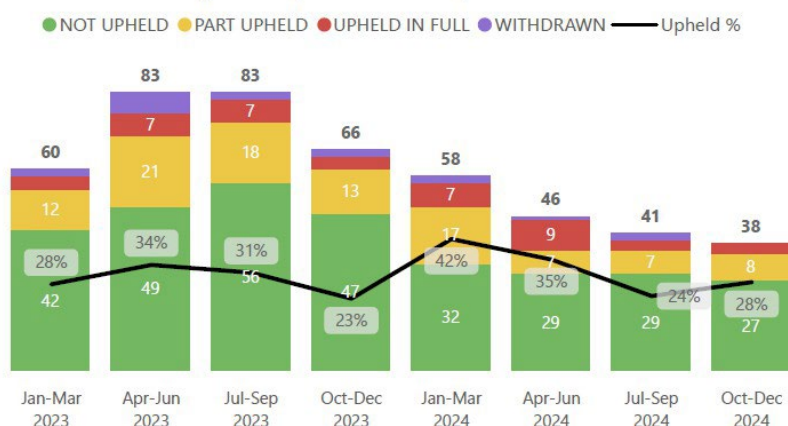
Children's Services is an area that has historically generated a high number of formal complaints. The nature of the work is often perceived to be intrusive by the families the service works with and many interventions are neither sought nor welcomed.

The number of complaints recorded against Children's Services decreased significantly in 2024 to 183 (292 in 2023). These figures are highlighted in the graphics below.

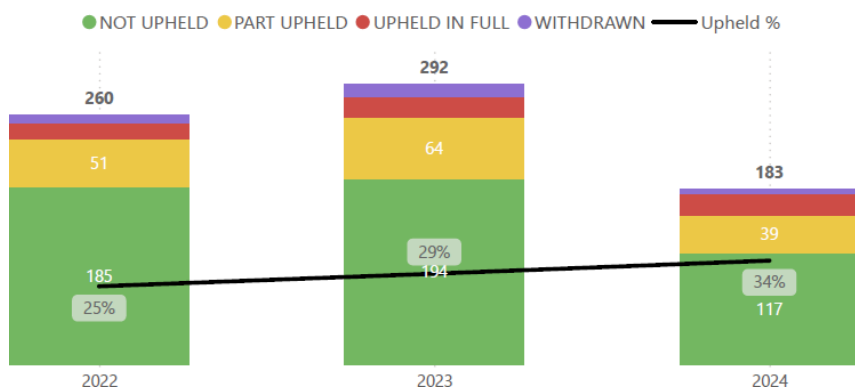
The number of customers who escalated their complaint increased slightly from 40 in 2023 to 45 in 2024. This figure represents 24% of customers exercising their right to escalate to stage two of the statutory complaints procedure; and increase in the percentage recorded in 2023 (14%).

The statutory complaints procedure for Children's Social Care is prescriptive and all complainants have the statutory right to escalate to the second stage.

Children Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Children Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



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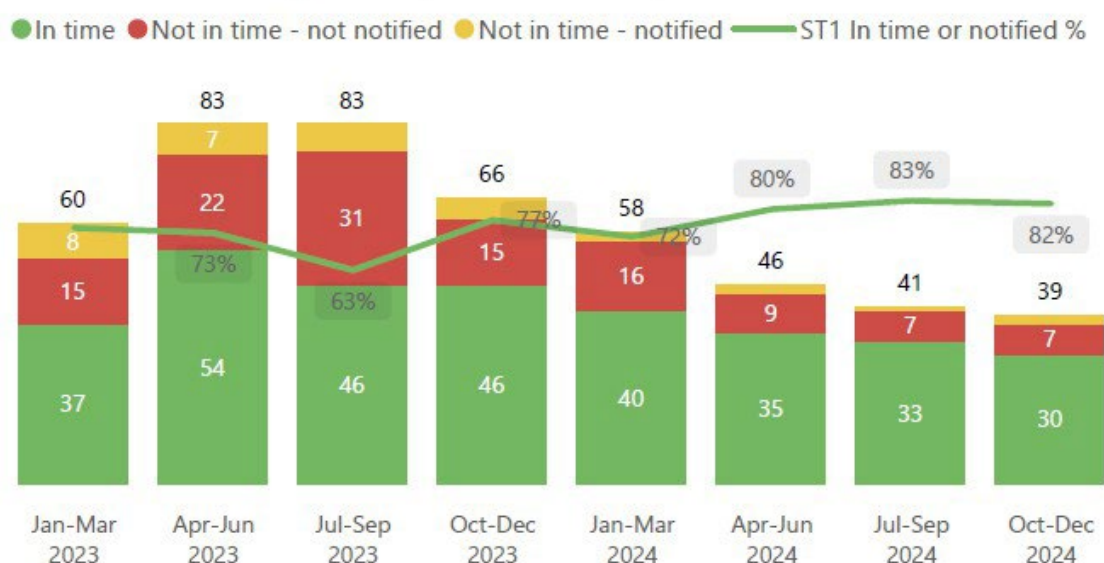
The Council's aim is to resolve complaints quickly and locally, to ensure the customer receives a full and considered response at the first stage of the complaints process. The continued low level of escalated complaints suggests that responses at stage one answer complainants effectively.

5.2 Timeliness of Responses

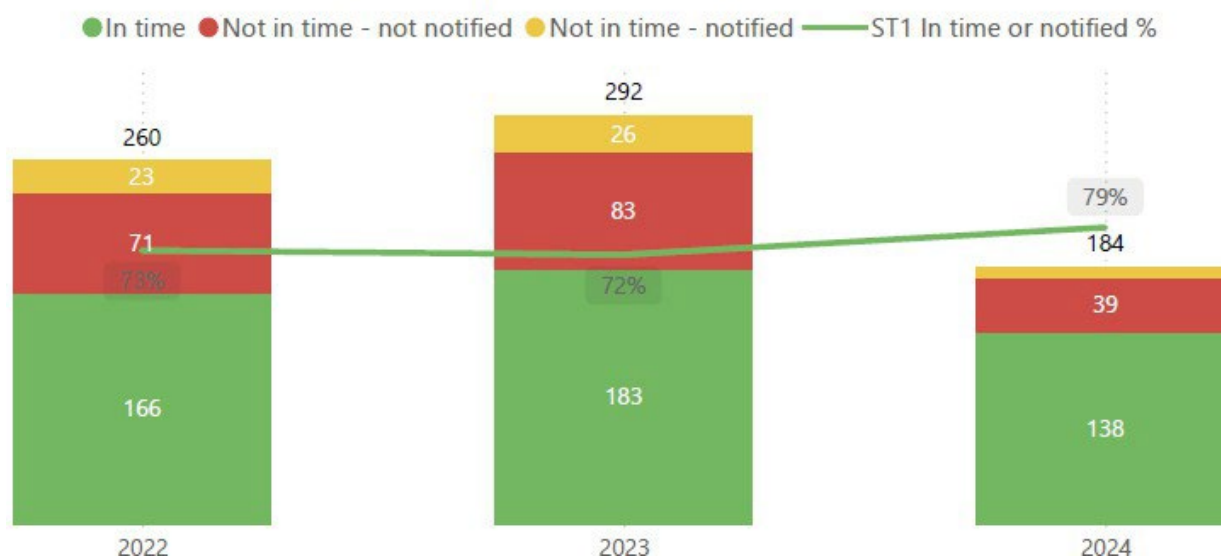
The percentage of complaints responded to within agreed timescale in 2023 (as extended and notified) has increased in 2024 (79%) when compared with 2023 (72%) as set out in the graphics below.

The percentage of stage one complaints responded to in time exceeds the Council average of 75%. The steps that senior managers within Children's Services have taken to drive compliance rates up in 2024 are set out in section 2.1 of this report.

Children Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales



Children Services - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales



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The percentage of complaints upheld (or upheld in part) increased slightly from 29% in 2023 to 33% in 2024, slightly below the Council average (36%).

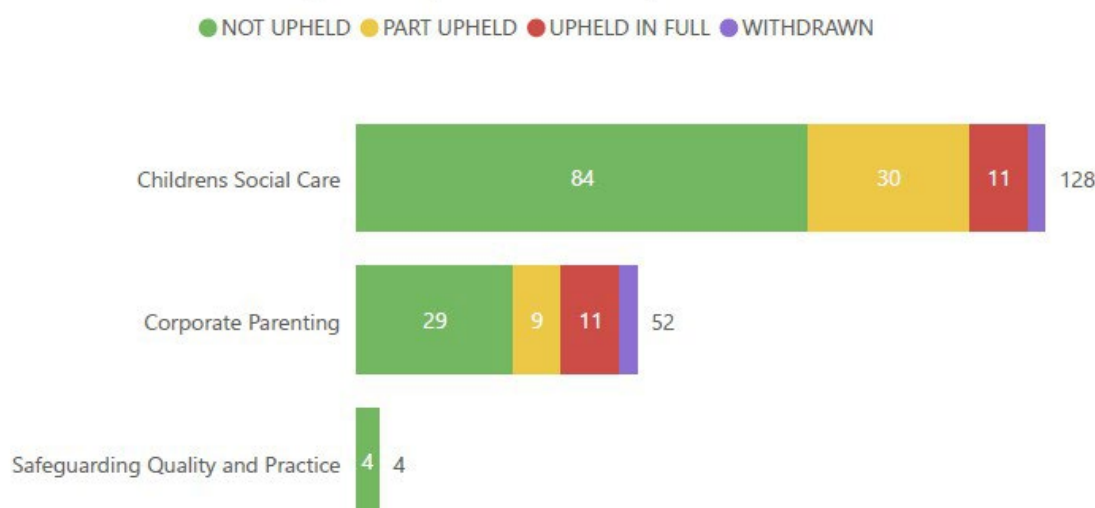
Most complaints about Children's Social Care are made by adults either on behalf of children or regarding their own interactions with the service.

Children and young people are encouraged to access an advocate to support them in making a formal complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure.

Most young people who are supported by the West Sussex Advocacy Service use that support to resolve their concerns without making formal complaints. More details of how young people are supported by this service and the Independent Visitor service can be found in the separate *Advocacy* and *Independent Visitor* reports and through the Council's webpages dedicated to [Advocacy](#) and [Independent Visitors](#).

The graphic below show a breakdown of complaints for 2024, grouped by team and then outcome. The graphs illustrate the total number of complaints closed, the number upheld (or partially upheld) and the number withdrawn.

Children Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Service and Outcome



It is the service areas that have most direct contact, and which are involved in decisions about intervention, that receive the most complaints. For instance, the IFD* (Integrated Front Door) deal with incoming initial contacts and make decisions about whether concerns should be taken forward and receive complaints both about decisions that a concern does or does not meet the threshold for action.

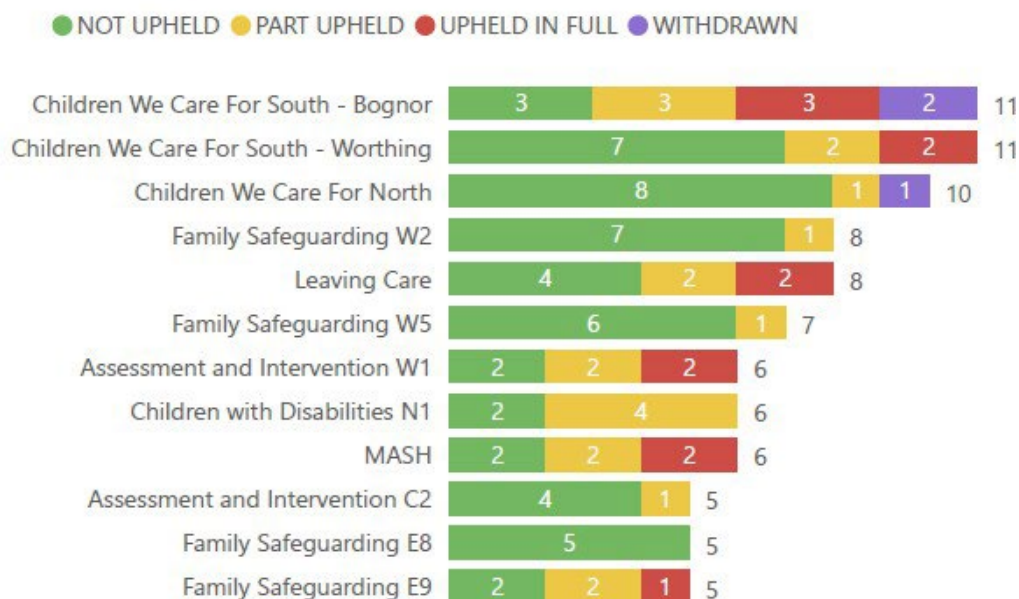
It is important to note that majority of complaints against these services are not upheld.

***Note that IFD figures are reported against 'MASH' (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) in the graphics below**

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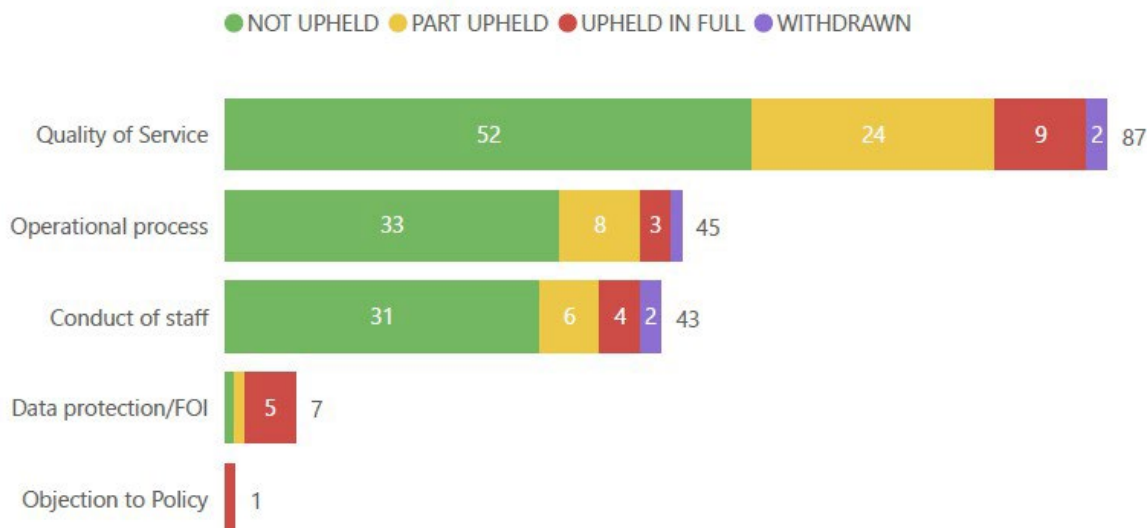
5.3 Complaints by Team (5 and Above)

Children Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Team and Outcome



The graphics above and below show the category of complaints about Children's Services and the proportion upheld for each. Complaints about social care are often complex and can include dissatisfaction about different elements of the service provided. For reporting purposes, the category reflects the *substantive* issue complained about.

Children Services - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Theme and Outcome



The statutory Children's process has three stages. Stage two requires the Council to appoint an independent person to oversee the investigation undertaken by the nominated investigating officer. Both investigating officer and Independent Person provide reports to the Council, which are considered and responded to by the Council's Adjudicating Officer.

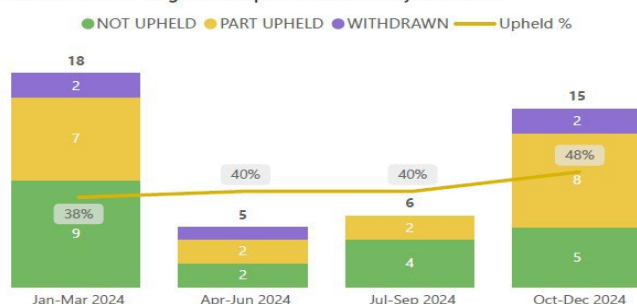
Complainants agree a statement of complaint with the investigating officer and the independent person. Often these statements are complex and lengthy, meaning that investigations are often multi-faceted, yielding a range of outcomes on sometimes unrelated complaints.

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Of the 44 stage two reviews completed in 2024, 19 were upheld (in full or in part); 20 were not upheld; and 6 complainants withdrew from the process.

The graphic below sets out the outcomes of the stage two complaints considered in 2024.

Children Services - Stage 2 complaints closed by outcome

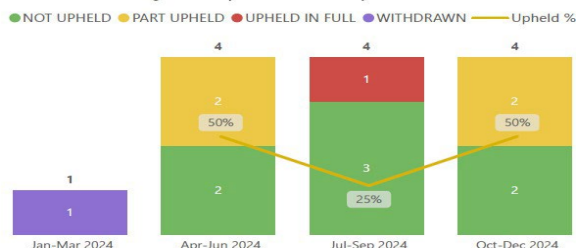


Stage three of the process requires the Council to appoint an independent panel to review the findings at stage two. The panel is attended by the Council's Adjudicating Officer, the investigating officer at stage two, the complainant and the Complaints Manager.

In 2024, 13 complaints were considered at stage three of the statutory complaints process. In total, only 12 panels were convened by the Council. Of those 12 panels, 7 found complaints to be not upheld, 4 were found to be partially upheld and one was found to be upheld in full. One complainant withdrew from the process, meaning no panel was arranged.

The graphic below sets out the outcomes of the stage three complaints considered in 2024.

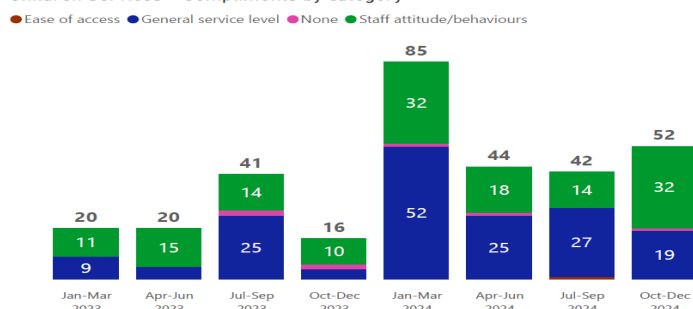
Children Services - Stage 3 complaints closed by outcome



Managers and operational staff are encouraged to report compliments received by them in recognition of their good practice. In recent years the Complaints Manager has stressed the importance of staff reporting the receipt of a compliment; the number recorded in 2024 reflects this – 223 formal compliments were logged in 2024, an increase from the 99 recorded in 2023.

Although this is very positive, it is very likely many unreported compliments are still being received; services have been asked to ensure they report compliments to the Complaints Team when received. The graphic below sets out the number of compliments received, and the category recorded in 2023 and 2024.

Children Services - Compliments by category



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

5.4 Education and Skills

The work undertaken by many of the teams within Education & Skills involves emotive subject matter and complex decision making, which attract a relatively large number of complaints.

Education & Skills - Summary

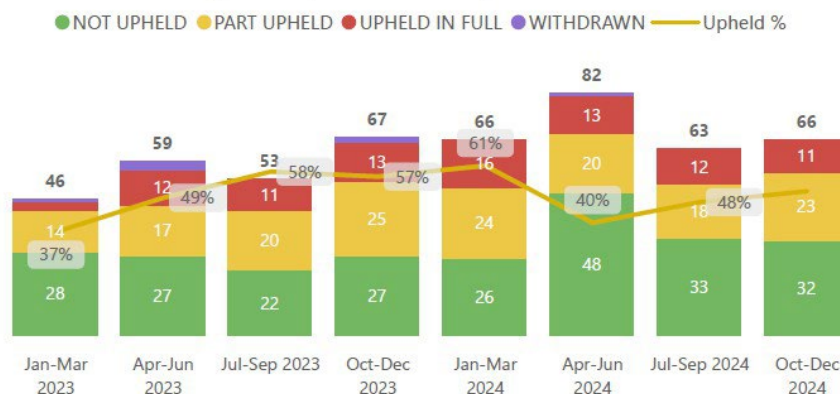
Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	277	73%	49%	101	53%	63%		47	303
2023	225	77%	51%	40	38%	58%		19	55

An increase in complaints in Education & Skills was anticipated as continued pressures in the area of special educational needs (nationally and locally) has resulted in continued delays to the assessment of children's special educational needs beyond the statutory timescales.

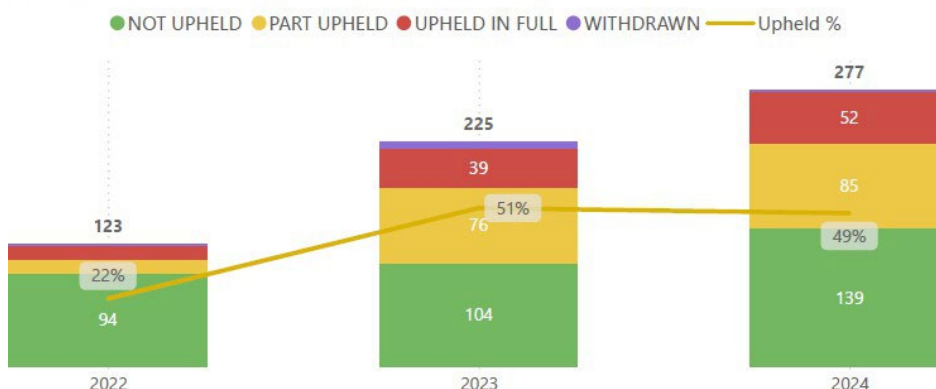
The increase in demand for services within Education and Skills has affected authorities across the country, and although the Council has put in place measures to address challenges faced as a result of increased demand, it will some time before these measures take full effect in the context of volume of complaints traffic.

The number of complaints recorded against Education & Skills increased from 225 in 2023 to 277 in 2024, which is highlighted in the next two graphs below.

Education & Skills - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Education & Skills - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The number of customers who escalated their complaint beyond stage one increased from 40 in 2023 to 101 in 2024. This figure represents 36.5% of customers exercising their right to escalate to stage two of the corporate complaints procedure; in 2023, 17.5% of complaints were escalated and responded to at stage two.

Of the 277 stage one complaints closed in 2024, 49% found fault with service provision. The vast majority of fault related to a failure to meet local and statutory deadlines in the assessment and planning space, and complaints that operational officers did not maintain timely and meaningful communication with service users. The percentage of complaints upheld in 2024 represents a slight decrease in the figure recorded in 2023 (51%). The percentage of upheld complaints is above the Council average (36%) and for the second year in succession, 1 in 2 complainants have been justified in raising a formal complaint.

The Education & Skills service acknowledges the continued rise in complaints over the past year and recognises the impact this has had on children and families, particularly when navigating the complex landscape of special educational needs (SEN). We understand advocating for your child's needs is highly emotive and sensitive, and we take all feedback seriously as part of our commitment to continuous improvement.

The increase in recorded complaints reflects both the growing demand for SEN-related services and the national context of systemic pressure in this area. The proportion of complaints escalating to stage two, indicates a growing dissatisfaction with the timeliness and quality of our initial responses.

To address these concerns, the service has undertaken a targeted programme of work, including:

- **Training and Development:** A training package has been rolled out for frontline staff, focusing on statutory obligations, effective communication with families, and complaint handling. This has included input from CCD directly to team managers.
- **Service Reconfiguration:** We have initiated structural changes to the SEN assessment and planning teams, including the creation of a further operations roles to support the more timely progressing of work.
- **Process Improvement:** There have been some limited review of internal processes but further work is needed and the service is keen to engage in the use of AI at the earliest opportunity.
- **Capacity Building:** Additional staffing resources has been provided which has had an impact on timeliness generally and we have seen a reduction in the overall wait time for an EHCP from 49 week to 37 week average. This staff increase was based on a lower demand rate than we saw in 2024 meaning the team have not been able to keep up with demand and deliver a sustained improvement given the volume and complexity of cases.

The service remains committed to learning from complaints and using them as a driver for meaningful change. Reducing the volume of upheld complaints and improving the service experience for families is a top priority for Education & Skills. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of these measures in the coming year.

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

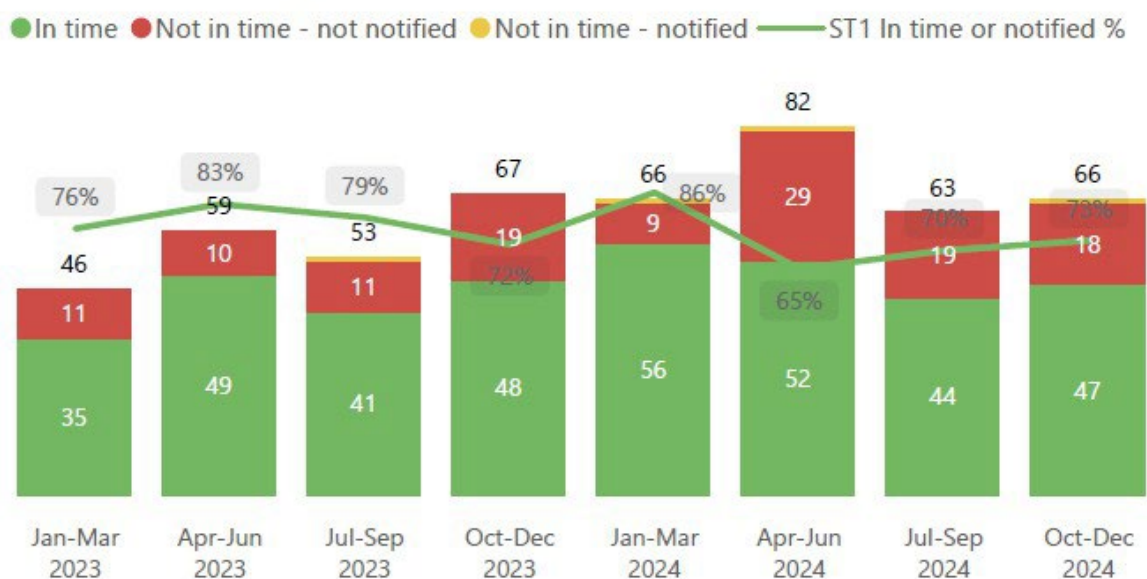
5.5 Timeliness of Responses

The percentage of Education & Skills complaints responded to within agreed timescale in (or as extended and notified) has decreased slightly in 2024 (73%) when compared with 2023 (77%) as highlighted in the graphics below.

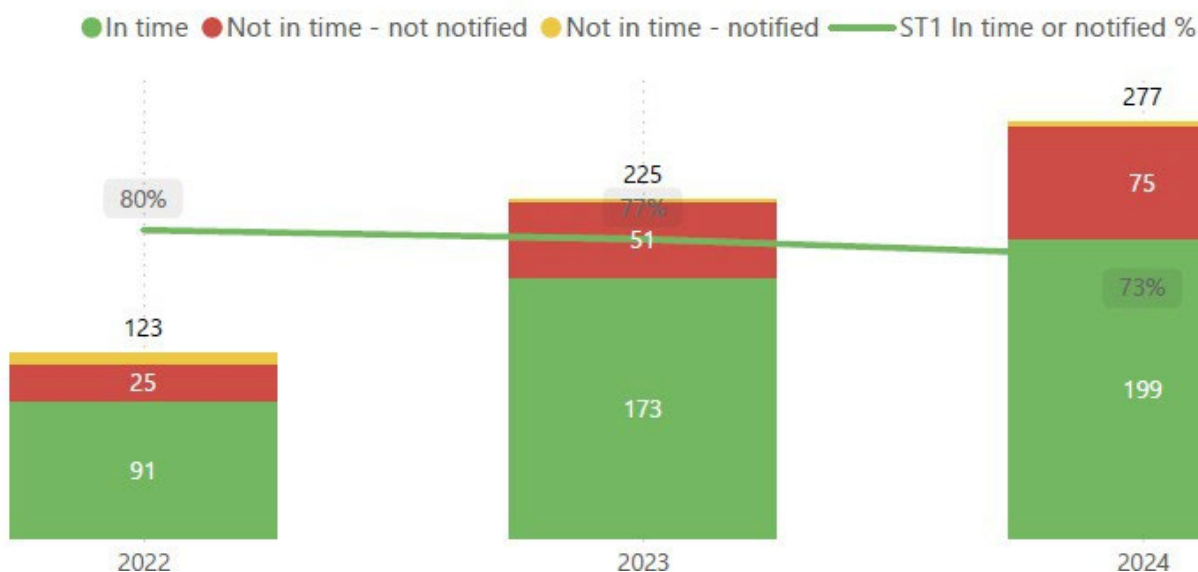
In the context of the increased operational pressure in the SENAT and the increase in complaints traffic, compliance with the published timescales remains close to the Council average, but can certainly be improved. The Complaints Team will continue to monitor compliance in this space.

The graphs below show the compliance with published complaints timescales throughout 2023 and 2024.

Education & Skills - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales



Education & Skills - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

5.6 Complaints by Team (5 and Above)

The graphics below show a breakdown of complaints by service areas and by teams where a team received 5 or more complaints in 2024.

The graphs below provide an overview of the complaints received across the service areas and by team within that service.

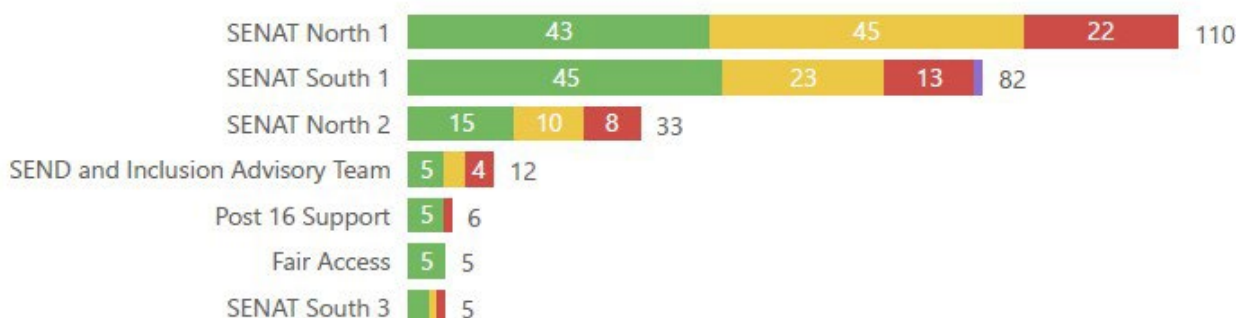
Education & Skills - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Service and Outcome

● NOT UPHELD ● PART UPHELD ● UPHELD IN FULL ● WITHDRAWN



Education & Skills - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Team and Outcome

● NOT UPHELD ● PART UPHELD ● UPHELD IN FULL ● WITHDRAWN



The traffic of formal complaints is dominated by complaints received in relation to assessment teams. The operational pressures described at the top of this section of the report provide some explanation for the increase in dissatisfaction from service users in the assessment space; the increase in complaints was expected and a high volume of complaints traffic in this space is projected in 2025.

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The graphics also show how many complaints were upheld in each area as well as how many were withdrawn.

It should be noted that during the latter part of 2024, a reorganisation of teams resulted in the renaming of many of the services reported on within this report. The Complaints Team has reconfigured the central logging system to reflect these changes to maintain the clarity of reporting throughout 2025.

As mentioned above, delays in the special educational needs assessment process is reflected in the number of complaints against the Special Educational Needs Assessment Team (SENAT).

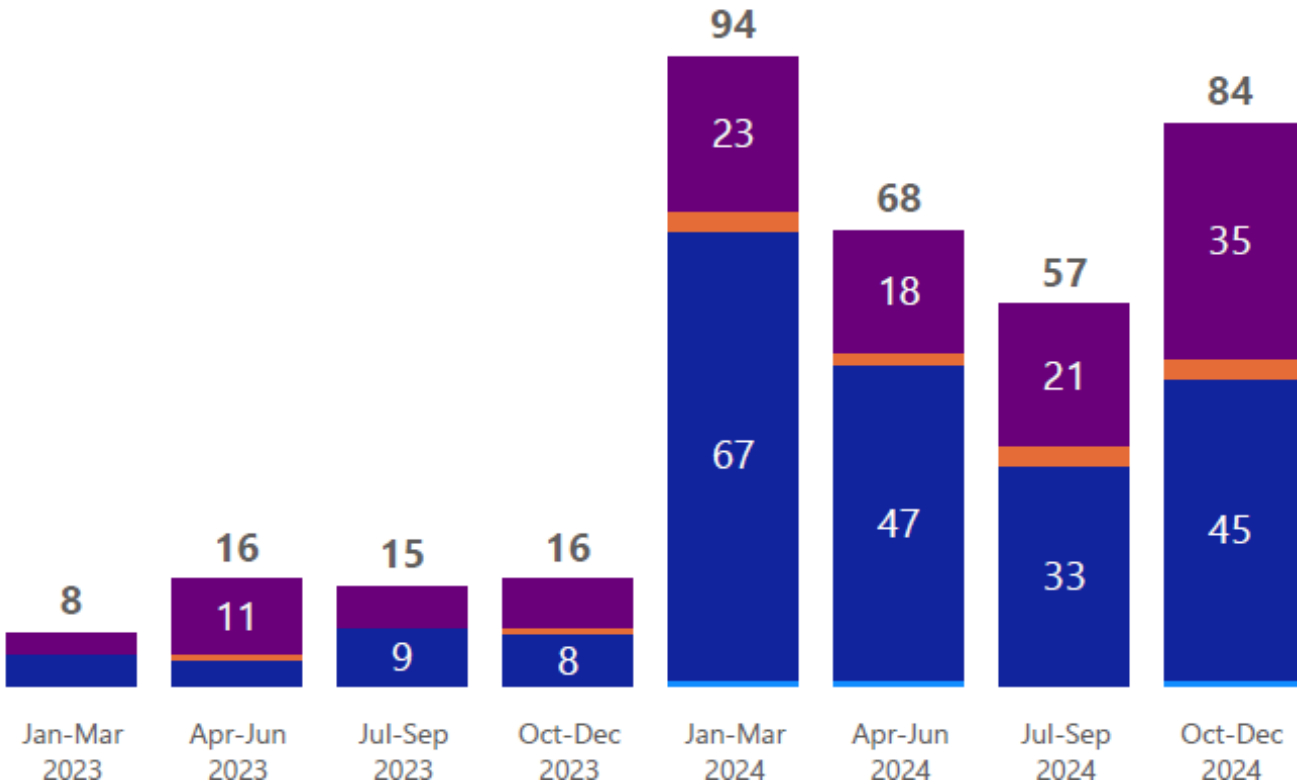
To provide some context the teams issued 1788 new EHCPs in 2023, when compared with 761 in 2023. At the end of 2024 there were 9416 EHCPs maintained by West Sussex (all requiring appropriate action associated with review, monitoring and general case management) up 21% from 7783 in 2023, so less than 1% of SEN customers made complaints.

Services within Education and Skills received 303 formal compliments in 2024, a significant increase to the total recorded in 2023 (55). Services have received a large number of compliments in recognition of the good work undertaken with young people and their families; the number of compliments reflects well on the service offered in the context of presenting operational challenges.

The graphic below sets out the number of compliments received, and the category recorded in 2023 and 2024.

Education & Skills - Compliments by category

● Ease of access ● General service level ● None ● Staff attitude/behaviours



6 Place Services

6.1 Highways, Transport and Planning

Highways, Transport & Planning - Summary

Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	252	82%	20%	20	55%	35%		20	145
2023	500	82%	28%	21	62%	29%		14	178

Highways, Transport & Planning is, historically, one of the main service delivery groups that report the highest number of complaints.

However, in 2024 the number of complaints recorded against Highways, Transport & Planning decreased from 500 in 2023 to 252 in 2024. The decrease in complaints recorded in 2024 represents a reduction of 50%.

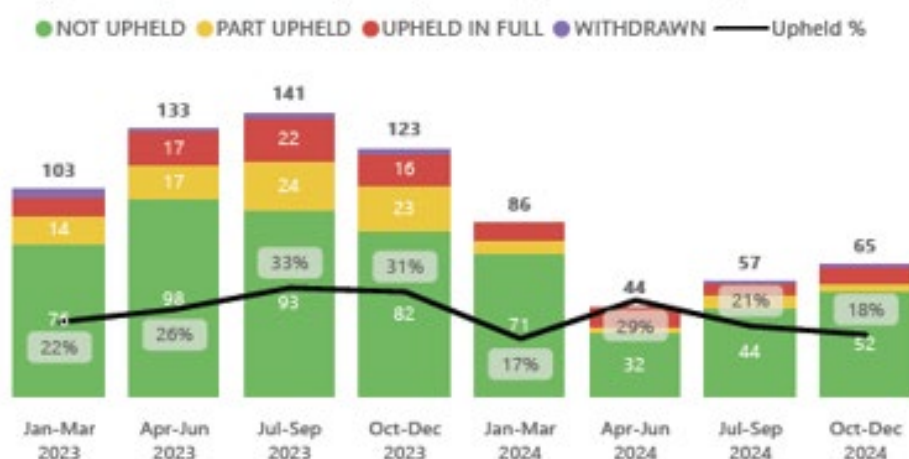
The number of complaints investigated in the period decreased significantly compared to the previous year. The exceptionally wet and cold autumn/winter of 2022/2023 had a major impact on network conditions, which contributed to an increase in complaints.

Additional revenue funding, increased staffing and contractor resources has improved the timeliness of responses to safety and drainage issues across the network during 2024. This focus on service improvement for residents is reflected in the acute drop in complaints traffic recorded.

The vast majority of complaints relate to the geographical operational teams carrying out services on the public highway. As the Highways Authority, the Council is responsible for the maintenance and repair of over 4000 kilometres of public highways; complaints recorded against Highways, Transport & Planning are historically related to the Council's operational actions in this space with 2024 being no exception.

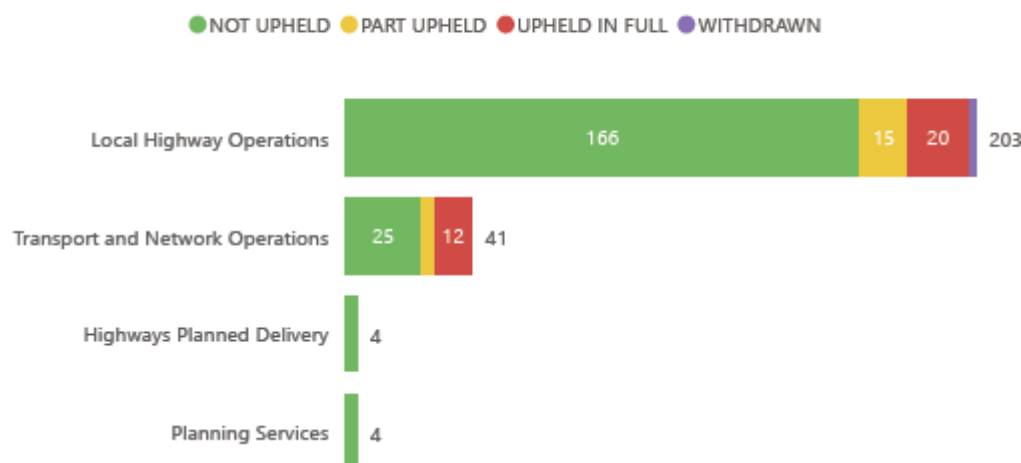
The graphics below show the number of Stage 1 closed by outcome with the second graphic showing a breakdown of complaints by service areas and by team for 2024; the first graphic tracks the outcome of complaints in Highways Transport and Planning across two years.

Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

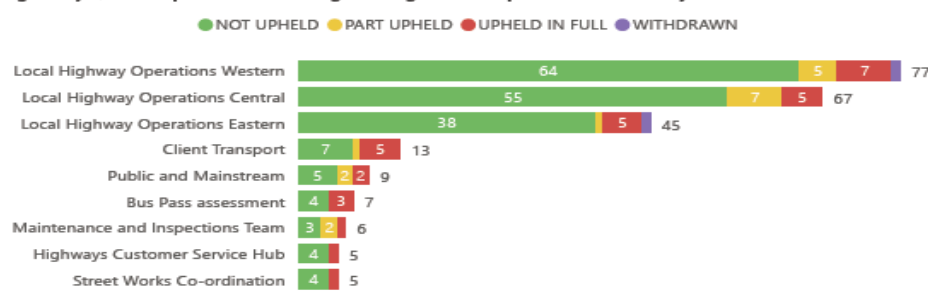
Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Service and Outcome



6.2 Complaints by Team (5 and Above)

The graphic below shows the volume of complaints by individual teams (where 5 or more complaints have been recorded) and the outcomes of the complaints investigated.

Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Team and Outcome



The broad spectrum of services provided, and the large number of residents affected by operational decisions means that expressions of dissatisfaction are to be expected.

The distribution of complaints is not surprising, with Local Highway Operations having responsibility for much of the work that impinges on the public, such as checks on the condition of the highway and the ordering of repair work which can affect traffic flow.

Similarly, Streetworks Coordination, with responsibility for issuing licences for repair and other works, receive complaints about delays caused by traffic controls, although these are not likely to be upheld, and often these are emergency works which by their nature are put in place with little or no notice and can give rise to a number of similar complaints by residents.

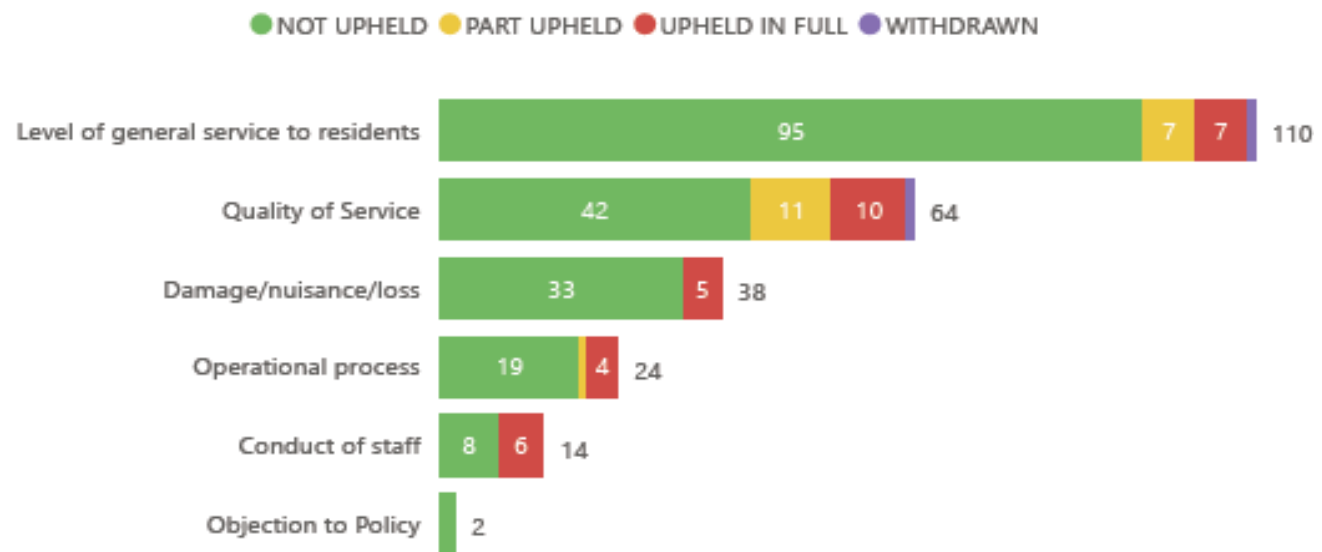
The graphic below shows the *category* of complaints received along with the outcome. For reporting purposes, the assigned category reflects the *substantive* issue complained about.

Complaints most likely to be upheld are those about communication and delays and these are included within the two categories with the highest numbers of complaints.

The directorate continues to work on the importance of customer service and encouraging staff to prioritise this alongside the priority of maintaining infrastructure.

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Theme and Outcome



As staff behaviour is a key area of customer service, where complaints were found to be upheld or partially upheld, appropriate steps were taken, and appropriate remedies were offered to customers following the conclusion of complaints investigations.

The percentage of complaints upheld (or upheld in part) decreased from 28% in 2023 to 20% in 2024. This percentage falls significantly below the Council average for upheld complaints (36%).

The number of customers who escalated their complaint beyond stage one decreased slightly from 21 in 2023 to 20 in 2024. This figure represents 8% of customers exercising their right to escalate to stage two of the corporate complaints procedure; in 2023, 4% of complaints were escalated and responded to at stage two.

The low number of complainants choosing to escalate complaints suggests that responding managers in Highways, Transport & Planning are providing full, considered and robust responses at stage one of the process, making fair and informed decisions. Only 35% of escalated complaints were upheld (in full or in part) endorsing the position that stage one responses were full, considered and fair.

6.3 Timeliness of Responses

The Council's timescale for responses at stage one is ten working days, with a maximum target of twenty working days unless an extension is agreed or the complainant is notified.

In 2024 Highways, Transport & Planning responded to 82% of complaints within 10 working days (or with an agreed extension); the same figure was recorded in 2023 (82%).

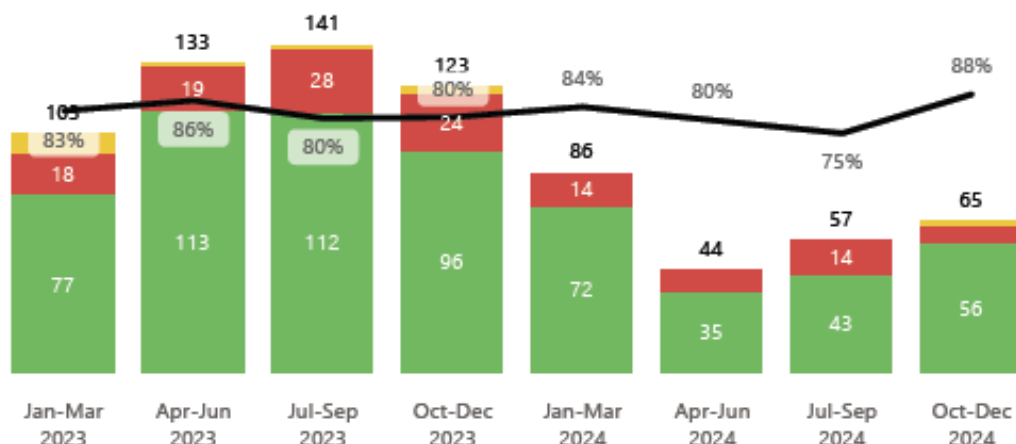
This high level of compliance has remained consistently strong over the past three years and this performance has been unaffected by continued operational challenges.

The graphics below show the compliance rates within Highways, Transport and Planning over a two year period.

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

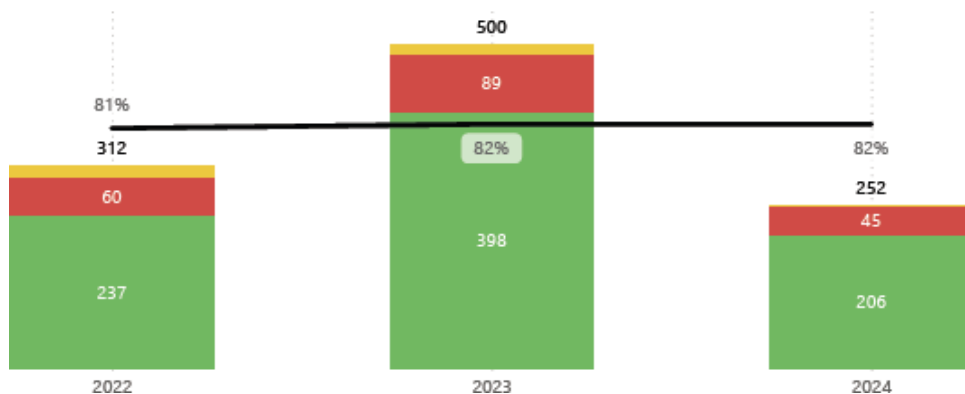
Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales

● In time ● Not in time - not notified ● Not in time - notified — ST1 In time or notified %



Highways, Transport & Planning - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales

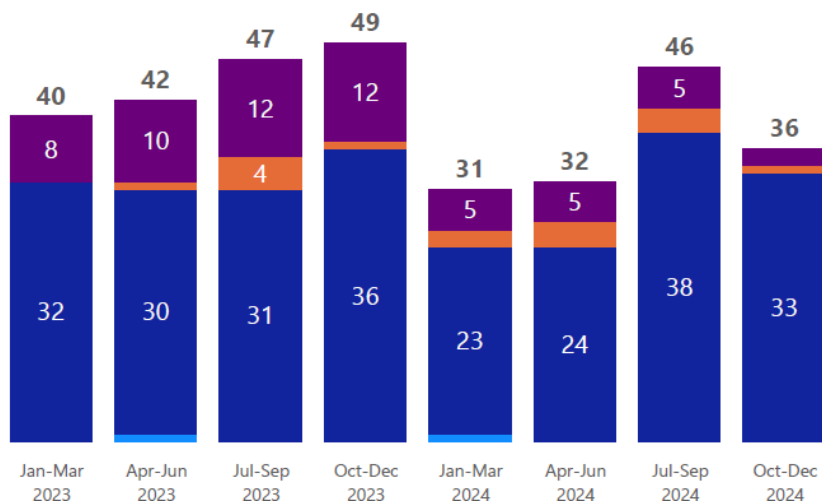
● In time ● Not in time - not notified ● Not in time - notified — ST1 In time or notified %



Services within Highways, Transport and Planning received 145 formal compliments in 2024, a decrease in the total recorded in 2023 (178). The graphic below outlines the compliments received during 2024 by category.

Highways, Transport & Planning - Compliments by category

● Ease of access ● General service level ● None ● Staff attitude/behaviours



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

7 Communities

Communities - Summary

Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	30	93%	53%	4	75%	50%		1	964
2023	66	91%	39%	4	75%	25%	1	1	1374

Teams in this directorate historically receive a large number of compliments and very few complaints. In 2024, 30 stage one complaints were received in relation to services provided by Communities in comparison to the 66 complaints recorded in 2023.

In March 2024 West Sussex County Council shifted to a new way of working within the Blue Badge Service where all elements of the process moved into the Councils Customer Service Centre which is the main front door for 23 services. The changes made have had a positive impact on the customers experience. Blue Badge applications are now processed by Customer Service professionals, they can assess Blue Badge walking and hidden disability applications through Desk Based Assessments strictly following the DfT guidelines, with an Occupational Therapist assessing the complex cases. The service has seen a 12% increase in demand, however, due to the improved ways of working customers are experiencing a 50% faster service which has resulted in a 78% reduction in complaints.

Although the percentage of complaints upheld at stage 1 across the directorate in 2024 (53%) was higher than the average for the Council, this only amounts to 16 complaints upheld across the entire directorate.

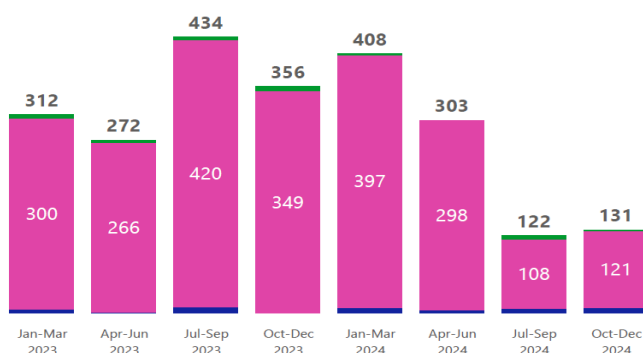
In 2024 the directorate responded to 93% of complaints within 10 working days (or with agreed extension). This is a slight improvement on 91% recorded in 2023. This remains some distance above the Council average of 75%.

Historically, the number of compliments received in relation to Communities has dwarfed those received by other directorates within the Council, in 2024, a total of 2714 compliments were formally recorded.

The figures reported here include 1750 compliments received in response to the Summer Reading Challenge, which has historically proven to be very popular with a broad range of customers of all ages; the Summer Reading Challenge compliments are not included in the graphics in this report. The graphic below details the compliments received but not including the Summer Reading Challenge.

Communities - Compliments by category

● General service level ● None ● Staff attitude/behaviours



8 Environment and Public Protection

Environment & Planning - Summary

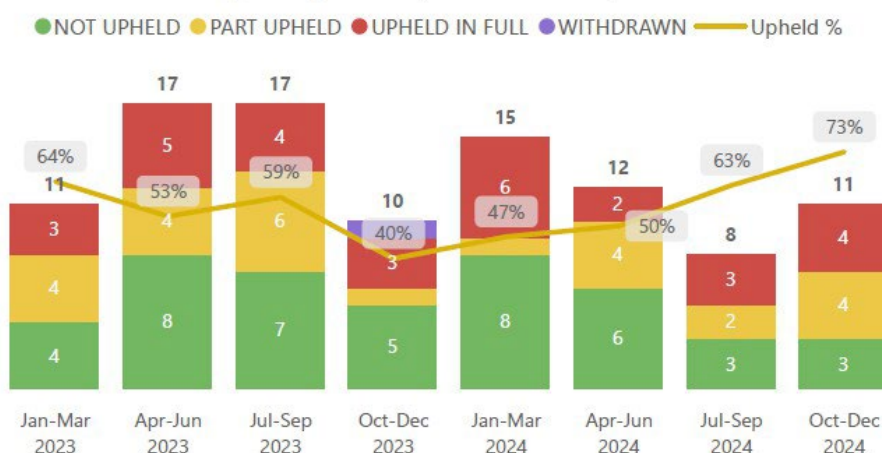
Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	46	100%	57%						30
2023	55	95%	55%	2	50%	50%		1	28

The Environment & Public Protection directorate includes services such as Trading Standards; Energy Services; Sustainability; Digital/Broadband delivery; and one of the Council's largest services, Waste Management.

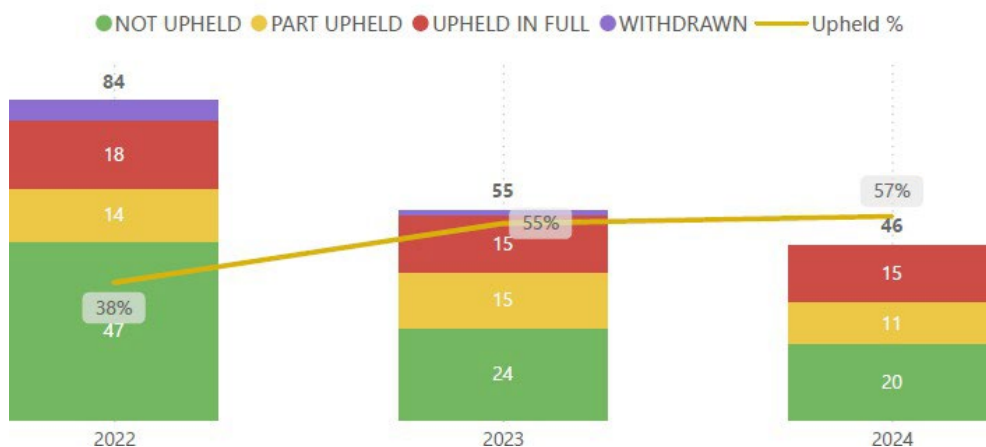
The number of complaints recorded against Environment and Public Protection decreased from 55 in 2023 to 46 in 2024.

The percentage of complaints upheld (or upheld in part) increased slightly from 55% in 2023 to 57% in 2024 as detailed in the graphics below. This percentage of upheld complaints is higher than the Council average for upheld complaints (36%).

Environment & Planning - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Environment & Planning - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The following graphics show a breakdown of complaints by service areas and by team for 2024.

Environment & Planning - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Service and Outcome

● NOT UPHELD ● PART UPHELD ● UPHELD IN FULL



Waste Management and especially the outsourced recycling sites across West Sussex generate the majority of complaints, compliments and objections to policy.

The majority of complaints relate to the services provided by the Household Waste Recycling Sites run by Biffa on behalf of the Council, but this should be viewed in the context of well over a million visits to the sites across the year.

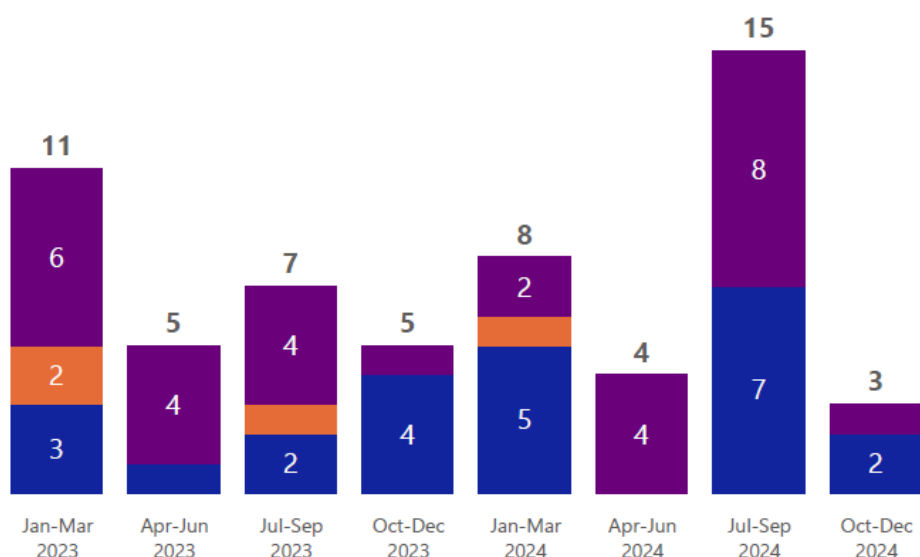
Many complaints received in relation to Biffa are anecdotal accounts of a customer's dissatisfaction with the customer service received on site. Biffa Area Managers investigate these complaints, often without any concrete evidence on which to rely. Responses are often very customer focussed, with an apology provided as a suitable remedy with an assurance that staff will be reminded of their commitment to excellent customer service, regardless of the challenges faced.

These complaints are formally logged as 'upheld' which provides useful context when considering the high percentage of complaints upheld within the Environment & Public Protection directorate.

During 2024, the Council recorded 30 compliments in relation to services provided. The graph below tracks the numbers of compliments recorded against services within the directorate over the last two years.

Environment & Planning - Compliments by category

● General service level ● None ● Staff attitude/behaviours



Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

9 Finance and Support Services

Finance, Procurement & Business Support - Summary

Year	Stage 1 closed	ST1 In time or notified %	ST1 Upheld %	Stage 2 closed	ST2 In time or notified %	ST2 Upheld %	Stage 3 closed	LGO Decisions received	Compliments received
2024	120	40%	51%	32	19%	22%		7	17
2023	87	39%	54%	8	25%	25%		4	13

The Finance and Support Services directorate includes the Welfare Benefits Advisors who undertake the financial assessments of clients received adult social care support. The service that has historically attracted a higher number of complaints from customers and families of customers unhappy with the service provided to them, or the outcome of the service.

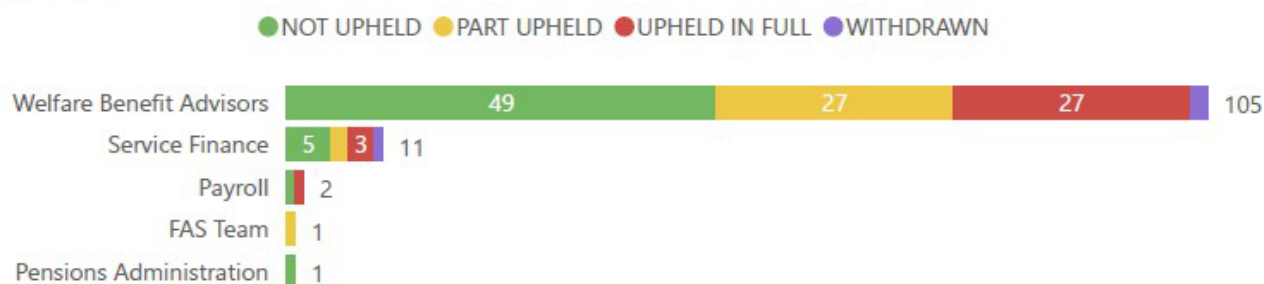
The number of complaints recorded against Finance and Support Services increased from 87 in 2023 to 120 in 2024, which represents an uplift of 35% for the second year in succession.

In 2024 the Complaints Team have worked hard to ensure that complaints that straddle Adults' Social Care and Welfare Benefits Advisors are logged appropriately. In previous years, it was revealed that on occasion, such complaints were logged against Adults' Social Care when the substantive complaint related to the service provided by the Welfare Benefits Advisors. Although it is not possible to attribute the increase in recorded complaints to this shift in administration, it is likely a key factor in the increase of complains recorded against Finance and Support Services.

9.1 Complaints by Team (5 and Above)

The graphic below shows the numbers of complaints recorded against individual services within Finance and Support Services.

Finance, Procurement & Business Support - Stage 1 Complaints closed by Team and Outcome



The percentage of complaints upheld (or upheld in part) reduced slightly from 54% in 2023 to 51% in 2024.

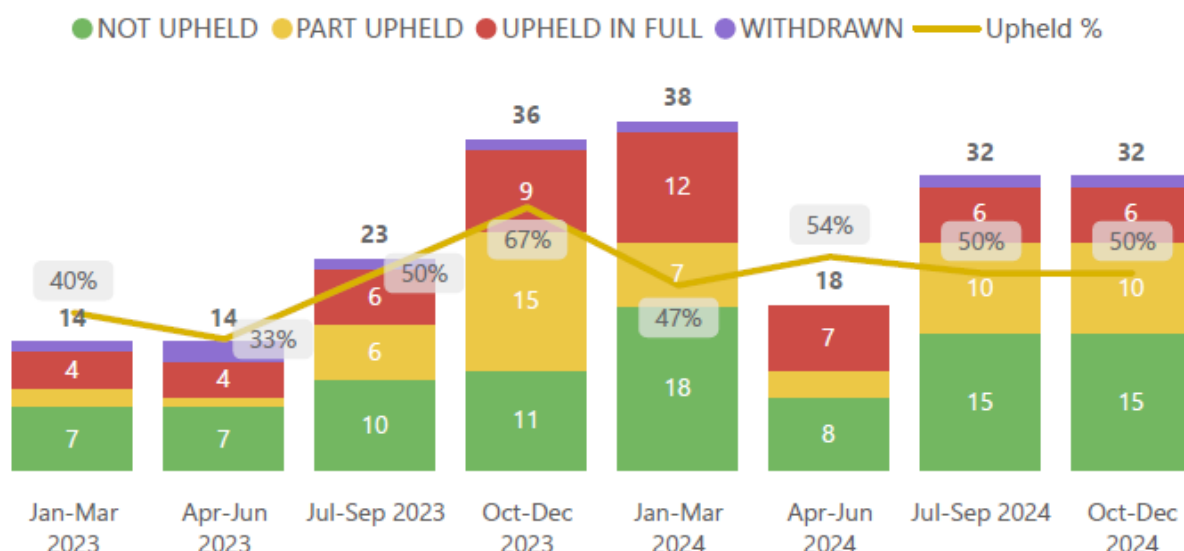
In total, 1 in 4 complaints escalated to the final stage, with 22% of escalated complaints upheld (in full or in part) by senior managers.

This percentage of upheld complaints is higher than the Council average for upheld complaints (36%) with 1 in 2 complainants having justified cause to complain.

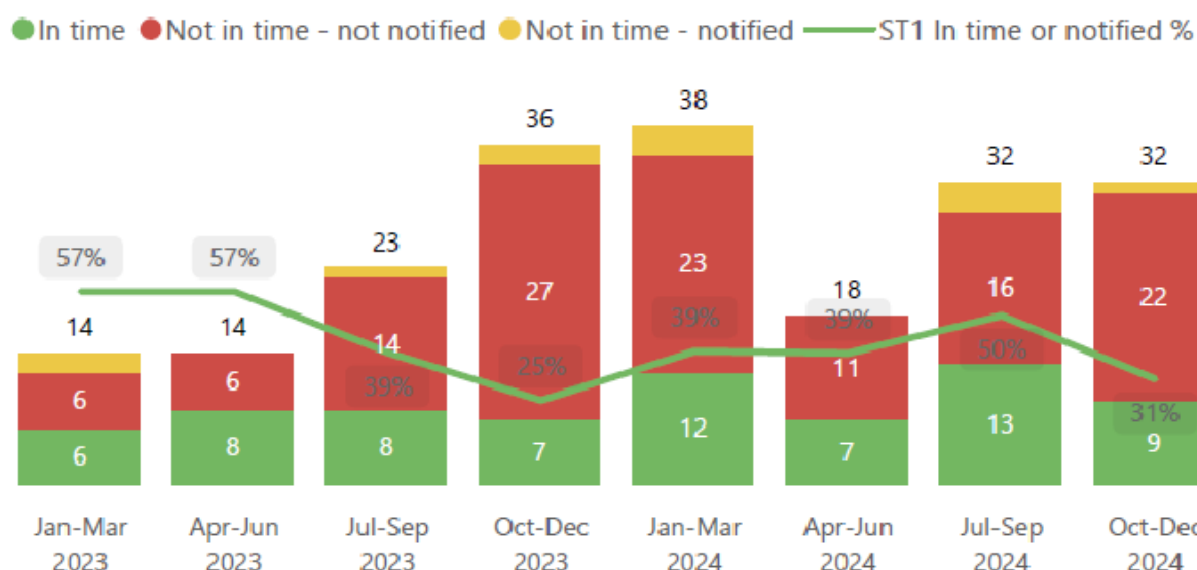
Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The graphics below show the compliance with complaints timeframes across a two year period.

Finance, Procurement & Business Support - Stage 1 complaints closed by outcome



Finance, Procurement & Business Support - Stage 1 complaints closed by timescales

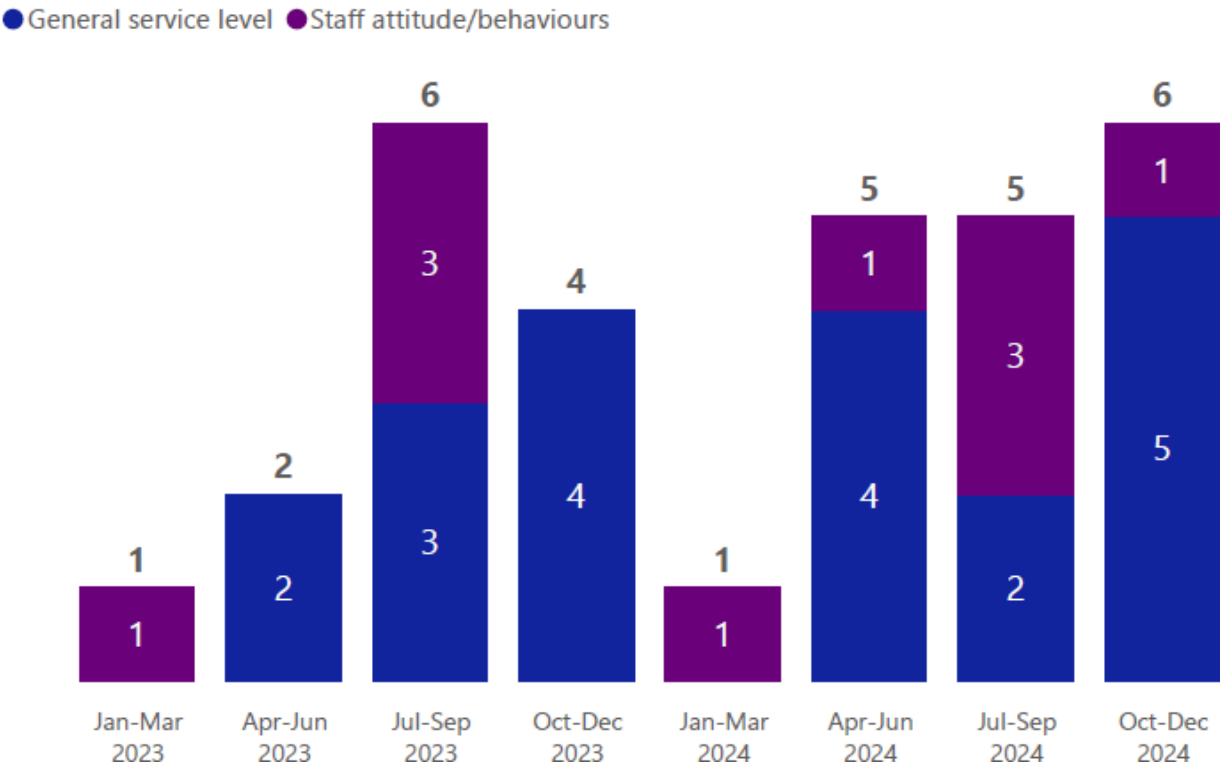


Compliance with published and statutory timescales was identified as an area for improvement in 2024. The percentage of complaints responded to within the published timescale in 2024 was 40% (39% in 2023). The Complaints Team extended the compliance monitoring set out in point 2.1 of this report to Finance and Support Services in late 2024 and it is projected that 2025 figures will improve significantly as a result of this additional scrutiny and frequency of monitoring potential drift.

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The graphic below shows the number of compliments received.

Finance, Procurement & Business Support - Compliments by category



10 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

Once a customer has exhausted the Council's complaints procedures, they may ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) to consider their complaint. This report focusses on the number of LGSCO decisions reached in the reporting period.

The LGSCO has four *headline* upheld categories:

1. Upheld: Fault & Injustice
2. Upheld: Fault, No Injustice
3. Upheld: Maladministration with Injustice
4. Upheld: Maladministration, No Injustice

The LGSCO publishes a range of decisions on all complaints that are not upheld; discontinued following assessment; considered to be out of jurisdiction; or withdrawn completely by the complainant.

The number of LGSCO decisions issued in 2024 was 132. This is an increase in decisions received when compared with the 99 recorded in 2023.

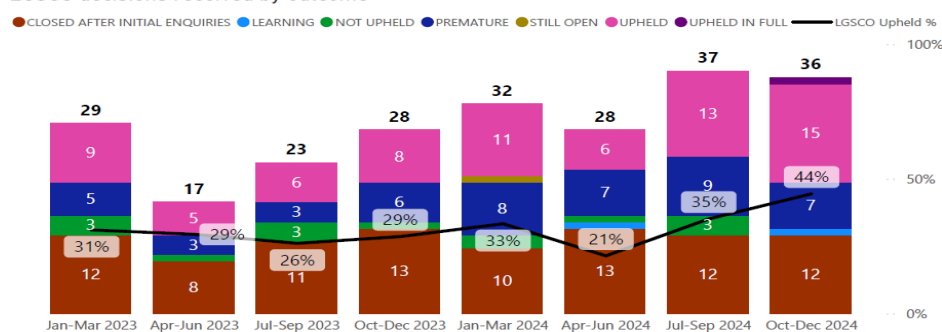
Of the 132 decisions issued in 2024:

- 33 were closed after initial enquiries with NFA required;
- 31 were considered to be 'premature' meaning the Council had not had a chance to consider the complaint at the point of referral to the LGSCO;
- 31 were recorded as *Upheld: Fault & Injustice*;
- 13 were closed after initial enquiries as 'out of jurisdiction';
- 11 were closed as *Upheld: Fault – NFA as Organisation Already Remedied*;
- 4 were closed as Upheld: Fault & Injustice – NFA as Organisation Already Remedied;
- 3 were closed as Declined (Invalid; Out of Time; and Repeat Complaint);
- 2 were closed as Not Upheld: No Fault;
- 1 was closed as Upheld: Fault, No Injustice;
- 1 was closed as Not Upheld: No Further Action;
- 1 was closed as Investigation Complete: Satisfied with Authority's Proposed Actions
- 1 Complaint was withdrawn

Annual report: Compliments and complaints 2024

The graphic below shows the figures for the LGSCO decisions received by outcome.

LGSCO decisions received by outcome



In 48 of the 132 decisions, the LGSCO found fault in the Council's actions.

In those cases where fault was identified, the LGSCO and the Council agreed a suitable remedy, usually an apology; a review of decision; or a symbolic financial remedy.

All recommendations from LGSCO cases are followed up and a letter confirming compliance with all remedies was received from the Ombudsman in relation to all upheld cases in 2024.

It is encouraging to note that 16 cases were resolved by the Council during consideration of complaints locally and prior to the LGSCO making enquiries. Early resolution is key when fault is identified by responding managers; the LGSCO's formal recognition that the Council sought to take appropriate action following its own investigations into matters arising is evidence that operational and systemic changes are being made as a result of complaints investigations.

An anonymised list of cases considered by the LGSCO is available from the Complaints Manager David.Tominey@westsussex.gov.uk and all anonymised decision reports are held on the [Ombudsman website](#).

There is not always a *guarantee* that complaints investigations will yield a broad range of systemic and operational change, but there are always actions and remedies arising from complaints where fault is identified; these remedies are monitored and logged by the Complaints Team.

Notable changes resulting from complaints in 2024 related largely to services provided within Adults' social care and Children Young People and Learning.

Changes in practice resulting from complaints about Adults' social care service related primarily to terminology and clarity of information provided to services users and within correspondence to them. Furthermore, a number of investigations found fault in delays to various assessments processes.

Adults Services have revised the content of several communications and considered the clarity of information provided to service users. It is advised that Finance have reviewed their processes to establish areas where changes need to be made, including providing more information to customers at the start of the financial assessment process. Staff in this area have also engaged with the corporate digital programme to widen their service offering and connected with colleagues in the Customer Service Centre to help change and increase opportunities to respond to customers in a timelier manner.

Within Children Young People and Learning, the identified fault through LGSCO investigation related to delays in the EHCP process, delays to correspondence with parents, and the Council failing to meet its duty under s19 of the Education Act.

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Changes resulting from complaints within the SENAT included the reconfiguration of the service and area divisions. The gaps in provision highlighted by LGSCO investigations led to an increase in resource within the SENAT, a decision to undertake the use of external Educational Psychologists, and a broad restructure of teams to work towards a reduction in wait times for families within the EHCNA/EHCP process.

In 2024, the SENAT had held a two-week training programme internally, surrounding all matters identified within LGSCO reports. Members of the SENAT were reminded of the Councils duty to secure education and EHCP provision for children not able to attend school and a new process was drawn up to direct how the department would operate going forward, to ensure more efficient operation.

Some examples where LGSCO investigations have resulted in actions or learning for the Council are below:

1. The LGSCO found the Council delayed making decisions about a customer's direct payments and failed to ask the complainant for his views on who to include in a review meeting.

Learning – The Council was instructed to send a reminder to officers about what the care and support statutory guidance says about service users being able to have other people present at a review should they wish them to do so.

2. The LGSCO found the Council at fault as considered that it had caused the complainant uncertainty by both the conflicting information he received in correspondence about his personal budget and the delay in completing the review.

Remedy – The Council apologised to Mr. X and offered a small symbolic payment in recognition of the identified fault.

3. The LGSCO found The Council at fault as it delayed in carrying out a care needs assessment and did not explore where the customer wanted to live when it eventually carried out the assessment. As a result, the customer was prevented from returning home with a care package. The fault also caused distress and uncertainty.

Learning – The Council provided the LGSCO with an action plan with timescales to show how the Council is or tackling the excessive times in carrying out care needs assessments. This was to reduce the time service users are waiting for their care needs to be assessed.

The Council reminded remind staff carrying out care needs assessments that such assessments should be person centred and fully involve the service user in decisions about their care.

4. The LGSCO noted that the complainant did not receive the Council's letter and form with financial assessment forms and observed that the Council failed to follow up the absence of a response.

Remedy – The Council apologised formally and made a symbolic payment of £200 to recognise the impact the matter. The Council also offered a suitable payment plan to clear the outstanding fee payment if necessary.

5. The LGSCO agreed that the Council did tell the complainant she would have to pay towards the cost of her care but took over a year to complete its financial assessment. As a result, there was a large bill and no chance to make informed choices about care.

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Remedy – The Council recalculated the bill in line with the actual care received and agreed an affordable payment plan with her. The Council also paid £250 in recognition of the avoidable distress caused by receiving a large and unexpected bill

6. There was a delay of almost six months in completing a post-16 transfer review and amendment of an Education, Health and Care Plan. This meant there was inadequate transition and the right to appeal the placement before the start of the school year was lost.

Learning – The Council apologised and made a symbolic payment of £750 to acknowledge the distress, uncertainty, lost appeal right, and time and trouble caused. The Council agreed to advise complaint officers to provide realistic timescales for when agreed actions will be completed and ensure families are kept informed if further delay is expected.

The Complaints Team was reminded that while use of standard wording can aid efficiency, this is only the case if the officer has properly considered and understood the matter at hand. The Complaints Manager addressed this in team meetings and staff supervision.

7. The LGSCO found that the Council delayed in completing an EHCP assessment, delayed offering an increase in one-to-one tuition and in responding to the complaint.

Remedy – The Council made a symbolic payment of £1200 in recognition of delay in assessment, the uncertainty caused and the delay in complaints processing. The Council also made a formal apology.

8. The Council accepted that it was at fault for a number of ways in which it failed to properly support the complainant while he was in care, specifically in relation to the administration relating to his birth certificate and passport.

Learning – The Council agreed to create an action plan which sets out what it has done, and what it will do, to avoid future failings similar to those identified in the complaint.

11 Equalities Monitoring

The process for monitoring complaints by age, sex, race, disability, religion or belief, and gender reassignment has historically produced insufficient data to form any realistic judgement as to the effectiveness of the procedure for individual groups.

Complainants are surveyed regarding their customer experience of the complaints process; that survey also requests equality data.