

ITEM No ...3.....

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 24 JUNE 2020

REPORT ON: ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 154-2020

1. PURPOSE

To report on complaints dealt with in 2019/2020, with comparisons to previous periods, and on action which continues to be taken to learn from complaints.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee notes:

- (i) the key performance indicators on complaints closed between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, with trends from previous periods;
- (ii) examples of the volume of transactions the Council has with customers and citizens as a context for the number of complaints;
- (iii) examples of how complaints have been used to improve services;
- (iv) results of the satisfaction survey sent to people who made complaints in 2019/2020, with trends from previous periods;
- (v) examples of compliments received about Council services.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The model Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities requires that regular reports are produced for elected members. This report covers complaints made during the year from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.
- 4.2 In terms of performance management, the report includes performance on key complaint handling indicators (Appendix One) and results from satisfaction surveys sent to those who made complaints (Appendix Four). The report also give examples of how we have used complaints to improve processes, another requirement of the model procedure (Appendix Three).
- 4.3 Appendix Two includes infographics illustrating just part of the range and number of transactions the Council has with customers and citizens, providing a context for the number of complaints received.
- 4.4 Appendix Five gives examples of compliments received about Council services.
- 4.5 Changes are being made by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman to the model Complaints Handling Procedure which will affect some of the performance information which is included in reports to Committee. A full report detailing the changes will be submitted to members later this year.

- 4.6 The format of this report has been updated from previous years, with more use of graphics and bullet point lists to highlight key information and trends as clearly as possible.

5. OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

Key issues to highlight from the detailed information in the Appendices include:

- The number of complaints recorded in 2019/2020 fell very slightly compared to the previous year.
- Although the % of Stage 1 complaints closed within the target time of 5 days fell slightly compared to the previous year, the average number of days taken to close complaints fell to 4.5, the first time this figure has been below 5 days.
- Conversely, the % of Stage 2 complaints closed within the target of 20 days increased, although the average number of days taken to close complaints at this stage rose to 23 days. A small number of complex cases taking a long time to resolve can skew this average.
- The % of complaints upheld at both stages has remained fairly consistent.
- Failure to provide a service (which on detailed analysis often turns out to be a delay in providing a service, rather than not providing it at all) has now become, although only marginally, the most common reason for complaint.
- Surveys of those who have complained continue to show that the two factors on which satisfaction is lowest is with the time taken to deal with complaints and being given a clear explanation of the decision.

All of these issues will continue to be raised through discussion of complaints at Council Management Team, the Complaints Review Group and within individual services. The examples given in Appendix Three do show that there is a commitment to learn from complaints and improve processes to prevent the same issues recurring, in addition to those complaints which lead to managers speaking to individual employees or arranging training for teams.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on equality and diversity, fairness and poverty, environment and corporate risk. There are no major issues.
- 6.2 The complaints recording database includes a feature that asks those dealing with complaints to note whether any complaints relate to an equalities issue - age, disability, gender, LGBT, race or religion. During 2019/2020, 6 such complaints were recorded - 3 relating to disability and 1 each relating to age, race and LGBT issues. These cases have been drawn to the attention of the Council's Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator and he has no concerns about how these were dealt with.

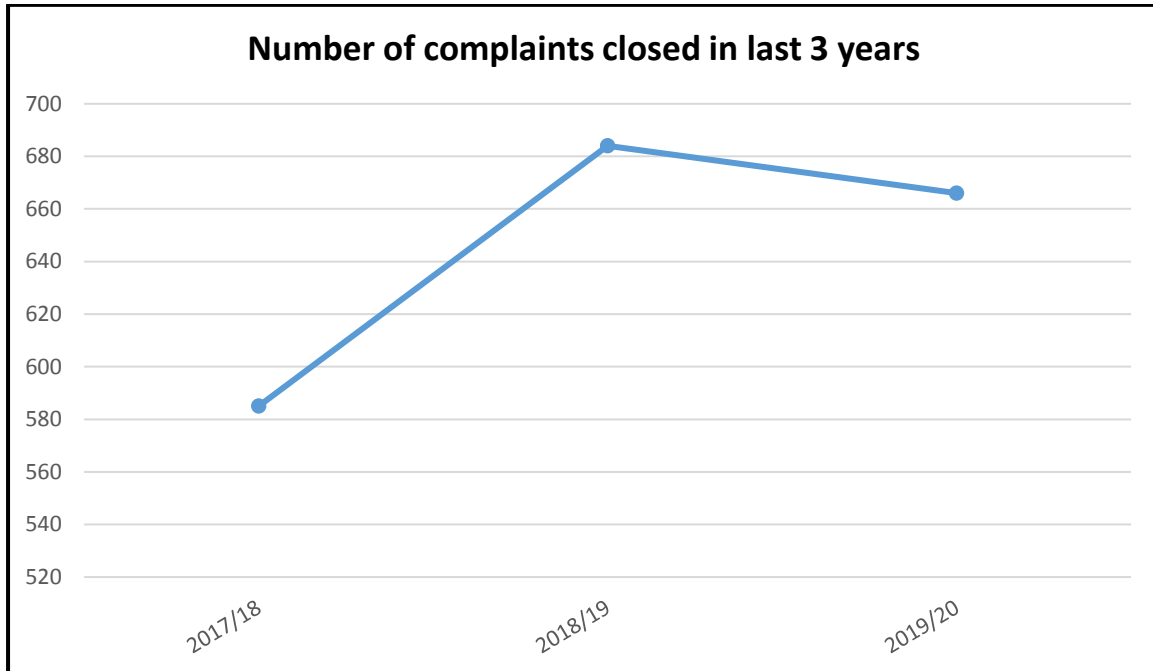
7. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team was consulted in the preparation of this report.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

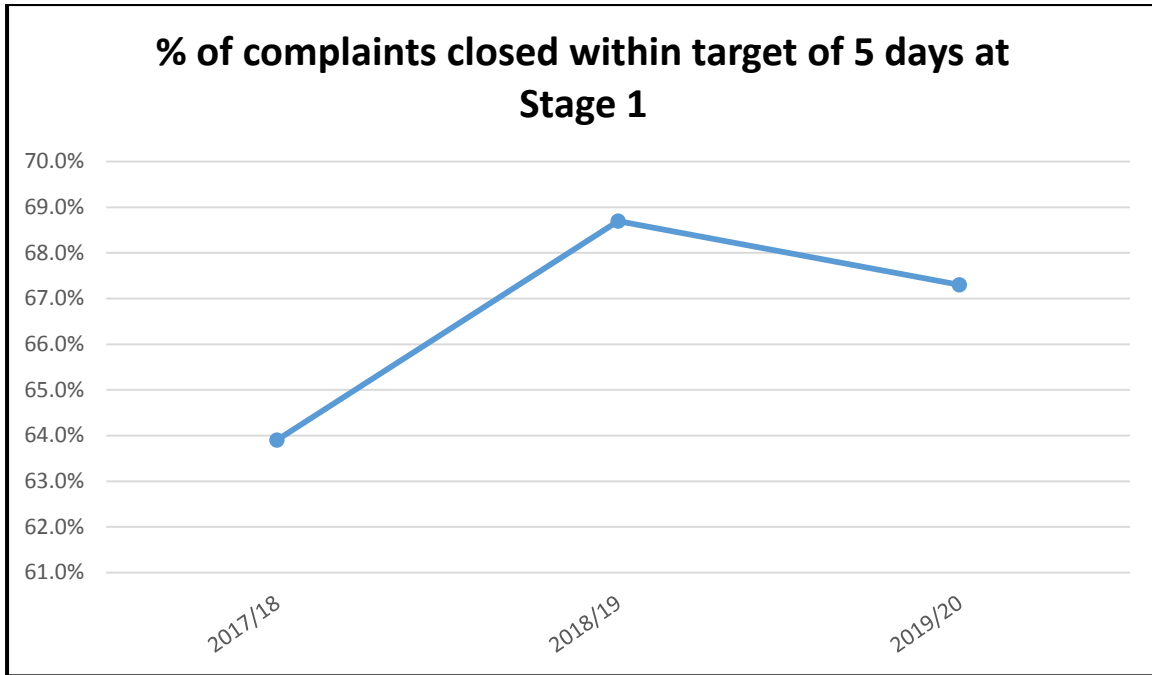
None.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



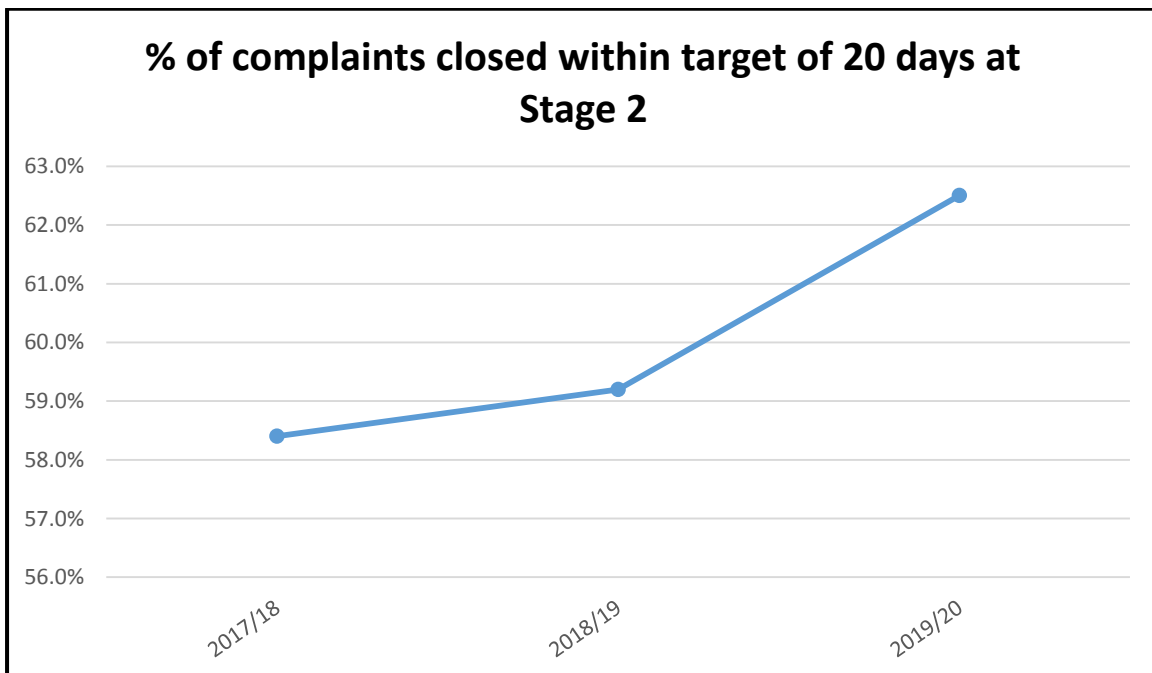
Breakdown by Service

Service	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Corporate Services	90	89	71
Children & Families			
- Education	124	125	98
- Children's Services	16	46	43
- Criminal Justice	4	3	8
Neighbourhood Services			
- Housing & Communities	108	180	177
- Environment	145	153	136
- Community Safety & Protection	N/A	N/A	22
City Development	59	50	56
Chief Executive's	1	6	4
Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership: Social Work	38	32	51



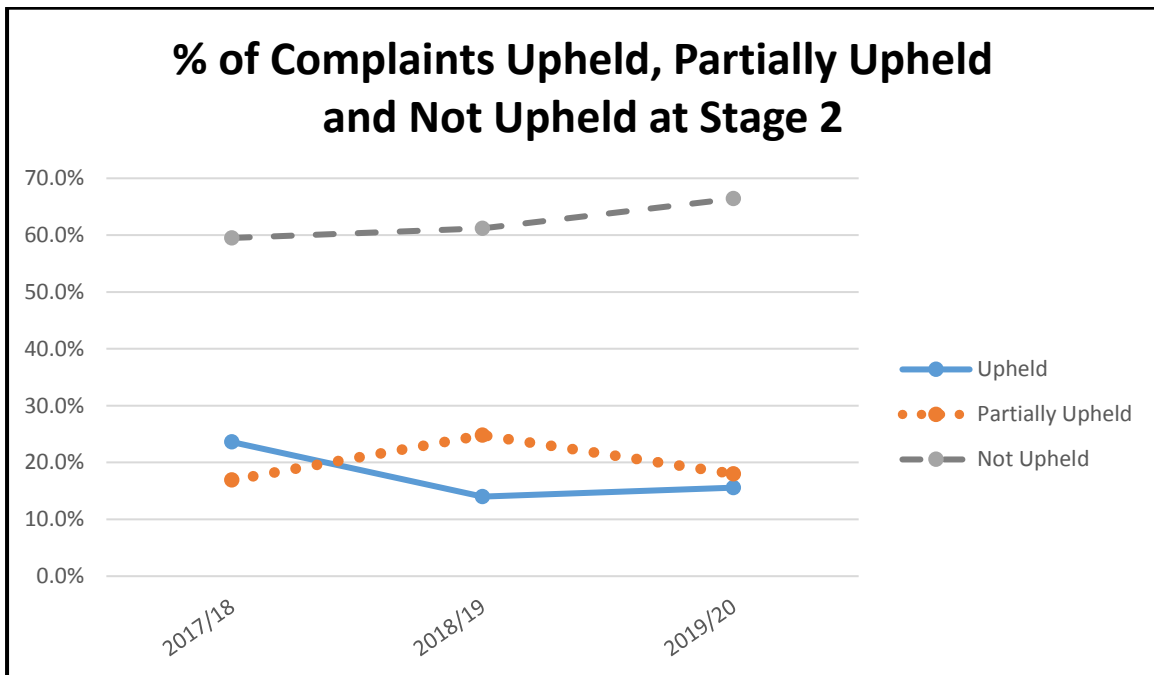
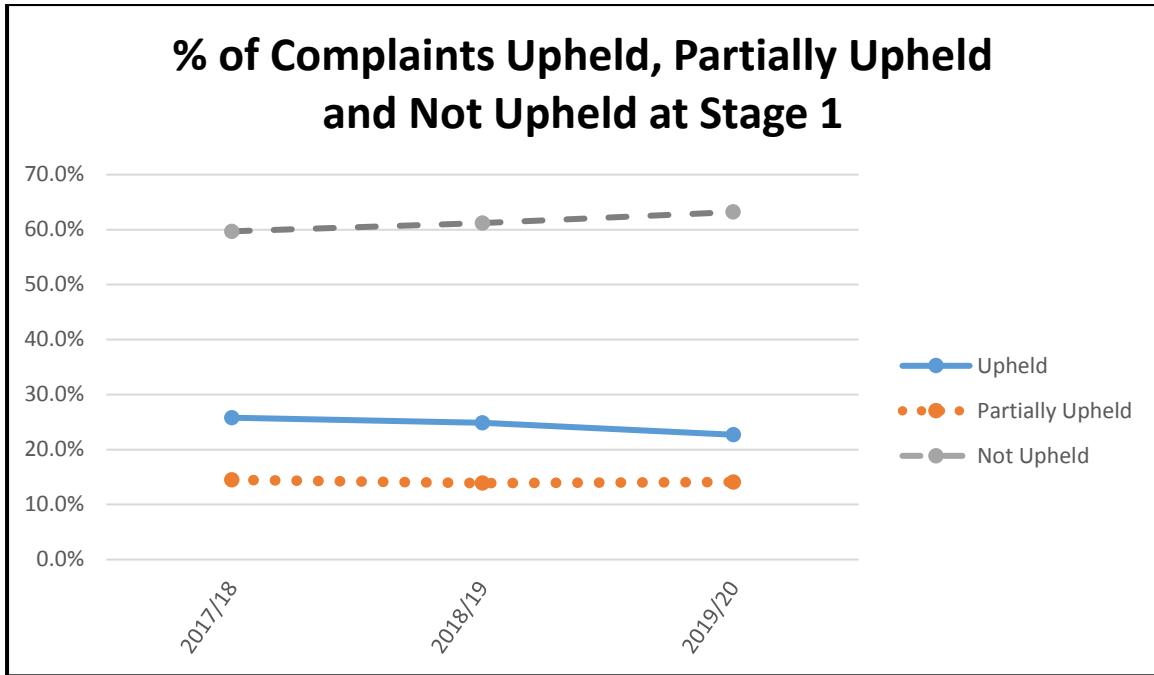
A further 11.5% of complaints in 2019/20 were dealt with within an extended target time.

The average number of days taken to close complaints at stage 1 in 2019/2020 was 4.5, compared with 5.2 in 2018/2019 and 8.0 in 2017/2018.



A further 28.9% of complaints in 2019/2020 were dealt with within an extended target time.

The average number of days taken to close complaints at stage 2 in 2019/2020 was 23.0, compared with 19.3 in 2018/2019 and 24.5 in 2017/2018.



Complaints by Nature

Nature of Complaint	2017/2018	2018/2019	2019/2020
Delay in responding to enquiries and requests	10.9%	13.8%	16.3%
Failure to meet our service standards	19.7%	21.5%	17.8%
Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff	29.4%	25.1%	24.8%
Failure to provide a service	25.3%	21.1%	25.6%
Dissatisfaction with our policy	8.3%	12.3%	11.2%
Failure to follow the proper administrative process	6.3%	6.2%	4.3%

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APPENDIX TWO

Examples of Council Transactions



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LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS:**EXAMPLES OF HOW COMPLAINTS HAVE BEEN USED TO DRIVE SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS**

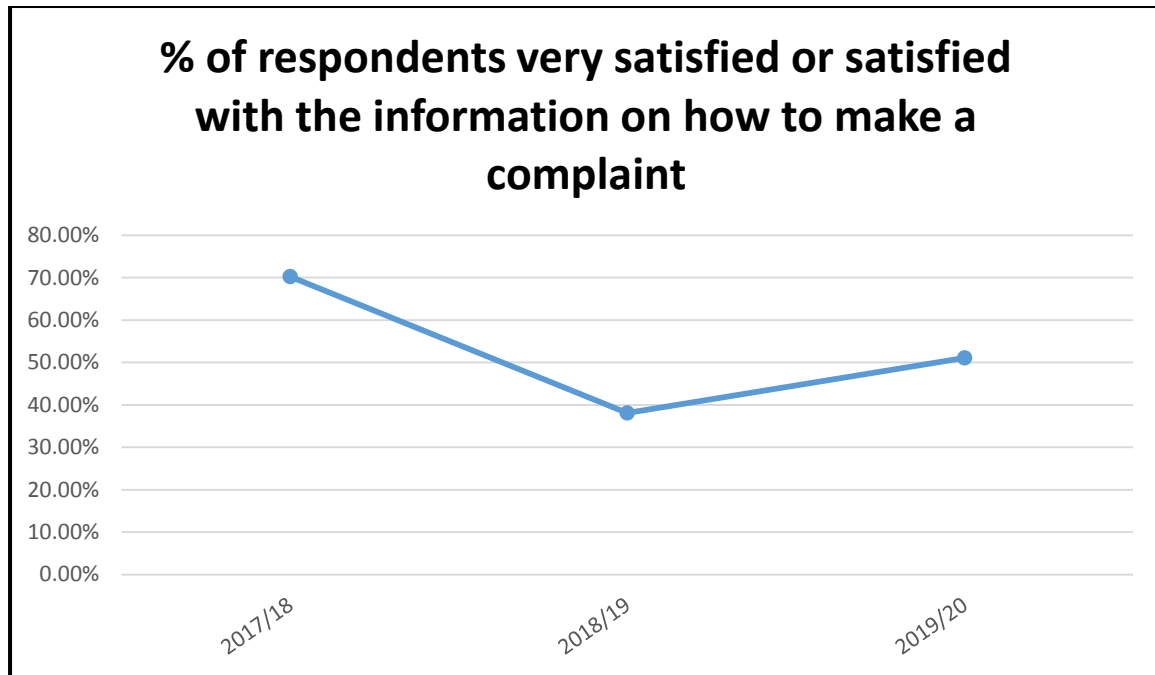
Anyone closing off a complaint as upheld or partially upheld is asked to identify planned service improvements, designed to prevent similar issues recurring. These often involve speaking to individual employees or arranging training for teams on correct use of procedures and customer care standards. Below are some examples of how complaints were used to identify process/service improvements during 2019/2020:

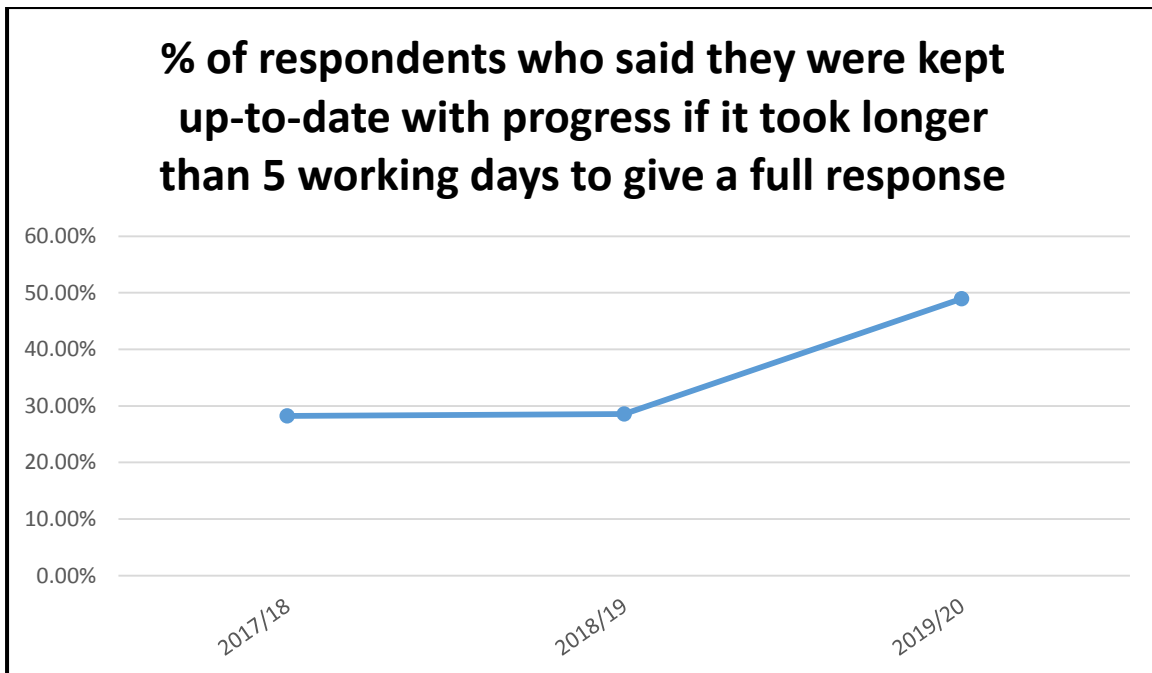
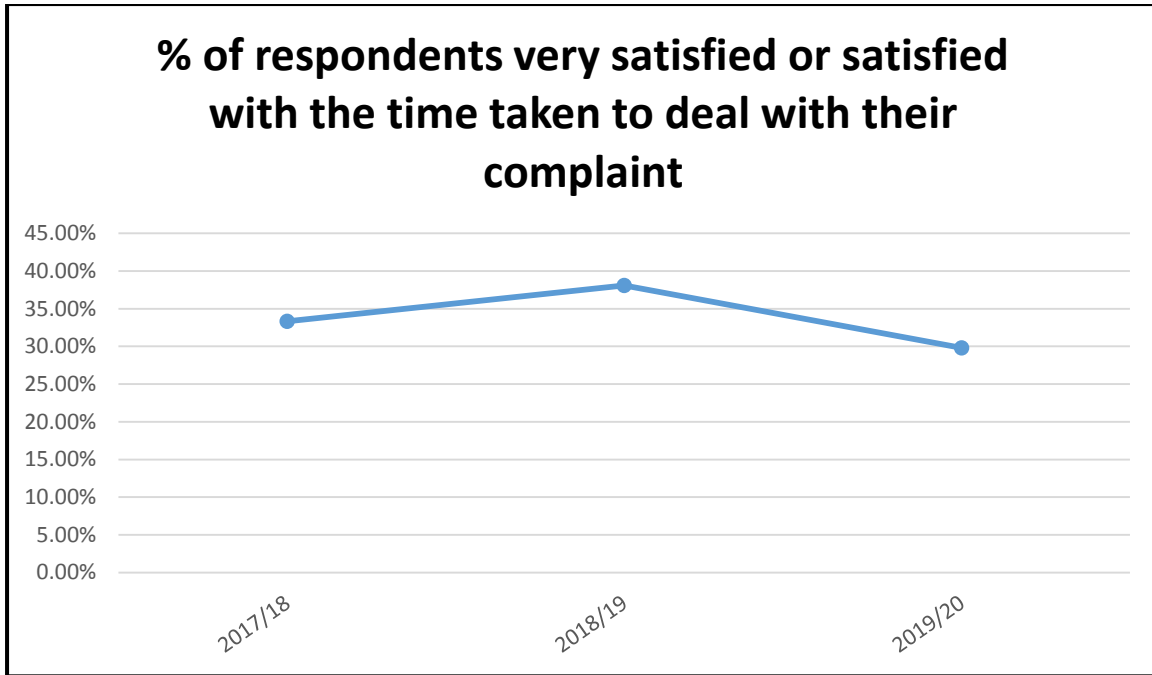
A customer complained that	We listened, we acted
They had set up a Direct Debit for Council Tax but still received an arrears notice for a previous year	Direct Debit procedures to be reviewed and staff awareness sessions carried out
They were unable to move into a house following a mutual exchange due to the number of repairs required	Inspection processes for mutual exchanges to be reviewed
Child fell in playground and parents were not notified of injury	Uneven surface in playground rectified and staff reminded of procedures
There was a delay in issuing a refund for Council Tax on an old account	The team used this as a case study in discussing how to ensure there were no delays when refunds are due
Repair of heating was delayed because gas engineer did not have the necessary part and did not have temporary heater to give tenant	Construction to ensure gas engineers carry appropriate stock in their vans
Letter about child was also addressed to ex-husband who no longer has contact	A flag was put on both Seemis and Mosaic for this particular pupil and parent. Practice within the service has been changed to prevent a similar issue recurring
Our website gave the wrong information about the cost of the building warrant fast track service	Information on website to be regularly checked and kept up-to-date
There was a lack of response to telephone calls and voicemails about the uplift of equipment to assist a person with disabilities	New staff rota developed to ensure telephone cover at all times
Child had not been supported in her assessment arrangements following a diagnosis of dyslexia	Changes made to how follow-up phone calls are made with parents and review of structures and process re assessments for pupils

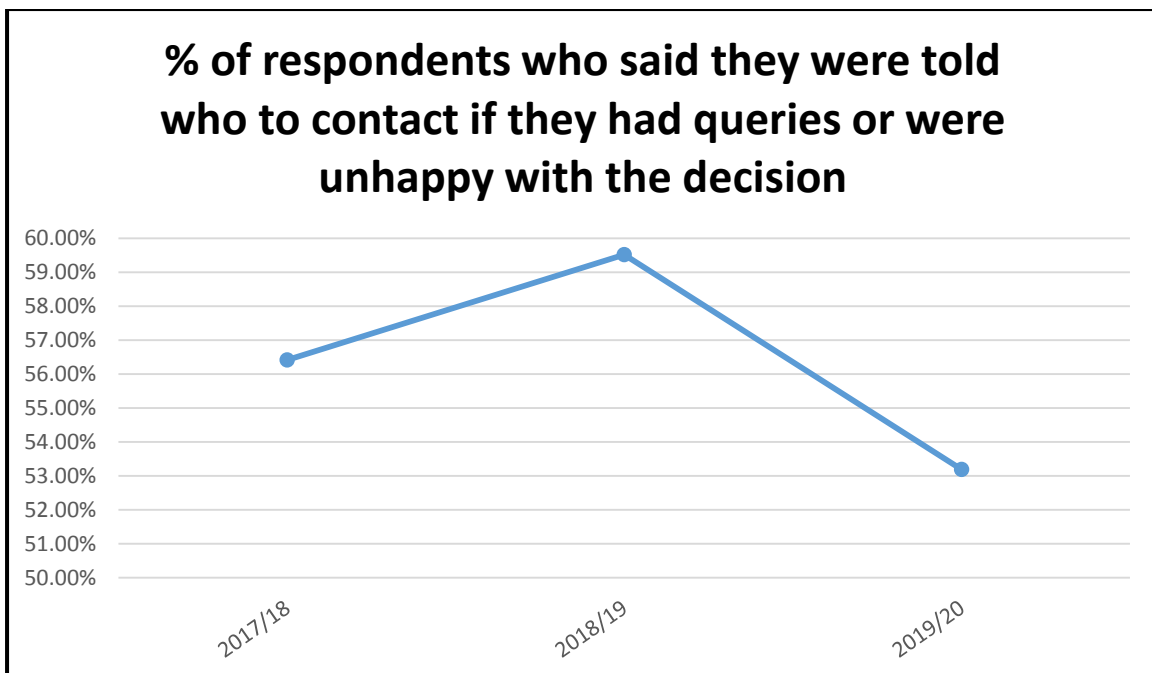
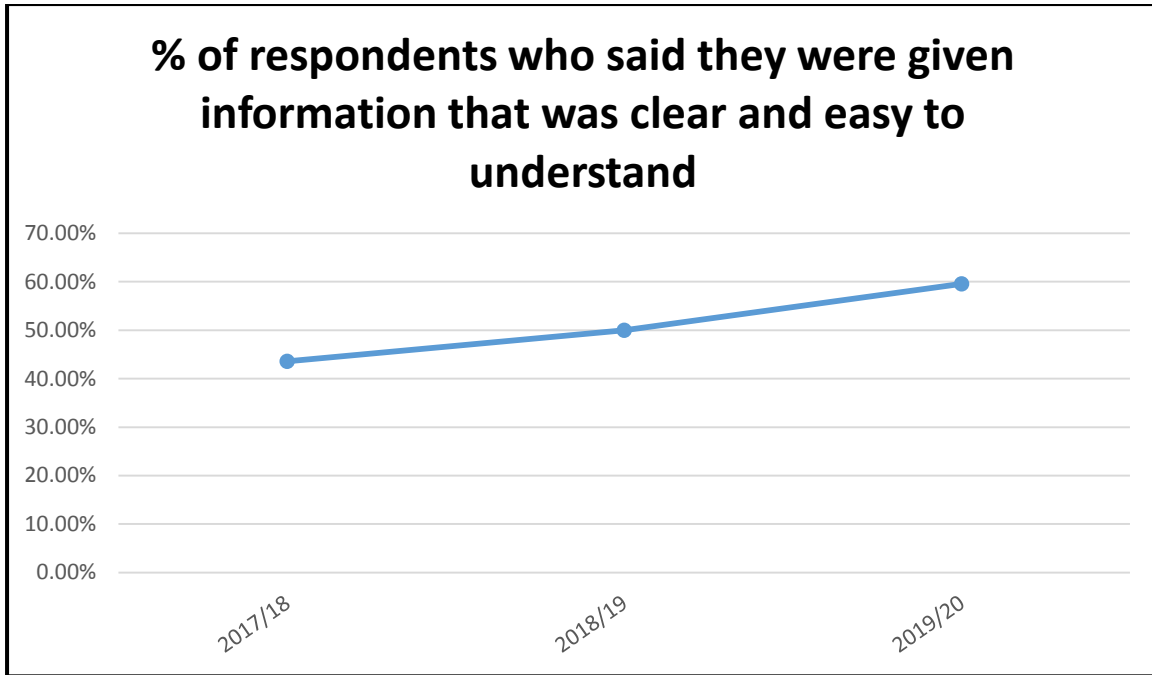
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SATISFACTION WITH COMPLAINTS HANDLING

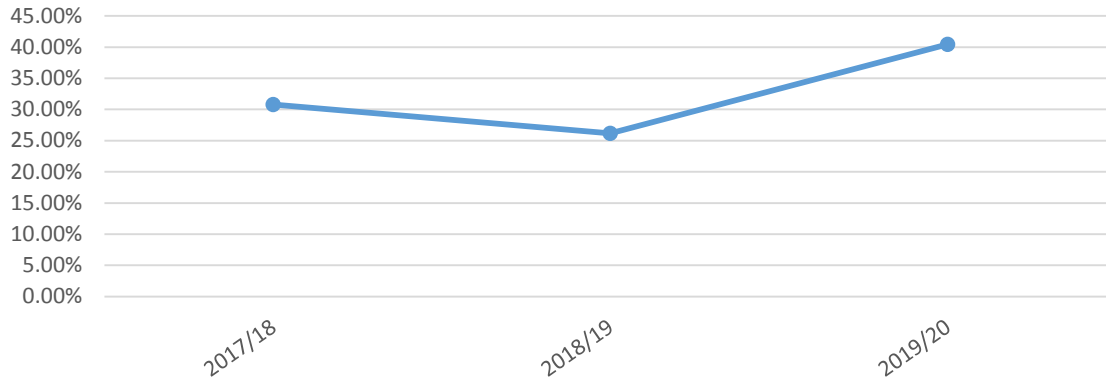
The model Complaints Handling Procedure requires the Council to report on a measure of customer satisfaction with its complaints process. To do this, we issue quarterly surveys. Result trends are shown in the charts below. Since the survey sample consists entirely of people who have made a complaint, many of which are not upheld, it may not be surprising that satisfaction levels are not high. The aim is to increase the % of respondents who acknowledge that the process of dealing with their complaint was satisfactory, even if they did not get the outcome they desired.



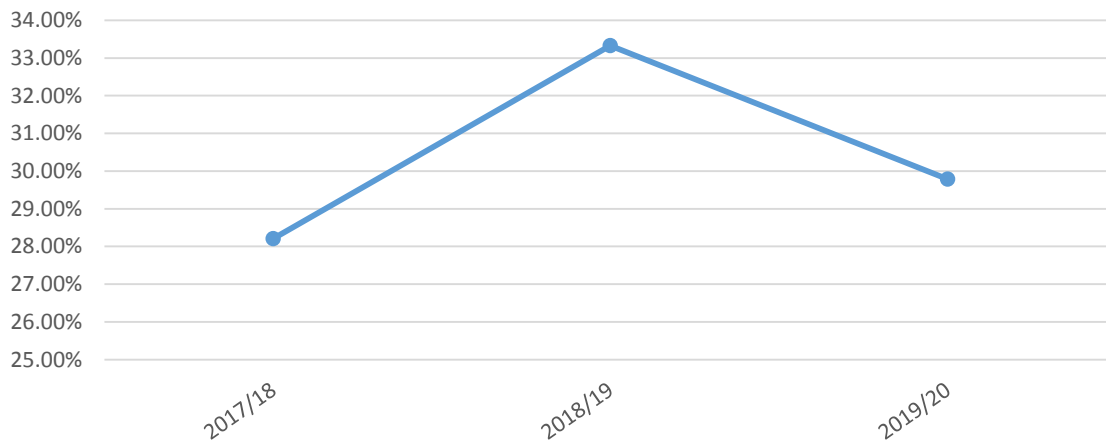




% of respondents very satisfied or satisfied that, even if they did not get the outcome they wanted, their complaint was taken seriously by the Council



% of respondents very satisfied or satisfied that they were given a clear explanation of the reason for the Council's decision



COMPLIMENTS

Members suggested that it would be useful to include in this report examples of compliments which have been received about Council services.

Below are some examples of the compliments which were submitted during 2019/2020 on the 'Tell Us About Good Service' form on the Council's website:

- Huge thanks to the plumber who sorted the leak from upstairs neighbour - he was more than helpful. Even when he was in the neighbour's house sorting leak, he visited my address to let me know what was happening every step of the way.
- I would like to compliment the design team for the outstanding climbing frames at Menzieshill Playpark.
- Thank you for helping me with my garden as I'm disabled and can't do it myself. They've been really nice.
- Amazing service from x at the Rent/Debt Recovery Team. She was extremely patient with me and explained everything fully. She really helped me and made me feel really comfortable. Not once did she judge me for being an unemployed young person with poor mental health. She was very calm and put me at ease.
- I received fantastic service from x when I was due a boiler safety check. She was very helpful, friendly and sorted out an issue I had with an engineer missing an appointment very promptly.
- What a great website your team have put together. We publish directories we send out free of charge to all UK local authorities. The way your website is structured made it a lot easier for me to fit staff into their correct departments and sections and then speak to the relevant teams. I look at every Council website in the UK and Dundee's website has been the best so far! Please pass my compliments to your web team.
- As a resident of the local area around Baxter Park, I am extremely pleased with the resurfacing work and other modifications being made to the park.
- Lovely workman turned up and quickly fixed leaky bathroom tap, fantastic work, I'm extremely happy at the amazing quickness of this request. I know I said I would be available anytime which probably helped but still a fab service.
- I had a new boiler fitted last month and was so impressed with the workmen. I stayed at home that day and would hardly know they were there. The service was second to none and am so pleased with the work carried out.
- Always forget to compliment the Council on the flowers displays across the city. Loved the wildflowers that cover areas around Olympia etc and the flowering garden on Dudhope roundabout is a delight to see when driving past. Makes the city look so good. Many thanks to the garden teams. Your work is appreciated.
- I just wanted to offer a massive compliment to x in the Council Tax and Revenues Department who has just dealt with my enquiry on the phone. We are moving house soon so I wanted to let you know and x said that I could do this online or on the phone with her. I chose the latter and she went through the form, completing it whilst I was on the phone and even checked to see how I could be refunded if a repayment was due. She was so helpful and even wished us luck with our move! With so many things to think about when you are moving it was good to sort out our Council tax with a person and know that it was done properly - thank you!
- Big "Thank You" to person doing the Food Waste collection today. Very helpful and courteous.

- We visited Dundee in August, and were struck by how accessible the transport services were. The buses gave us ample time to get on and off with my daughter in her wheelchair, and drivers actually stopped to let us know if the wheelchair space was occupied, a level of courtesy you don't get hereabouts. The taxi ranks had a good number of accessible vehicles, and drivers converted the seating very willingly to accommodate us. I just wanted to let you know that Dundee in this, and so many other ways, exceeds expectations.
- Again want to compliment the excellent service that the hedge trimming person does - it's always done in a professional manner! Many thanks.
- Many thanks for your fast efficient response to my feedback regarding overgrown grass within communal area. Was very out of character for our back garden lawn not to be cut for some time. Very much appreciated gardening maintenance team for their fast response and cutting communal drying green area. Thanks again to your team for efficient service greatly appreciated.
- Asked for a repair for my radiator. Was seen to promptly and the workman sent out to the repair was pleasant and professional. I wanted to pass on my satisfaction with the job and the workman who carried it out.
- The cashier at Dundee House was friendly and efficient and really couldn't have been more helpful.
- While visiting family I happened to see Dundee's green roofed bus shelters. On returning to London where I stay I wondered if this was something we could do in my Borough. I was very impressed with the speed and ease with which I got the information I needed from your Council. (1) The search engine on the web site identified the right page straight away. (2) I phoned the number shown on the page and it was answered straight away by a lady who understood my query. (3) She said the person I needed to speak was out on site but she would get them to call me back. (4) They called me back later that afternoon and gave me the information I needed. Excellent service.
- I would like to compliment Dundee City on the provision of recycling facilities. I live in a multiple deprived postcode, but I find recycling really easy. The Council has provided a food waste bin and glass, paper and plastic recycling bins are within my walking distance. This and the recycling centre allow me to recycle almost like I was in Germany.
- I submitted details of a large pothole earlier this year and meant to say that I was really impressed at your quick response and repair. Great service - thank you.
- Green circular walkway lights and others around Techy Park reported and fixed within day. Makes my, and hundreds of others, walk to and from work much safer. Thank you.
- My husband and I had to personally deliver our election ballot papers to the Council, as we had missed the postal deadline. Because I have difficulty in walking, we had to park our car in Crichton Street in order to get to the City Square. We went to the car park under the City Square to ask if there was an access alternative to the stairs. A member of staff immediately came out of the office to ask if he could help. We explained the situation and without hesitation and being extremely considerate, he not only explained where we should go, but took us to the office. We really appreciate his support, as without his help we wouldn't have been able to find the correct as the venue as the 'postal election venue' was closed. He went the extra mile, had excellent customer service.
- Draft excluder was expertly done.
- Really happy that the graffiti was removed promptly. Thank you very much.
- I bought a brown bin permit and then forgot to put my brown bin out for the first collection. The bin men went into my back garden, emptied the brown bin and then returned it. I think that's above and beyond and I am really grateful for that. I had no right to expect that level of service when I forgot to put the bin out. Thanks!!

- Blocked drains were swiftly dealt with. Plumbers who attended with drain guy were all excellent and courteous throughout. Was good to see even although budgets are shrinking and work force is getting less on ground that I still received an excellent service. Many thanks to your hard working team. They certainly had the right attitude towards customers and good to see morale was still up there even although services stretched. Thanks again.
- Sent complaint in regarding empty lorry trailer, keeping me and elderly neighbours awake during night due to banging loose doors on disused trailer. Environmental health responded quickly to my concerns and trailer has been crushed and removed. I am so grateful to F and team for resolving this matter for me after I had made numerous attempts with land owners. People always focus on negatives of a service and never look at wider picture on limited resources available to local authorities. I have received an excellent customer service. Can't thank their team enough.
- Just wanted to thank the waste management department for still providing a service while a lot of Council workers are at home I hope these workers will be thanked by the Council in some way when this is over. Keep up the good work, credit to the Council.

As well as the compliments submitted on the online form, a number of services have received 'thank you' letters, cards and emails. Here are a sample of the compliments received through those methods:

- "The truth is: if it weren't for the Social Work intervention, I'd probably be dead or worse. You do what could be considered a thankless job. I want you to know how much of a positive effect you have had on me."
- "I have a looked after child in my care... I am writing to congratulate the staff and give my heartfelt thanks. The social worker and his senior have encouraged, supported, believed in and NEVER given up hope on this young man. My heart is bursting with pride to inform you that he has just accepted a conditional place at college which is beyond our wildest dreams. None of this would have been possible without the support of the staff involved. They are a true credit to your team."
- "Staff at Community Living are positive and upbeat... I can safely say that my daughter could not get any better care anywhere. The team are marvellous and passionate about putting a positive input into her life - so understanding, very supportive, working together and training for her care package and building on her life. Staff go above and beyond and problem solve, listen and communicate well" ... "We cannot thank staff enough for all the support and care that they have shown my brother. My mum and brother are continually singing staff praises. I am so grateful. It really puts my mind at ease, knowing my brother is so well cared for".
- Thank you for making Mum and Dad's Diamond Wedding at Craigie House so special. The buffet and the dining room were laid out so well and we appreciated so much the effort everyone made.
- (About Janet Brougham House). Thank you all for the loving care, kindness and attention that you gave x in her time at Janet Brougham House. We would also like to give thanks to the kitchen staff for their superhuman efforts to ensure she got something to eat... The care given to my father was so special, especially towards the end. He always enjoyed his chats with the staff and most of the time coming away with his corny jokes, he also enjoyed sitting in his lovely room watching his movies, it was such a nice cheery room with plenty of laughter... I would like to thank you and your team along with your residents for looking after my Grandad. I was told of a great reputation of the Janet Brougham House from my family and upon visiting for myself, I found it a relaxed, calm, friendly atmosphere. A place you enjoyed coming to. A place Grandad loved. It goes without saying a place I would recommend in a heartbeat. A special place, lovely people, please continue your excellent work of looking after your lovely residents... You really know how to make this amazing place so warm, welcoming and delightful. I loved every minute of my volunteering time. You and your professional team made me feel just like family. You went above and beyond and I am touched and grateful. I was very happy for being in the middle of the elderly people who need special attention and care. Their individuality, independence, choice and personal dignity are respected at all time. Supportive and homely atmosphere is your main principle that is too vital for their wellbeing... Thank all staff for the care, affection and attention delivered to Dad. With particular gratitude and appreciation during his palliative stage in life.

- (About Oaklands Day Centre). You are a wonderful team. In Mum's time with you she really enjoyed her days... A huge thank you for providing my Gran with the opportunity to do what she loved most - socialise - when she began to find it too tricky to do it herself. In recent years where she struggled to be as independent as she had been, we know that Oakland's was a place where she was able to enjoy some of the things she loved. This is down to all of the amazing staff being so caring and compassionate in all that they do... Deepest thanks for the care and support that you offered my Mum over the last 12 months. The kindness displayed by all at Oakland's, helping her to maintain social contact, made a huge difference to her quality of life... We appreciated the time taken to write up Mum's diary - it gave us a real insight into how she spent her days with you. She particularly liked the concerts and blethering with the friends she made.
- (About Craigie House). Thank you for all the wonderful care that you all provide”.
- (About Menzeshill House). I am indebted to you all forever for the love, kindness and wonderful care you gave (my mum). Everyone, care staff, kitchen staff, cleaners, laundry, maintenance, entertainment, hairdresser and I apologise if I've missed anyone, thank you from the bottom of my heart. The care you gave my Mum was exceptional. I could ask no more... “Thank you for making mum part of the Menziesshill House family, and treating her with special care and dignity in her final years. We will always be grateful” ... “Thank you very much for helping to make x's 100th birthday party such a success. I know without the care she receives at Menziesshill House she would not have reached the 100 years”.
- (About the Community Health Team/Health Inequalities Service). “Thank you for all the help you gave me. I feel a million times better now than I did from the first time I met you. You're very good at your job” ... “I enjoyed our time together and found your advice most helpful. It's so easy to let yourself go when caring for someone, and you gave me a little nudge to look after myself” ...“Thanks so much - if I hadn't met you I wouldn't be doing any of these things - they have changed my life” ... “I am feeling so much better. I have made so many new friends and am so much more confident I can honestly say for the first time in years I am truly happy... I am so grateful to you for all your help as if it wasn't for yourself and art angel I wouldn't be in a good place” ...“A wonderful service that helps people at their most vulnerable times with strong support at times when one feels there is nothing left to live for, a life-saving service” ... “I'm staying sober and getting the right professional help thanks to you. You've given me a chance/ lease of life. It's not just your job, you adapted and talked to me the way I respect. I'm shocked and glad you got through to me. Very professional my friend.”
- A distraught would-be bride who had forgotten to contact the Registrars in enough time before the wedding ceremony said the member of staff she dealt with “was so nice, just like a brother” (and the City Registrar got her a dispensation so the marriage could go ahead!)
- “I was in your office to register my Dad's death. X was very kind, courteous and considerate in carrying out her role and is a credit to your office. I'd like to pass on my gratitude for being so caring at what is a difficult time for us.
- “I write to inform you of the outstanding reception I received from three members of your staff and an employee of Tayside Contracts... While locking my car, I accidentally dropped my car key which I believed fell into the drain. I quickly phoned Dundee City Council and a very calm lady quickly re-assured me she would be able to help. I was transferred to a very helpful gentleman in Roads who arranged for a colleague to call me to say he had organised for a representative from Tayside Contracts to come to my aid. A very kind and helpful gentleman arrived within 20 minutes and was most courteous. He proceeded to bring out the contents of the drain and meticulously searched through the gunge. On failing to find the key, we again looked under the car and the one in front (and found it under the rear wheel of the car in front). He congratulated us and not once did he, or the people on the phone, suggest I had been stupid. I am humbled by these responses and could these people be congratulated. All are a credit to Dundee”.