

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 12 DECEMBER 2018
REPORT ON: BI-ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS
REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
REPORT NO: 369-2018

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on complaints statistics for the first half of 2018/19, with comparisons to previous periods, and to report on the action which continues to be taken to ensure that complaints are handled well and that the Council learns from complaints.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee notes:

- (a) the key performance indicators on complaints closed between 1 April 2018 and 30 September 2018, with trends from previous periods.
- (b) the latest update from the Complaints Review Group which meets quarterly to check the quality of complaints handling and to promote learning and process improvement from complaints.
- (c) the results of the satisfaction surveys sent to everyone who made a complaint closed during the first half of 2018/19, with trends from previous surveys.
- (d) a summary of the annual letter from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman on complaints received about the Council during 2017/18, which highlights that only one complaint reached the Ombudsman's investigation stage and was upheld.
- (e) that a programme of training for employees on dealing with complaints is continuing, and is reinforcing the importance of dealing promptly with complaints, keeping complainants informed and giving clear explanations of decisions.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Since 1 October 2012, the Council has been operating the model Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Part of that procedure is that regular reports are produced for the Council's management team and elected members. This latest report covers complaints closed during the six months between 1 April 2018 and 30 September 2018.
- 4.2 The aim of this report is to analyse performance where people have used the Council's complaints process. There has been discussion previously at Committee about issues raised with Councillors, rather than through the complaints system, and paragraph 6.8 of this report provides information on a 'snapshot' survey of members aimed at ensuring that useful information from such contacts is captured.

5. COMPLAINTS STATISTICS: 1 APRIL 2018 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

5.1 In the first half of 2018/19:-

- 340 complaints were closed (compared to 293 in the first half of 2017/18).
- 71.5% of complaints at the frontline stage were closed within the target of 5 working days and a further 8.4% within an extended target time.
- the aim of the model Complaints Handling Procedure is for as many complaints as possible to be resolved at the frontline stage (stage 1) with as few as possible going for further investigation (stage 2). During the first half of 2018/19, our ratio of complaints closed at stage 1 compared to stage 2 was 77.4% to 22.7% - the Ombudsman's office regards over 80% closed at stage 1 as good performance.
- 61.0% of complaints at the investigation stage were closed within the target of 20 working days and a further 29.9% within an extended target time.
- the average number of working days taken to close complaints was 5.2 days at the frontline stage and 18.5 days at the investigation stage (combining 'opened at' and 'escalated to' figures). The targets are 5 and 20 days, although the Ombudsman has emphasised that the 5 and 20 day targets are designed to drive improvement rather than absolute standards which must be complied with. It is acknowledged that some complaints take longer to resolve and that missing the targets is not regarded as a 'fail'. In particular, complaints relating to schools tend to take longer to resolve as they often involve arranging meetings with parents or investigations according to agreed procedures for teachers. Nevertheless, we continue to reinforce to services the importance of responding quickly to complaints.
- at the frontline stage, 27.0% of complaints were upheld and a further 11.0% were partially upheld.
- at the investigation stage, 13.0% were upheld and 24.7% were partially upheld.
- the percentage of complaints recorded in each category is shown below (with the figures for the first half of 2017/18 in brackets):

- delay in responding to enquiries and requests	-	13.5%	(11.9%)
- failure to meet our service standards	-	19.1%	(15.5%)
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff	-	25.4%	(28.1%)
- failure to provide a service	-	22.4%	(27.7%)
- dissatisfaction with our policy	-	13.3%	(10.6%)
- failure to follow the proper administrative process	-	5.5%	(5.8%)
- refusal to give advice or answer questions	-	0.8%	(0.3%)

Complaints categorised as relating to treatment by or attitude of staff continue to be the highest group although the % has fallen compared to the equivalent period last year.

- 26 people made more than one complaint during the first half of 2018/19, 19 making two complaints, 2 making three complaints, 3 making four complaints and 2 making five complaints.
- by service, the number of complaints recorded were:
 - Corporate Services (51)
 - Children & Families
 - Education (47)
 - Children's Services (21)
 - Criminal Justice (1)
 - Neighbourhood Services
 - Housing and Communities (93)
 - Environment (79)

- City Development (29)
- Chief Executive's (4)
- Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership: Social Work (15)

A breakdown of each service's figures is given in Appendix One.

5.2 To put the number of complaints received into context, the Council manages a huge volume of transactions with customers. For example, in a typical year we:

- manage around 12,500 Council houses and relet around 1,200 of these.
- carry out around 55,000 repairs and deal with over 1,500 reports of anti-social behaviour.
- put out over 210,000 Council Tax bills and reminders - adding benefit notifications and other letters takes the total of revenue transactions to over 350,000.
- educate over 18,000 pupils (over 3.2 million 'pupil days') and process around 1,700 placing requests.
- process around 2,500 applications for various education benefits.
- carry out almost 800 food inspection visits and re-visits, 250 occupational health and safety visits and 4,000 pest control visits.
- complete around 6 million collections from waste and recycling containers city-wide.
- provide home care to over 1,800 people and residential care to 1,200 service users.
- receive almost 1,600 requests under Freedom of Information Legislation and Environmental Information Regulations.
- register around 4,000 births and deaths and conduct around 600 weddings.
- receive over 120,000 service requests on our website (job applications, requests for wheelie bins, book renewals etc).
- process over 200,000 online payments through our website valued at around £150 million.
- process 1,100 Building Warrant applications and 900 planning applications, and investigate around 120 planning enforcement complaints.
- maintain over 500 Km of roads and approximately 1,100 Km of footpaths, and travel about 30,000 Km treating priority roads in the winter.
- provide free school transport to over 1,000 pupils, making 400,000 trips per school year.
- process over 12,000 recruitment applications via the Talentlink portal.
- deliver 3,700 adult learning opportunities and deliver a youth work programme to almost 3,500 young people.
- have over 29,000 attendances at community centre activities by children aged 5-10.
- have 8,000 attendances at community events.

5.3 Key quarterly trends from the analysis of performance indicators are shown in the charts in Appendix Two. Note that the figures for each quarter will not necessarily add up to the bi-annual or annual totals reported - complaints are only counted once although their status may change during the year. For example, a complaint may be counted as a stage 1 in one quarter but be counted as a stage 2 in a subsequent quarter and in the bi-annual and annual statistics if it has been escalated because the complainant was dissatisfied with the first response.

6. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

6.1 A Complaints Review Group, made up of complaints administrators from a number of services and officers with a remit for performance and improvement from the Chief Executive's service, meets every quarter to review a sample of complaints and check if these were well recorded, investigated and responded to. The group also looks at all 'open' complaints which are beyond the target date for response, and at the planned service improvements identified by officers when they close complaints as upheld or partially upheld. A key aim is to identify any lessons learned from complaints which can be used as intelligence, translating the insight gained from complaints into practical action which can help to prevent the same issues recurring.

6.2 The group continues to find evidence that complaints are generally being recorded, investigated and responded to well, along with evidence that complainants are being contacted to keep them informed of progress if complaints are taking longer than the target number of days to investigate. The group does still see some cases where targets have been missed, complainants have not been advised about escalating complaints if still dissatisfied and clearer explanations and apologies could have been given where complaints were upheld. These are discussed with complaints administrators and they have been asked to reinforce the importance of good practice in complaint handling. The importance of dealing with complaints quickly, keeping complainants informed and advising complainants what to do if still dissatisfied continues to be emphasised to staff through guidance on the intranet, reminder messages on the complaints system, emails and presentations. A new programme of training on complaints is underway.

6.3 The Complaints Review Group has also assessed the effectiveness of the Council's complaints handling arrangements using a Performance Assessment Tool developed by the Complaints Standards Authority within the Ombudsman's service. This tool allows organisations to assess their performance in relation to six themes of good practice and to identify any areas requiring improvement action. As a result of the initial assessment, the following priorities were identified:

- repeat the training programme implemented when the model Complaints Handling Procedure was introduced, and ensure that training continues to be refreshed on a 3-year cycle - this is now underway.
- ensure that dealing with complaints is among the competencies considered in Employee Performance and Development Reviews for relevant staff.
- make further efforts to establish the 'root cause' of complaints and ensure that any improvements made in response to individual complaints are communicated across the service and the Council. In particular, the Performance Assessment Tool highlights the importance of identifying key themes from complaints and being able to demonstrate improvement actions as a result - this is a key focus of the work of the Complaints Review Group.
- make sure that independent advice agencies are aware of the Council's procedures so can advise and assist complainants where required.
- ensure that reports such as this are cascaded to staff involved in dealing with complaints.

6.4 Most of the 'planned service improvements' identified as a result of complaints during the first half of 2018/19 involved speaking to individuals about errors or arranging training for teams to remind them of procedures and customer care standards. However, over this period there were also a number of service improvements identified, for example:

A customer complained that	We listened, we acted
The notification letter about a rent increase showed the deduction for Housing Benefit but not the Discretionary Housing Payment.	The letters telling tenants about changes to charges are to be reviewed to avoid confusion.
There was a delay in response to enquiries sent to the Corporate Appointee mailbox.	Email processes fully reviewed and a checking system in place to ensure action taken.

They were not notified of plans for roof replacement work.	Ways of working revised to improve communication with residents.
Different action should have been taken when a child was injured at school.	Health and Safety guidelines reviewed and clear information given to head teachers.
They were not given enough notice of change to bin collection calendar.	Calendar distribution for 2019 planned earlier than in previous years to let residents plan.
Repeated calls had to be made about missed bin collections in street.	Route changes implemented to better balance workloads between crews.

6.5 The electronic complaints recording system also has a feature which sends an automatic 'follow-up' email to those who record planned service improvements when closing complaints. The aim is to ensure that these improvements are implemented. Officers are prompted to give further updates a month after the complaint was closed, and these are also reviewed by the Complaints Review Group.

6.6 Analysis of complaints will be used to inform decisions on topics for service redesign reviews, empowering our people to use the most appropriate methodology based on the principles of lean service and customer insight, and it is felt that this approach lends itself well to learning from complaints and improving processes to prevent recurrence.

6.7 We also learn from complaints about other authorities. Each month the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman issues a newsletter highlighting complaints and, where these concern local government, we draw these reports to the attention of relevant services to ensure they are aware of any criticisms of other Councils or examples of good practice.

6.8 Analysing complaints is just one of a wide range of methods the Council uses to gather feedback from the people who use its services, in order to drive continuous improvement. Because councillors have so much interaction with customers and service users, we are keen to ensure that feedback from these contacts, which would help to identify improvements, is not missed. We now carry out short surveys twice a year giving members the opportunity to identify the most common subjects raised by constituents and any suggestions for Council processes or policies which, if improved, would reduce the number of issues raised with them. The most common themes highlighted by members in the October/November survey this year were anti-social behaviour, bins/refuse collection, roads and housing issues. Suggestions for process improvements included:

- communication - clearer communication with citizens and ensuring that their calls are dealt with efficiently and passed to those who will take action.
- timescales - remind officers of the agreed timescales for responding to elected members and ensure consistency in the speed and quality of response.

These issues will be discussed at the Complaints Review Group, highlighted to service management teams and covered in staff training.

Regarding the 'nature' of complaints, there was no clear overall consensus but the most common mentions were for:

- delay in responding to enquiries and requests
- failure to provide a service
- standard of service

It is reassuring that the responses do not highlight any major concerns about staff attitude or behaviour, which was one of the options ranked lowest.

We will continue to give members a regular opportunity to give similar feedback and include the results in the reports on complaints to Scrutiny Committee.

7. SATISFACTION WITH THE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

- 7.1 The model Complaints Handling Procedure requires that the Council reports on a measure of customer satisfaction with its complaints process. To achieve this, we issue surveys to people who have made a complaint in the previous three months.
- 7.2 Trends in satisfaction are highlighted in the charts in Appendix Three. Since the survey sample always consists entirely of people who have made complaints about the Council, the majority of which are not upheld, it is not surprising that satisfaction levels are not always high. Samples each quarter are also small, so caution needs to be exercised in drawing conclusions from one period's results.
- 7.3 Points to note from the survey trends include the need to continue to reinforce the importance of:
- responding quickly to complaints, and keeping complainants informed when that is not possible.
 - giving complainants information and explanations that are clear and easy to understand.
- 7.4 It is recognised to be very difficult to get complainants to comment objectively on the complaints process, as distinct from the outcome, where their complaint was not upheld or did not result in the action they wanted. Nevertheless, our aim is to increase the % of complainants who acknowledge that the process of dealing with their complaint was satisfactory, even if they did not get the outcome they desired.
- 7.5 Performance will continue to be monitored and messages about good complaints handling will continue to be reinforced. Overall trends since the Council adopted the model Complaints Handling Procedure are positive, but those responding to the survey still indicate high levels of dissatisfaction with certain aspects of how we have dealt with their complaints so efforts to improve will continue. It should be noted, however, that overall levels of customer satisfaction with contact with the Council remain high, as evidenced by the results of the annual citizen survey. In particular, the survey continues to show high satisfaction with the friendliness, courtesy and helpfulness of employees.
- 7.6 A programme of training for employees on dealing with complaints is underway, and this will reinforce the importance of dealing promptly with complaints, keeping complainants informed and giving clear explanations of decisions.

8. COMPLIMENTS

- 8.1 During discussion on previous reports, members have suggested it would be useful to include information on compliments received, and this was done in the last annual report.
- 8.2 Below are some examples of the compliments which have been submitted in the period covered by this report on the 'Tell Us About Good Service' form on the Council's website:
- Many thanks for very prompt clear up of the dumped rubbish. Greatly appreciated.
 - Would like to give a compliment to the bin man in our local area - such a happy person, always polite and says hi, really puts a smile on our face.
 - Would like to commend one of your gardeners for his honesty. Lost my purse until the gardener was cutting the drying green and found it in the grass. Very grateful. My faith in humanity has been restored.
 - Pass on my sincere thanks and appreciation to one of your staff dealing with benefit payments - was helpful, understanding, intelligent and kind. Answered my questions and gave me a clear understanding of what she had done and what would happen next.

- Reinstatement of white line at our driveway after road resurfacing was completed very promptly.
- The bin men on this round are brilliant. My son loves lorries. He waves and shouts at all but the blue bin men actually take him on. They wave and 'thumbs up' to him every time.
- Staff collecting the bins yesterday morning were polite, friendly and even took a second to wave to my baby son who is obsessed with bin lorries.
- Very pleased with new bin collection routine. I now recycle much more plastic and, as a result, very rarely fill my landfill bin.
- Just been to parents and carers meeting regarding Braeview. Would like to say how amazed and positive I left this meeting. The work put in by the Council, teachers and all involved blows me away. The head teacher is so passionate about the school and her kids.
- Quick response in having bin emptied - a big thank you.
- Big thank you for prompt service to fixing our entry door to block. Not only can my disabled wife now open the door herself but your team went above and beyond my complaint and fitted two grab rails so now she can get into our back garden.
- Would like to thank staff for their assistance in locating the grave of my grandparents. They were extremely helpful and professional which I very much appreciated.
- Just want to praise the great service I have received in exchanging my small blue bin to a larger one. Seamless is how I would describe the process. Credit where credit is due.

We have also received a number of compliments about the drivers of the 'Blether Bus'. Members will be aware that, in Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland inspection reports, there are often compliments recorded from service users and their families.

9. ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN

- 9.1 The annual letter from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, providing statistics on complaints to the SPSO about the Council during 2017/18, was received in October 2017.
- 9.2 24 complaints about Dundee City Council were received by the Ombudsman in 2017/18, 3 less than in 2016/17. The number of complaints received about the Council represents 1.6% of those received by the Ombudsman about local authorities in the year, down on last year's figure of 1.8% and the previous year's figure of 2%.
- 9.3 Of the 24 complaints received, 9 were about Social Work, 4 about Housing, 3 about Roads and Transport, 2 about Education and 1 each about Planning and Legal/Admin. 4 were categorised as 'subject unknown'.
- 9.4 Of the 25 complaints determined during the year:-
- 9 were recorded as not duly made or withdrawn.
 - 6 were listed as premature
 - 3 were out of jurisdiction
 - 1 was 'outcome not achievable'
 - 5 were 'proportionality'
 - only one complaint reached the 'investigation' stage, compared to two in 2016/17. The complaint concerned housing repairs in connection with a mutual exchange and was upheld. The Ombudsman's recommendations have been implemented.

10. BENCHMARKING

- 10.1 The Council takes part in the Scottish Local Authorities Complaint Handlers Network which shares good practice and also carries out an annual benchmarking exercise. This allows Councils to compare their complaints statistics with all other Councils in Scotland and, in particular, with Councils in their 'family group' of similar authorities.
- 10.2 For the majority of indicators, the Council's performance is broadly in line with national and family group figures and with expectations of good practice.
- 10.3 The benchmarking exercise does highlight that:
- Dundee records a relatively low number of complaints per 1,000 population (3.9 in 2017/18) compared to both the national (10.8) and family group (14.1) averages. This is partly explained by a small number of Councils who record an exceptionally high number of complaints which skews both of these averages. For example, a very small number of Councils record the first report of a 'missed bin' as a complaint, but these numbers are so large that they affect the overall averages significantly. Dundee's figures are in line with a group of around 1/3rd of Councils which are likely to take a similar approach to defining complaints. We encourage services to ensure that complaints are recorded on the electronic system to ensure that performance can be managed and reported.
 - Possibly linked to the above, we also uphold a smaller % of complaints at stage 1 (25.8%) than the national (50.6%) and family group (51.0%) averages. If some Councils are recording significantly more complaints than us, it seems likely that a high proportion of these are very straightforward cases of fixing a problem without the need for much in the way of investigation/explanation (eg the 'missed bin') and therefore are more likely to be upheld. As with the figures above, a group of around 1/3rd of Councils have broadly similar figures for upheld/not upheld. However, this issue will be explored as the benchmarking process continues.

11. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality and Risk Management. There are no major issues.
- 11.2 The complaints recording system includes a feature that asks complaint handlers to highlight any complaint relating to an equalities issue - age, disability, gender, LGBT, race or religion. In the first half of 2018/19, 4 such complaints were recorded, one relating to gender and three to disability. Details of all have been drawn to the attention of the Council's Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator.

12. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team has been consulted in the preparation of this report and agrees with its contents.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

BREAKDOWN OF DATA ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 1/4/2018 TO 30/9/2018

Chief Executive's													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	2		2	100.0					2	100.0			1.2
Opened at Investigation	1		1	100.0					1	100.0			3.3
Escalated to Investigation	1		1	100.0			1	100.0					10.5

Children & Families - Education/Schools													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	21	44.7	9	42.9	2	9.5	4	19.0	12	57.1	5	23.8	8.9
Opened at Investigation	24	51.1	17	70.8	3	12.5	1	4.2	15	62.5	8	33.3	20.4
Escalated to Investigation	2	4.3	2	100.0					1	50.0	1	50.0	5.2

City Development													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	26	89.7	20	76.9	1	3.8	1	3.8	24	92.3	1	3.8	3.5
Opened at Investigation	1	3.4	1	100.0					1	100.0			0.8
Escalated to Investigation	2	6.9	2	100.0			1	50.0	1	50.0			1.2

Corporate Services													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	47	92.2	35	74.0	3	6.4	18	38.3	24	51.1	5	10.6	4.2
Opened at Investigation	2	3.9			2	100.0			2	100.0			16.9
Escalated to Investigation	2	3.9	2	100.0			1	50.0			1	50.0	11.6

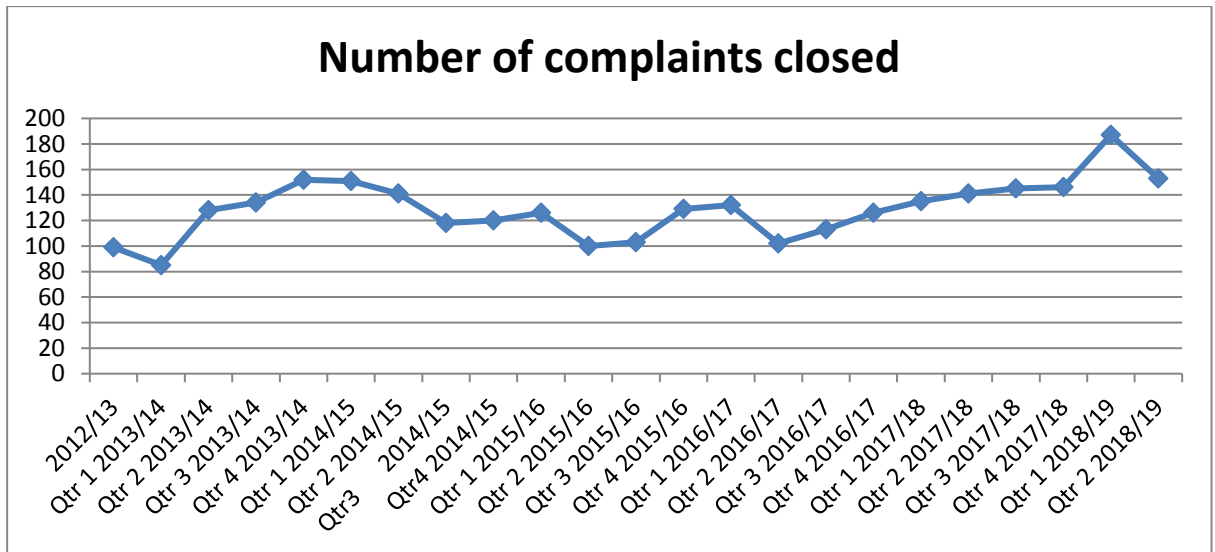
Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership (Social Work complaints only)													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	8	53.3	1	12.5	2	25.0			8	100.0			13.8
Opened at Investigation	7	46.7	3	42.9	3	42.9	2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	14.7
Escalated to Investigation													

Neighbourhood Services - Housing and Communities													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	74	79.6	57	77.0	8	10.8	24	32.4	42	56.8	8	10.8	4.3
Opened at Investigation	6	6.5	5	83.3	1	16.7	1	16.7	3	50.0	2	33.3	9.8
Escalated to Investigation	13	14.0	9	69.2	2	15.4	1	7.7	8	61.5	4	30.8	16.6

Neighbourhood Services - Environment													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	79	100.0	62	78.5	6	7.6	24	30.4	46	58.2	9	11.4	5.2
Opened at Investigation													
Escalated to Investigation													

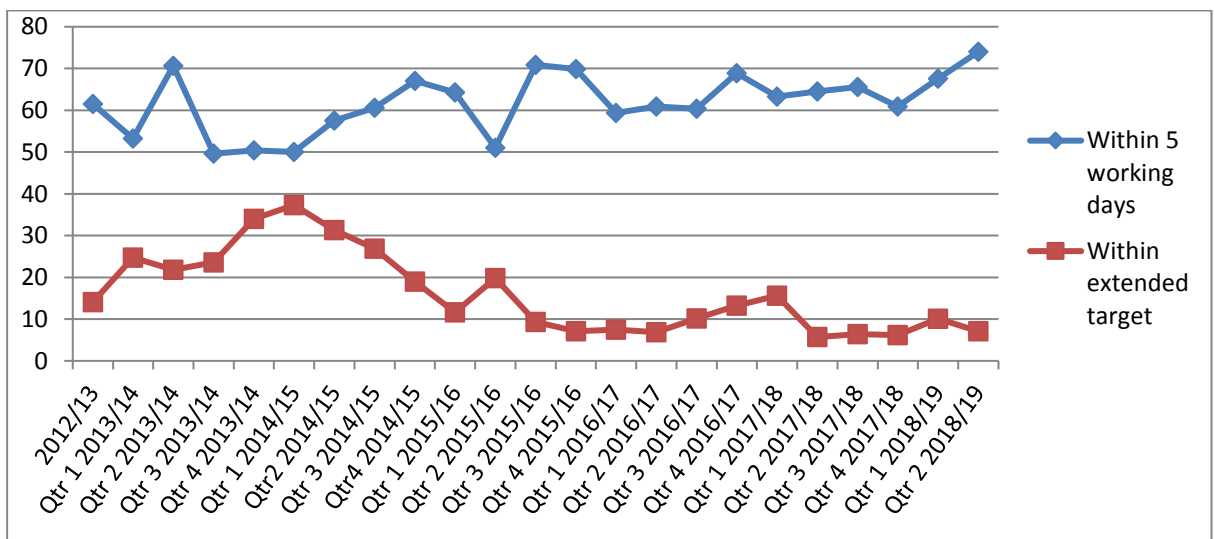
Grand Totals													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	263	77.4	188	71.5	22	8.4	71	27.0	163	62.0	29	11.0	5.2
Opened at Investigation	54	15.9	30	55.6	19	35.2	6	11.1	35	64.8	13	24.1	19.8
Escalated to Investigation	23	6.8	17	73.9	4	17.4	4	17.4	13	56.5	6	26.1	15.5

COMPLAINTS STATISTICS



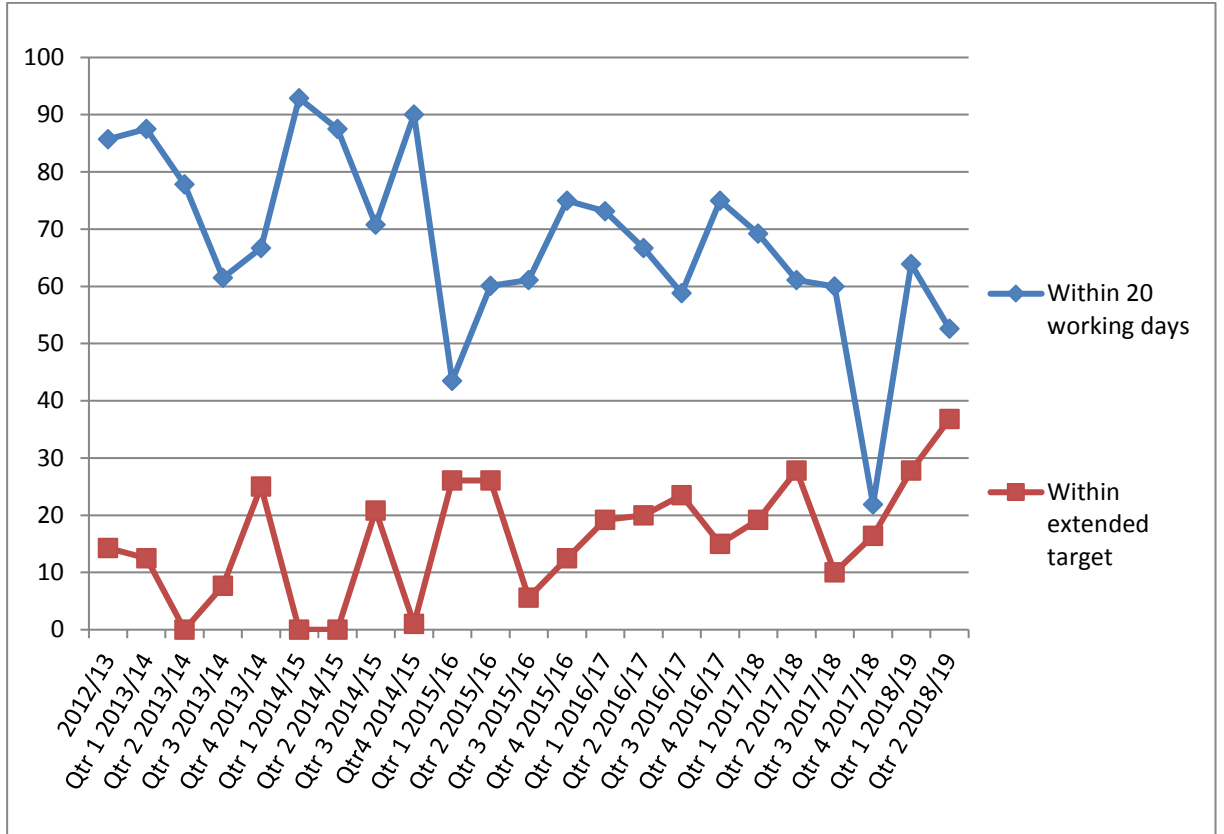
While the overall trend has risen since 2012, we believe this reflects greater use of the electronic complaints recording system rather than any increase in actual dissatisfaction. The Council should continue to emphasise that it welcomes complaints as a valuable source of customer feedback and an opportunity to identify improvements, rather than something negative.

% of stage 1 complaints closed within target



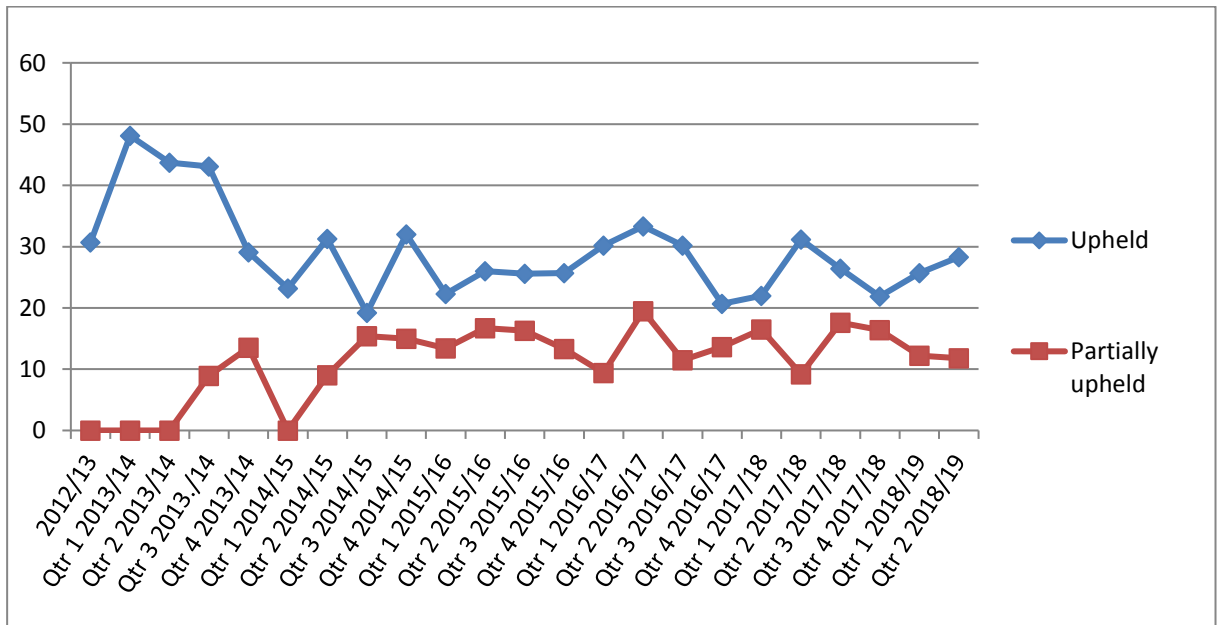
We continue to emphasise to staff the importance of responding to complaints within target (or contacting customers to agree extended targets if a quick response is not possible).

% of stage 2 complaints closed within target



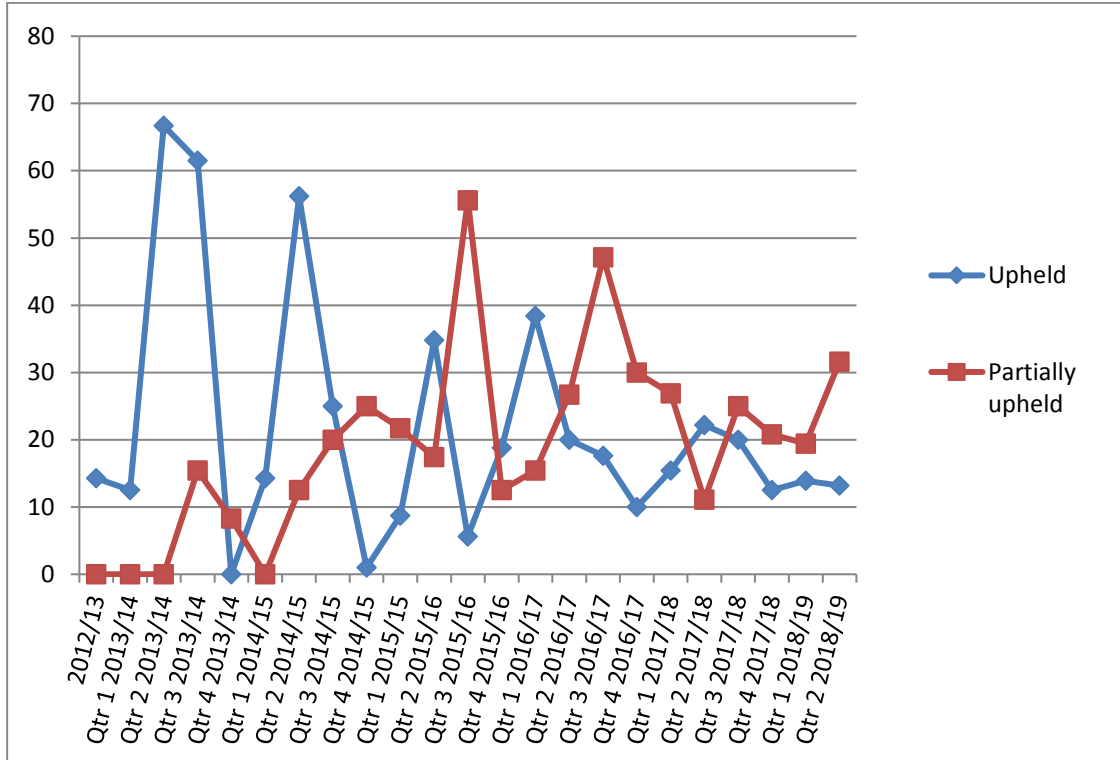
A very small number of complaints go to stage 2, so % figures will fluctuate considerably from one quarter to the next due to individual cases. Officers who deal with stage 2 complaints have been reminded that these should be acknowledged within 3 days as well as responded to within 20 days or an agreed extended target timescale.

% of stage 1 complaints upheld and partially upheld



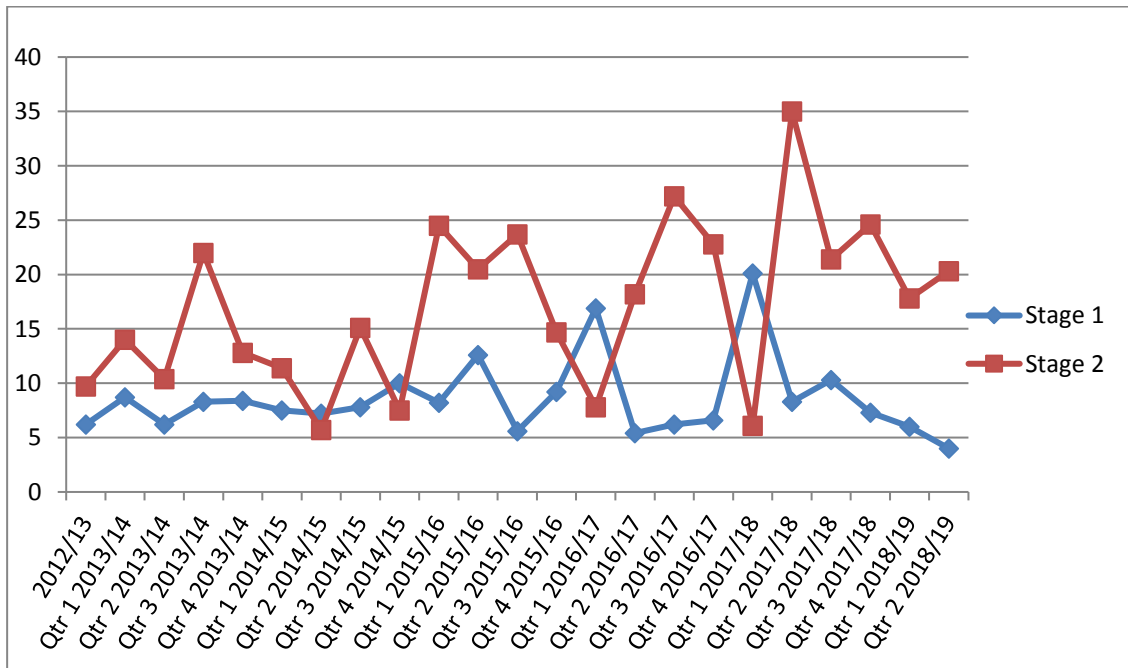
'Partially' upheld was not originally included as an option in the indicators specified by the SPSO, so these figures are only available from 1 October 2013. The % of complaints being upheld or partially upheld appears reasonable.

% of stage 2 complaints upheld and partially upheld



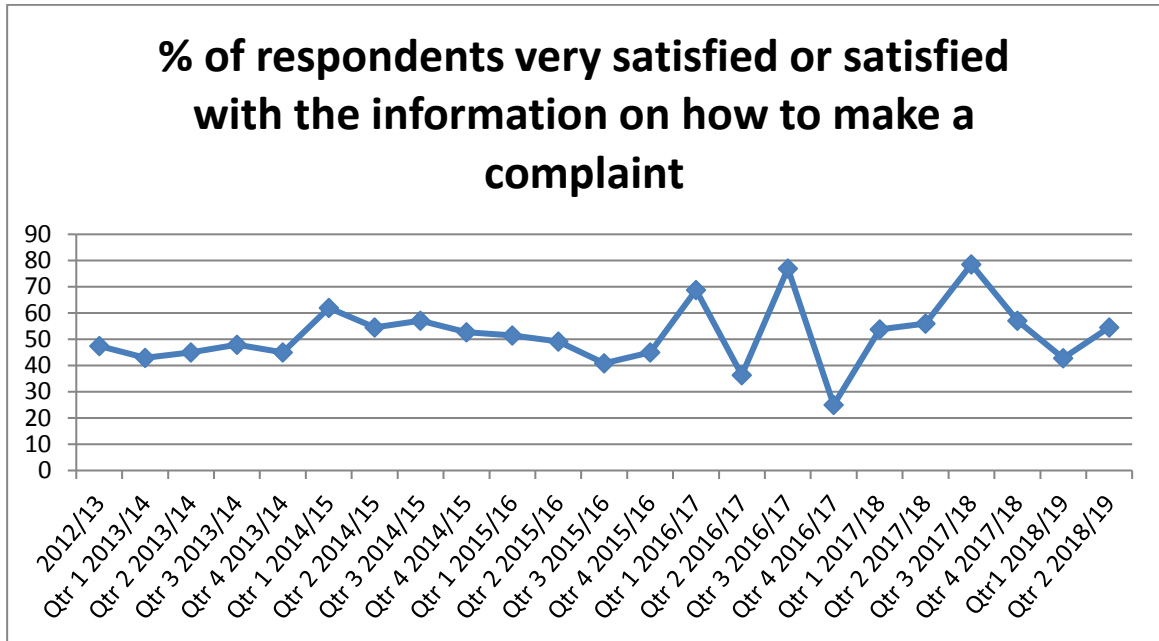
A very small number of complaints go to stage 2, so % figures will fluctuate considerably from one quarter to the next due to individual cases.

Average number of days to close complaints



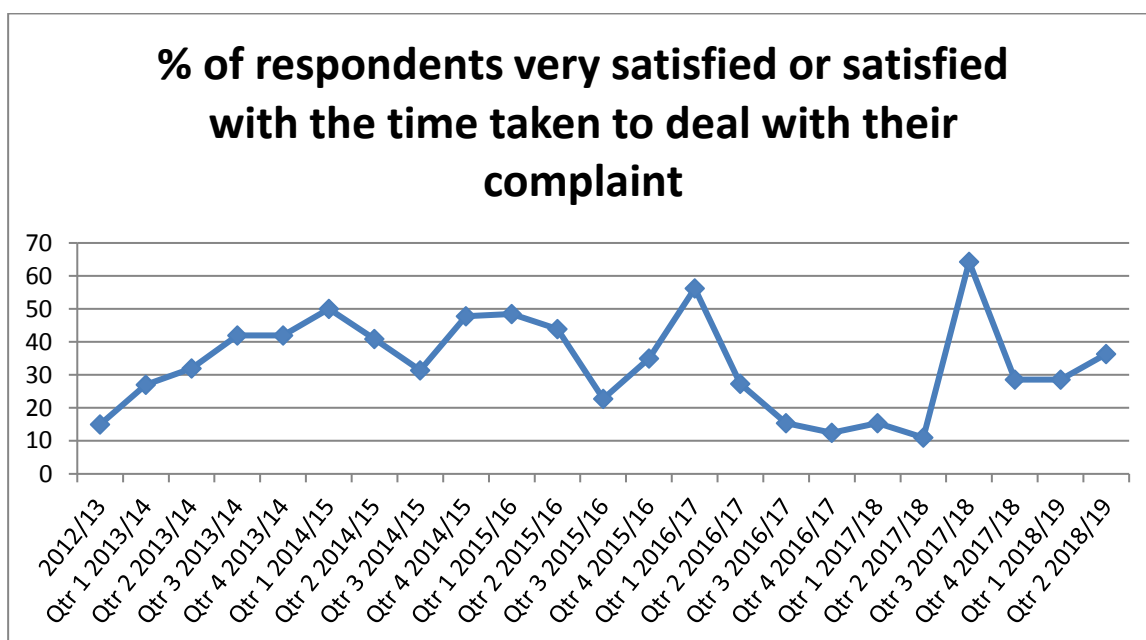
All services should aim to respond quickly to complaints, although it is acknowledged that some are complex and resolving these is likely to drive up the 'average number of days to close' performance.

RESULTS OF SATISFACTION SURVEY OF THOSE WHO MADE COMPLAINTS

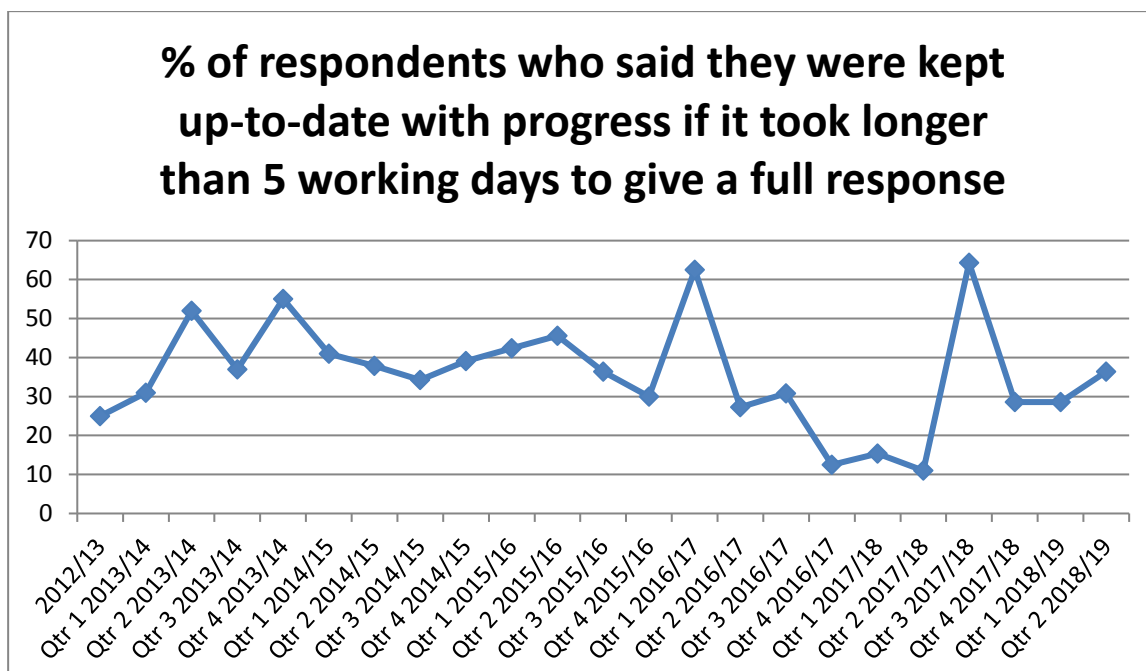


We will review the availability of complaints leaflets in offices and check that the information on the website about making a complaint remains prominent and clear.

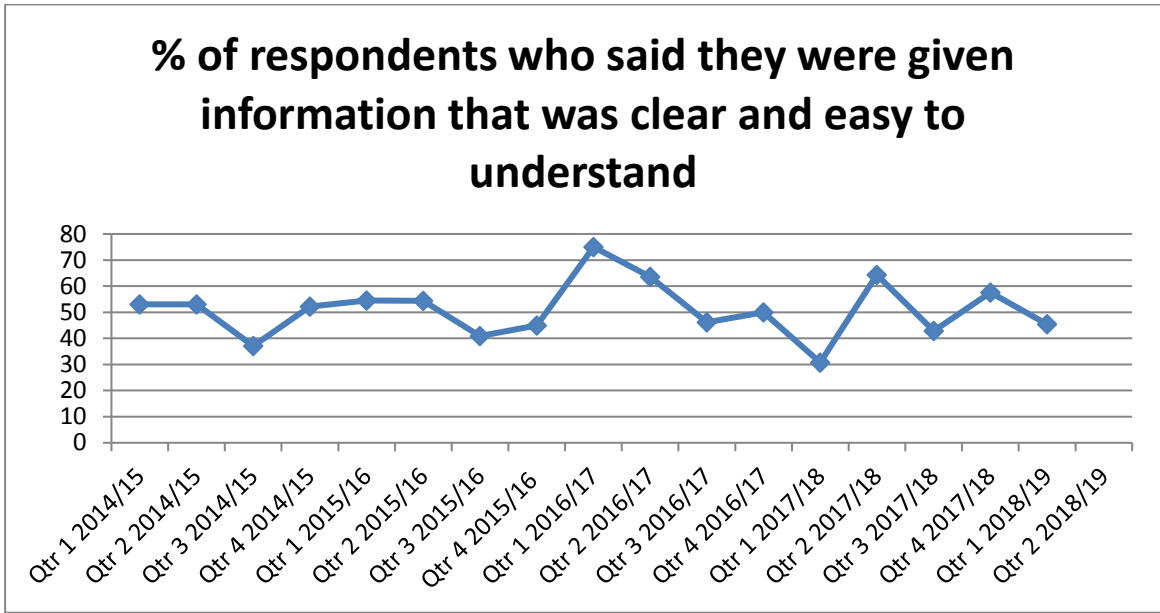




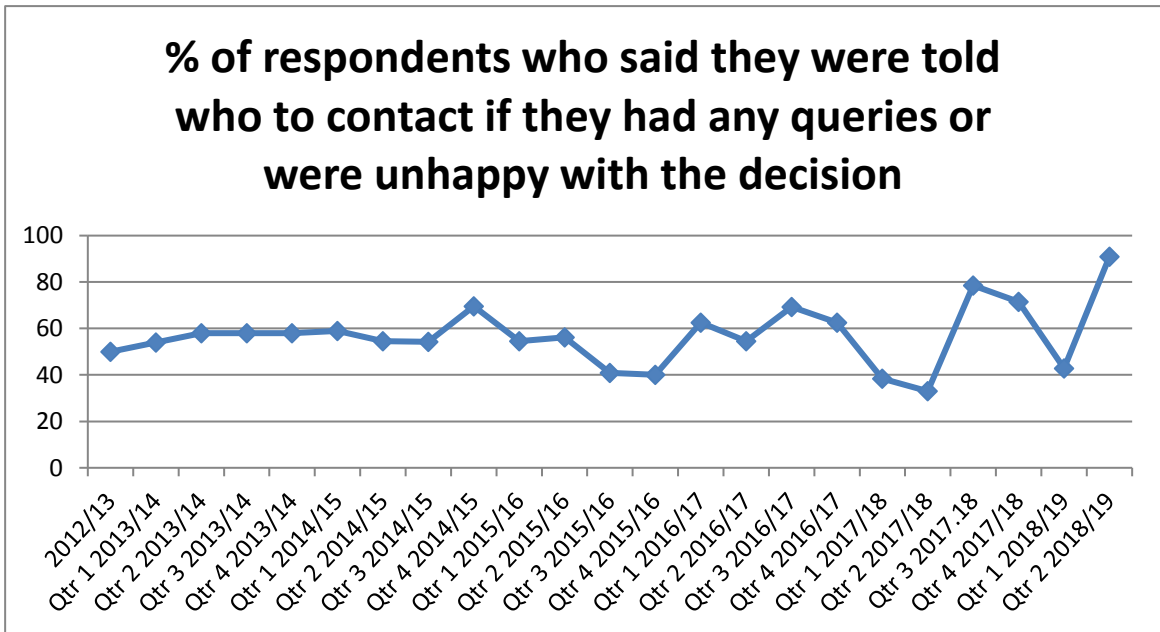
Around 45% of those responding in the latest period said they were 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the time taken to deal with their complaint. Members of the Council Management Team have been asked to continue to reinforce to officers the importance of dealing with complaints as quickly as possible, and explaining to customers where this is not possible - see next result also.



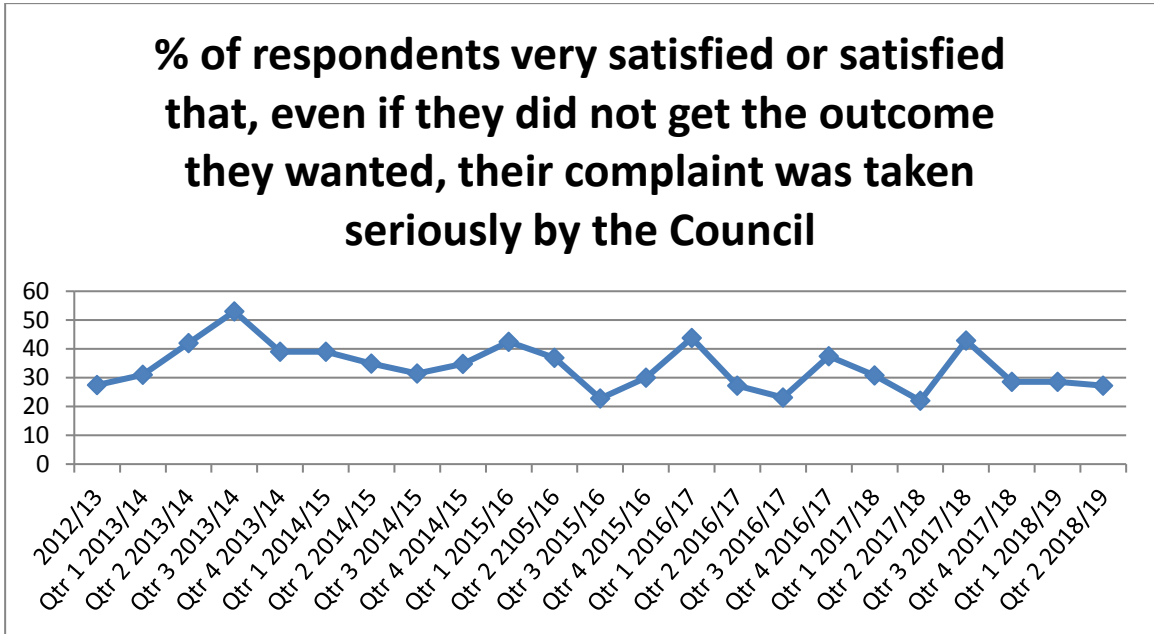
The Management Team has been asked to reinforce to staff the importance of keeping complainants up-to-date with progress on complaints which take longer than the target number of days to resolve and this will be reinforced in training for staff.



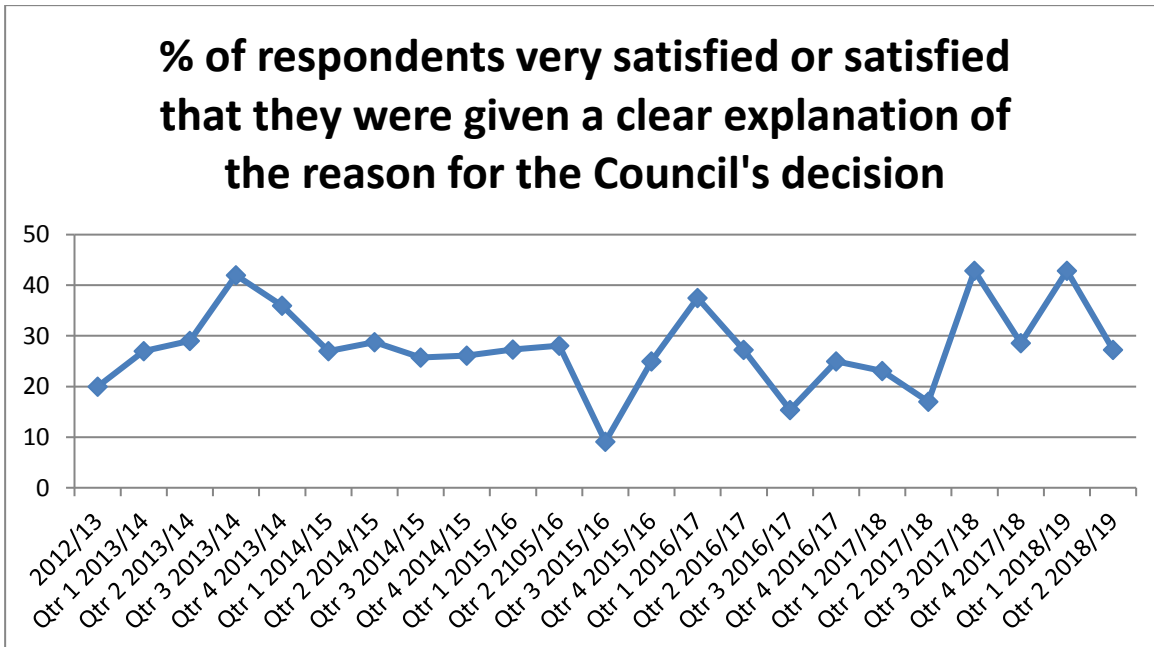
We continually reinforce to staff the importance of using plain English and techniques such as bullet points, headings etc to make complex explanations easier to read and understand.



It should be clear to all complainants who to contact in every case. We continue to reinforce the importance of telling complainants who to contact if dissatisfied with a response, and to monitor a sample of cases to check this is being done.



Around 45% of respondents said they were ‘very dissatisfied’ that their complaint had been taken seriously. Although based on a small sample, this suggests that we still need to make more effort to assure complainants that their concerns have been taken seriously even where their complaint is not upheld.



Around 45% of respondents were also ‘very dissatisfied’ with this aspect of the process. We will continue to emphasise to staff the importance of clearly explaining decisions on complaints, especially in the training programme which is underway, although it is acknowledged that this result will be affected by people’s feelings on the outcome of their complaint.