

**ITEM No ...4.....**

**REPORT TO:** SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 13 DECEMBER 2017

**REPORT ON:** BI-ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS

**REPORT BY:** CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**REPORT NO:** 425-2017

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To report on complaints statistics for the first half of 2017/18, 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 2017 and 30 September 2017, 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 2017/18, 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 2016/17, which highlights that two complaints reached the Ombudsman's investigation stage of which one was partially upheld.
- (e) that a programme of training for employees on dealing with complaints is underway, and will reinforce 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.
- 4.2 This latest report covers complaints closed during the six months between 1 April 2017 and 30 September 2017, and includes performance on key indicators as well as the results of the satisfaction surveys sent to those who made complaints closed during each quarter, with charts showing the trends compared to previous periods.
- 4.3 The report also updates Committee on the work of the Complaints Review Group which meets quarterly to check that the complaints handling procedure is being followed correctly and to promote learning from complaints and ensure that the intelligence and insight gathered from complaints is translated into process improvements.

- 4.4 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 2017 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

### 5.1 In the first half of 2017/18:-

- 293 complaints were closed (this now includes complaints about Social Work which became subject to the model Complaints Handling Procedure from 1 April 2017).
- 64.0% of complaints at the frontline stage were closed within the target of 5 working days and a further 10.0% 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 2017/18, our ratio of complaints closed at stage 1 compared to stage 2 was 85.3% to 14.7% - the Ombudsman's office regards over 80% closed at stage 1 as good performance.
- 67.4% of complaints at the investigation stage were closed within the target of 20 working days and a further 20.9% within an extended target time.
- the average number of working days taken to close complaints was 7.4 days at the frontline stage and 30.3 days at the investigation stage (combining 'opened at' and 'escalated to' figures). 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, the averages are above target and we will reinforce to services the importance of responding quickly to complaints.
- at the frontline stage, 27.2% of complaints were upheld and a further 12.4% were partially upheld.
- at the investigation stage, 25.6% were upheld and 14.0% were partially upheld.
- the percentage of complaints recorded in each category is shown below (with the figures for 2016/17 in brackets):
 

- delay in responding to enquiries and requests	-	11.9%	(14.2%)
- failure to meet our service standards	-	15.5%	(15.5%)
- treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff	-	28.1%	(25.8%)
- failure to provide a service	-	27.7%	(24.5%)
- dissatisfaction with our policy	-	10.6%	(13.0%)
- failure to follow the proper administrative process	-	5.8%	(6.2%)
- refusal to give advice or answer questions	-	0.3%	(0.8%)

Complaints categorised as relating to treatment by or attitude of staff continue to be the highest group although there has also been an increase in the % categorised as 'failure to provide a service'.

- 17 people made more than one complaint during the first half of 2017/18, 15 making two complaints and 2 making three complaints.

- by service, the number of complaints recorded were:
  - Corporate Services (44)
  - Children & Families
    - Education (42)
    - Children's Services (9)
    - Criminal Justice (2)
  - Neighbourhood Services
    - Housing (64)
    - Environment (95)
  - City Development (18)
  - Chief Executive's (1)
  - Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership: Social Work (18)

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.
- bill around 74,000 domestic properties for Council Tax and issue approximately 350,000 Council Tax bills and reminder notices, not including benefit notifications and other letters which would take the total number of Revenue transactions to over 600,000.
- educate over 17,000 pupils (over 3.2 million 'pupil days') and process nearly 1,500 placing requests.
- process over 4,000 free school meal and clothing grant applications and over 600 applications for Education Maintenance Allowance.
- carry out around 800 food inspection visits, 600 occupational health and safety visits and 7,000 pest control visits.
- service over 6 million different types of recycling and residual waste containers.
- provide home care to over 1,800 people and residential care to 1,000 service users.
- receive over 1,400 requests under Freedom of Information Legislation and Environmental Information Regulations.
- register around 4,000 births and deaths and conduct around 600 weddings.
- receive over 100,000 service requests on our website (job applications, requests for wheelie bins, book renewals etc).
- process more than half a million payments valued at around £150 million.
- process 1,100 Building Warrant applications and 900 planning applications, and investigate over 150 planning enforcement complaints.
- maintain over 500 Km of roads and almost a million Km of footpaths, and travel about 30,000 Km treating priority roads in the winter.
- process over 17,000 recruitment applications via the Talentlink portal.
- provide over 5,000 interpretation and translations per year.

- 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 2017/18 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 .....
Letters to the Council about their transfer from DLA to PIP had not been passed on to their support worker, resulting in benefits being stopped.	Procedures have been tightened where letters are received requiring action on behalf of Corporate Appointeeship clients and an early warning system put in place where care managers are informed where clients' income reduces suddenly or unexpectedly.
His garden and gate had been damaged in the course of work to install external wall insulation.	Improved monitoring now takes place of damage to surrounding areas after completion of work.
A Eurobin had been located directly below his window, causing noise and loss of privacy.	Positioning of street bins is being more thoroughly assessed.
They had difficulty getting through to report problems with waste collection.	Senior Officers responsible for Neighbourhood Services, Customer Services and Business Support have discussed the issues arising from the number of phone calls during the recycling roll-out and work is underway to address these.
Her daughter was supposed to attend an after-school club but had been dismissed into the school playground.	School introduced a register for the club to be completed by teachers and double-checked by the club leader.

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 STEP reviews. STEP (Systems Thinking Empowers People) is the Council's approach to service improvement 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. In October this year, we ran a short survey 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 were housing (including repairs and allocations),

roads/traffic/parking, environmental issues (including bins, street cleaning, grass cutting, trees) and anti-social behaviour. Suggestions for process improvements included:

- co-ordination - officers not just dealing with their part of a problem but taking a 'lead professional' approach.
- contact - keeping in touch with people who make complaints, keeping members 'in the loop' and ensuring cases are handed over when staff are on leave.
- communication - better communication, with a concentration on plain language and more care taken with standard letters.
- timescales - reinforce to officers the agreed timescales for responding promptly to elected members and ensure these are being met.

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

Some members again suggested the development of a case management system which allows members to track cases from mobile devices and allows proper statistical analysis. It was suggested that we use a system developed and tested elsewhere rather than design an in-house solution, so we will continue to monitor the development of user-friendly systems which would help members manage their caseloads.

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

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

As well as the 'process' issues listed above, suggestions made which will be passed on to relevant officers included:

- Publicity about the work of local forums such as the CRF and the Community Councils/Neighbourhood Representative Structures.
- Produce a plan for an ideal bus network and work to make it a reality with national government.
- Transparency on school performance - number of teachers in classes on given days etc.
- More social housing.
- Greater enforcement and partnership work with the Police.
- Check anti-social behaviour policies as they seem to not be working for some people.
- Improve reporting system online - should be covered when new website goes live.
- Residents parking scheme.

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. ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE SCOTTISH PUBLIC SERVICE OMBUDSMAN**

- 8.1 The annual letter from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, providing statistics on complaints to the SPSO about the Council during 2016/17, was received in October 2017.
- 8.2 27 complaints about Dundee City Council were received by the Ombudsman in 2016/17, 8 less than in 2015/16. The number of complaints received about the Council represents 1.8% of those received by the Ombudsman about local authorities in the year, slightly down on last year's figure of 2.0%.
- 8.3 Of the 27 complaints received, 7 were about Social Work, 6 about Housing, 2 each about Education and Environmental Health/Cleansing and 1 each about Planning, Finance, Legal/Admin and Recreation/Leisure. 1 was categorised as 'other' and 2 described as 'subject unknown or out of jurisdiction'.
- 8.4 Of the 27 complaints determined during the year:-
- at the 'advice' stage, 10 are recorded as being premature and 7 as not duly made or withdrawn.
  - at the 'early resolution' stage, 4 are listed as out of jurisdiction, 1 as not duly made or withdrawn, 1 as outcome not achievable, 1 as premature and 1 as proportionality.

- only two complaints reached the 'investigation' stage. Of these, 1 was partially upheld, and 1 was not upheld. There were no fully upheld complaints.

The partially upheld complaint concerned the time taken to respond to a complaint about a social work matter. The substantive complaint was not upheld.

## 9. BENCHMARKING

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 The benchmarking exercise does highlight that:
- Dundee records a relatively low number of complaints per 1,000 population (3.2 in 2016/17) compared to both the national (14.29) and family group (16.93) 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. However, we do still feel complaints may be under-recorded and we are still encouraging services to ensure that complaints are recorded on our 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 (28.7%) than the national (58.9%) and family group (57.9%) 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. However, this issue will be explored as the benchmarking process continues. Some Councils have centralised complaints teams, independent of services, which may mean complaints are more likely to be recorded and upheld.

## 10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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 2017/18, one such complaint was recorded, relating to disability. This concerned a person's medical assessment for re-housing. This has been drawn to the attention of the Council's Equality and Diversity Co-ordinator.

## 11. CONSULTATIONS

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



**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

DAVID R MARTIN  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

27 November 2017



## APPENDIX ONE

## BREAKDOWN OF DATA ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 1/4/2017 TO 30/9/2017

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	41	93.2	30	73.2	3	7.3	17	41.5	22	53.7	2	4.9	7.0
Opened at Investigation													
Escalated to Investigation	3	6.8	2	66.7			1	33.3	2	66.7			19.0

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	27	64.3	12	44.4	3	11.1	8	29.6	10	37.0	9	33.3	20.0
Opened at Investigation	14	33.3	8	57.1	4	28.6	3	21.4	10	71.4	1	7.1	35.0
Escalated to Investigation	1	2.4									1	100.0	21.2

Children and Families - Children's 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	4	44.4	2	50.0	1	25.0			4	100.0			7.3
Opened at Investigation	3	33.3	2	66.7	1	33.3			2	66.7	1	33.3	23.0
Escalated to Investigation	2	22.2	2	100.0					2	100.0			10.4

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Neighbourhood Services - Housing													
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	53	82.8	36	67.9	5	9.4	12	22.6	37	69.8	4	7.5	4.7
Opened at Investigation	4	6.2	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0	3	75.0			34.1
Escalated to Investigation	7	10.9	7	100.0			2	28.6	4	57.1	1	14.3	19.2

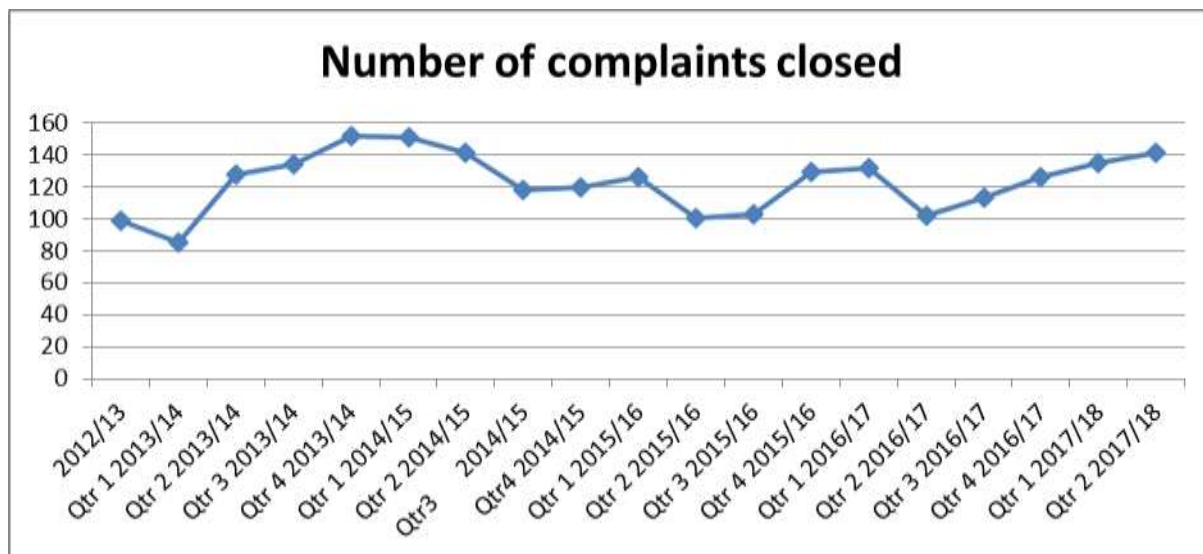
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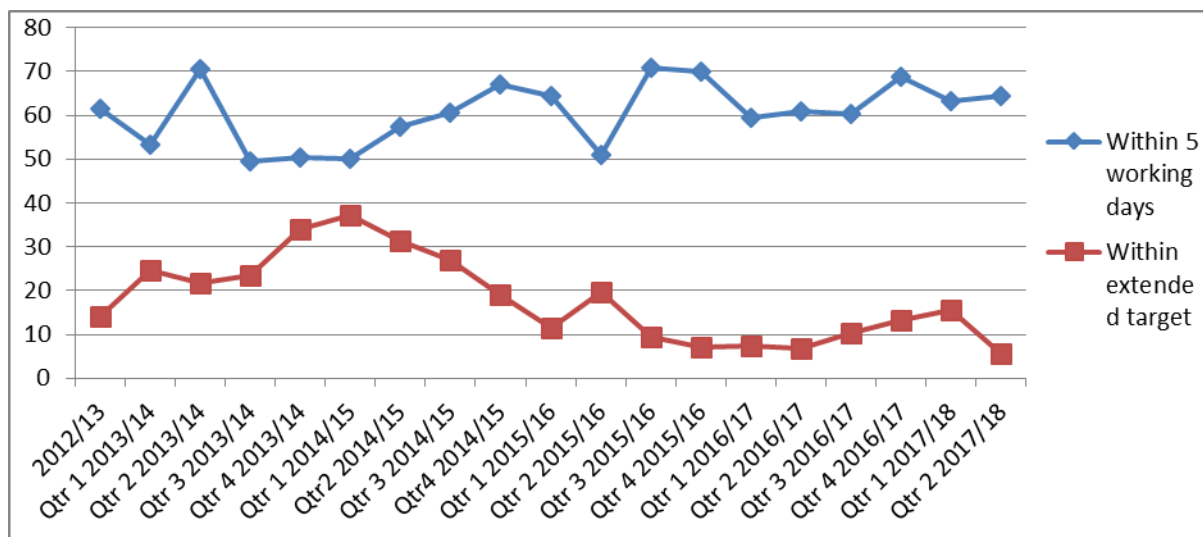
Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership (Social Work complaints only)													
Stage	Total		Within Target		With Extension		Upheld		Not upheld		Partially upheld		Average days to resolve
	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	Count	% age	
Frontline	11	61.1	3	27.3	1	9.1	2	18.2	8	72.7	1	9.1	13.2
Opened at Investigation	5	27.8	3	60.0	2	40.0	3	60.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	28.2
Escalated to Investigation	2	11.1	2	100.0					1	50.0	1	50.0	17.5

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	250	85.3	160	64.0	25	10.0	68	27.2	151	60.4	31	12.4	7.4
Opened at Investigation	28	9.6	16	57.1	9	32.1	8	28.6	17	60.7	3	10.7	30.3
Escalated to Investigation	15	5.1	13	86.7			3	20.0	9	60.0	3	20.0	17.9

## COMPLAINTS STATISTICS

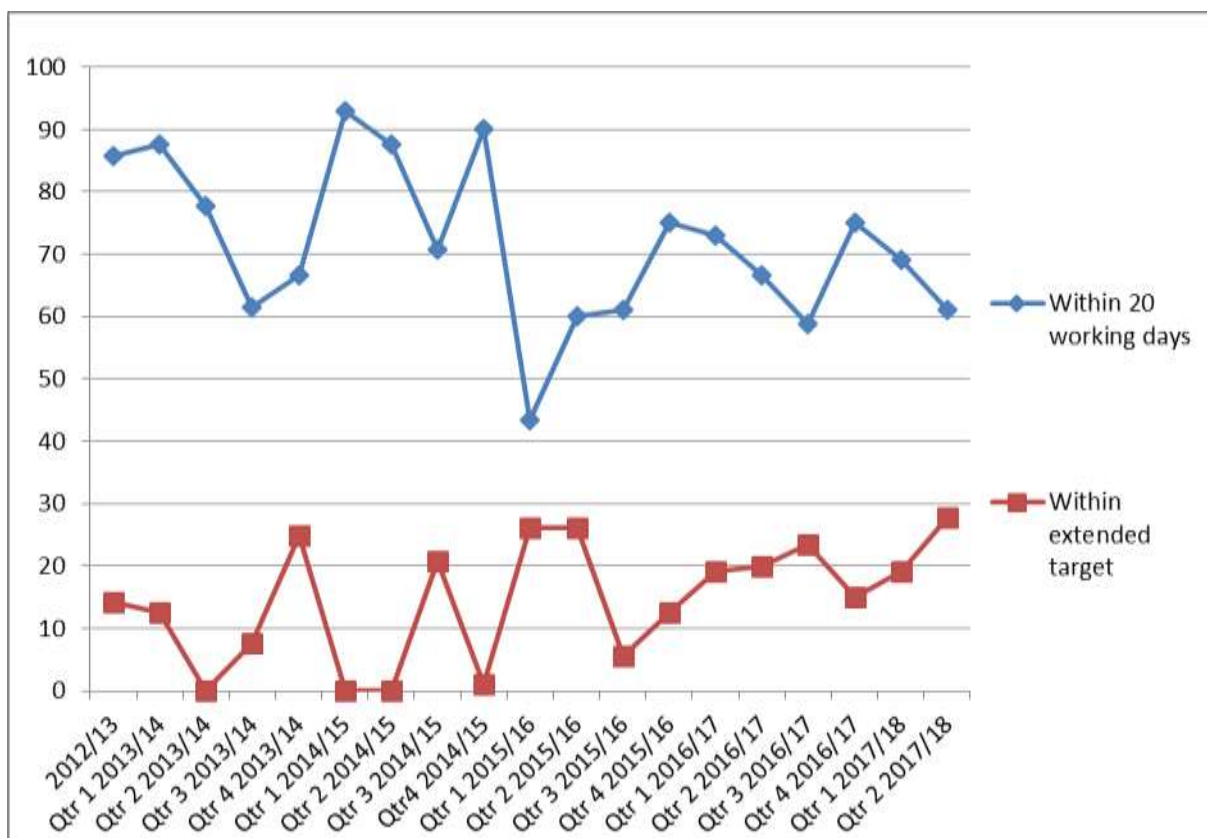


While the overall trend has risen since 2012, we believe this reflects greater use of the electronic complaints recording system rather than any increase in actual dissatisfaction. The Council should continue to emphasise that it welcomes complaints as a valuable source of customer feedback and an opportunity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

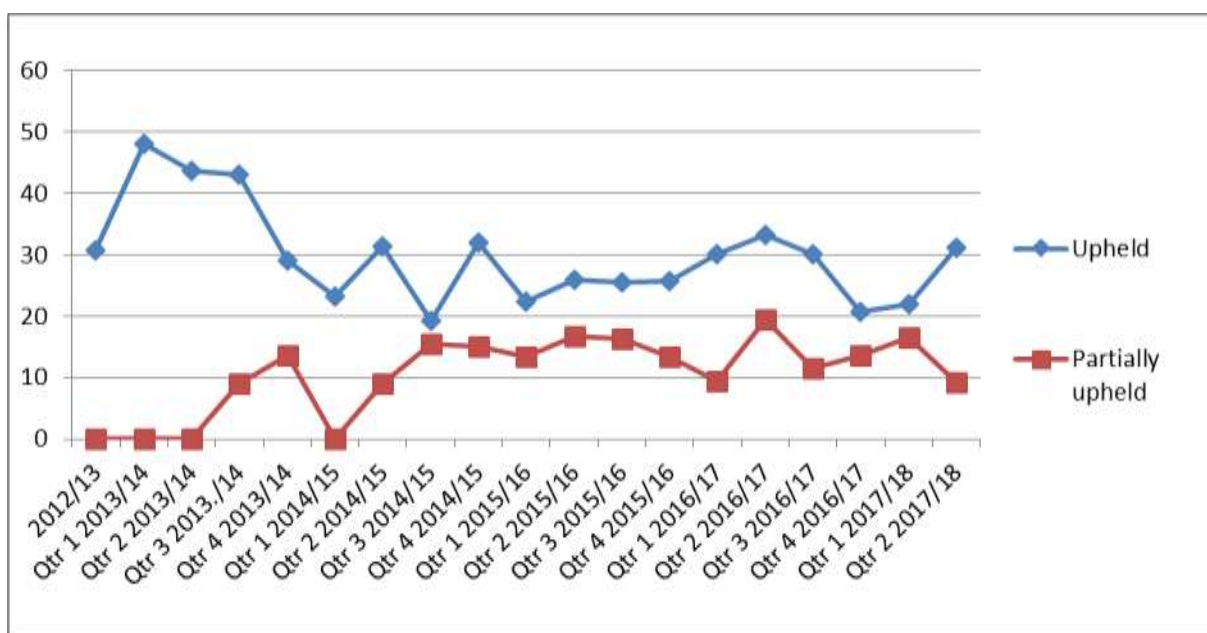
**% of stage 1 complaints closed within target**

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).

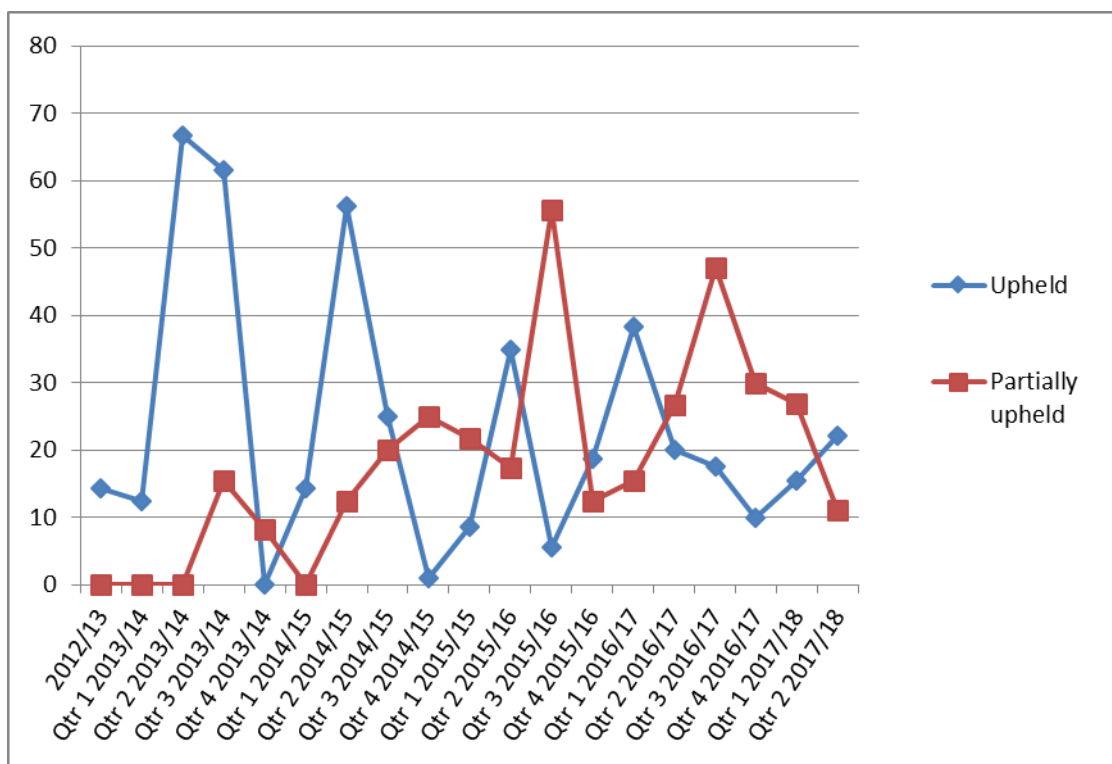


**% of stage 2 complaints closed within target**

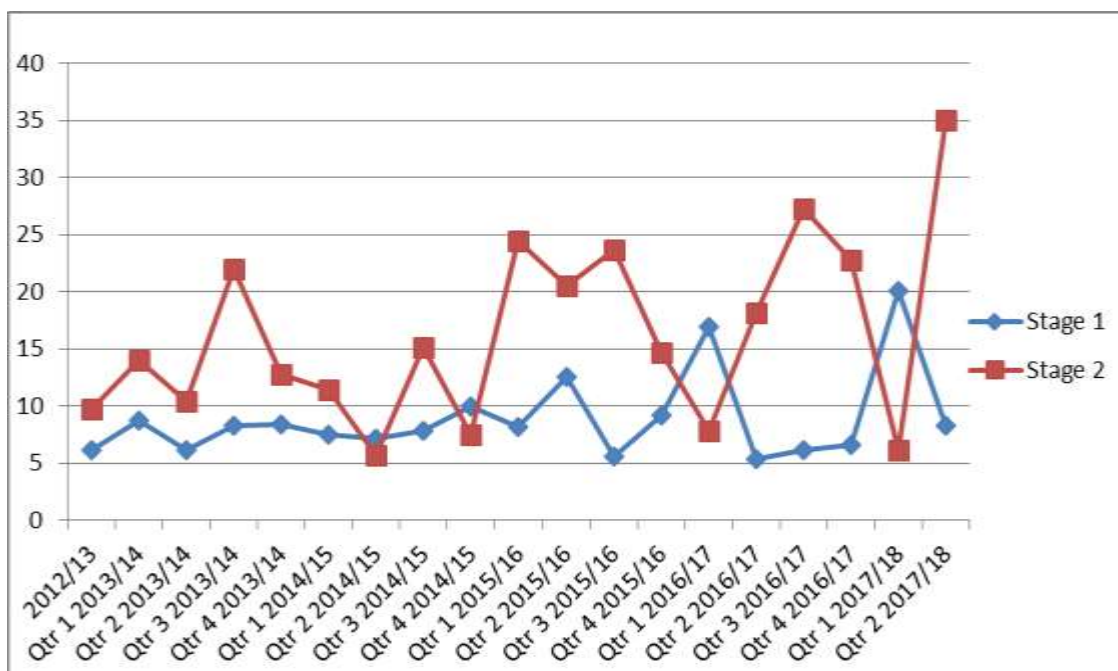
A very small number of complaints go to stage 2, so % figures will fluctuate considerably from one quarter to the next due to individual cases. Officers who deal with stage 2 complaints have been reminded that these should be acknowledged within 3 days as well as responded to within 20 days or an agreed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

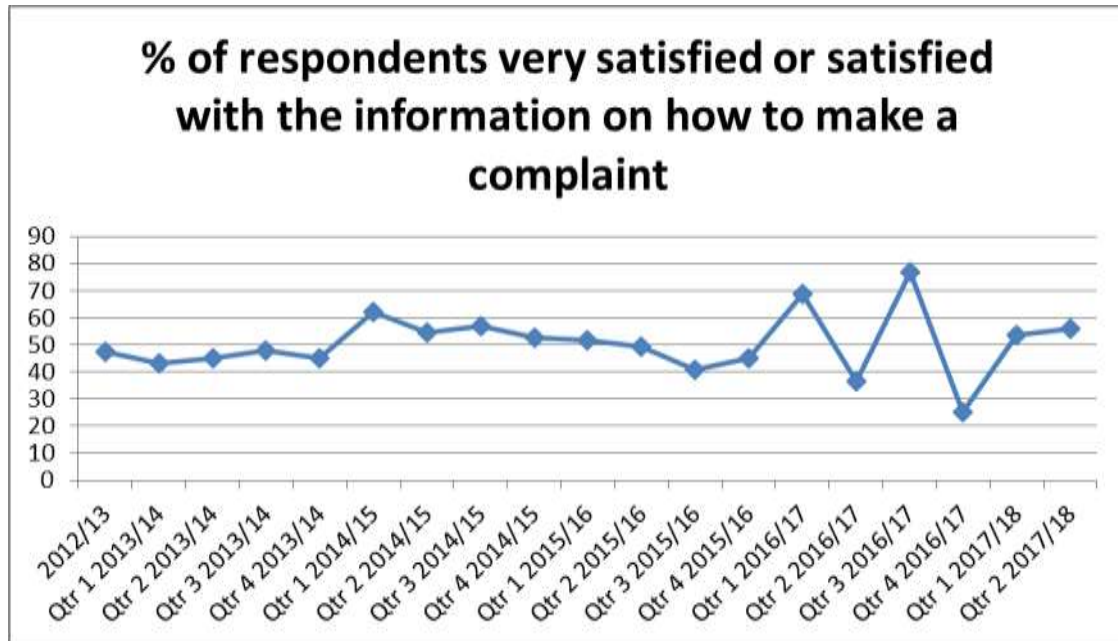
**% of stage 2 complaints upheld and partially upheld**

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

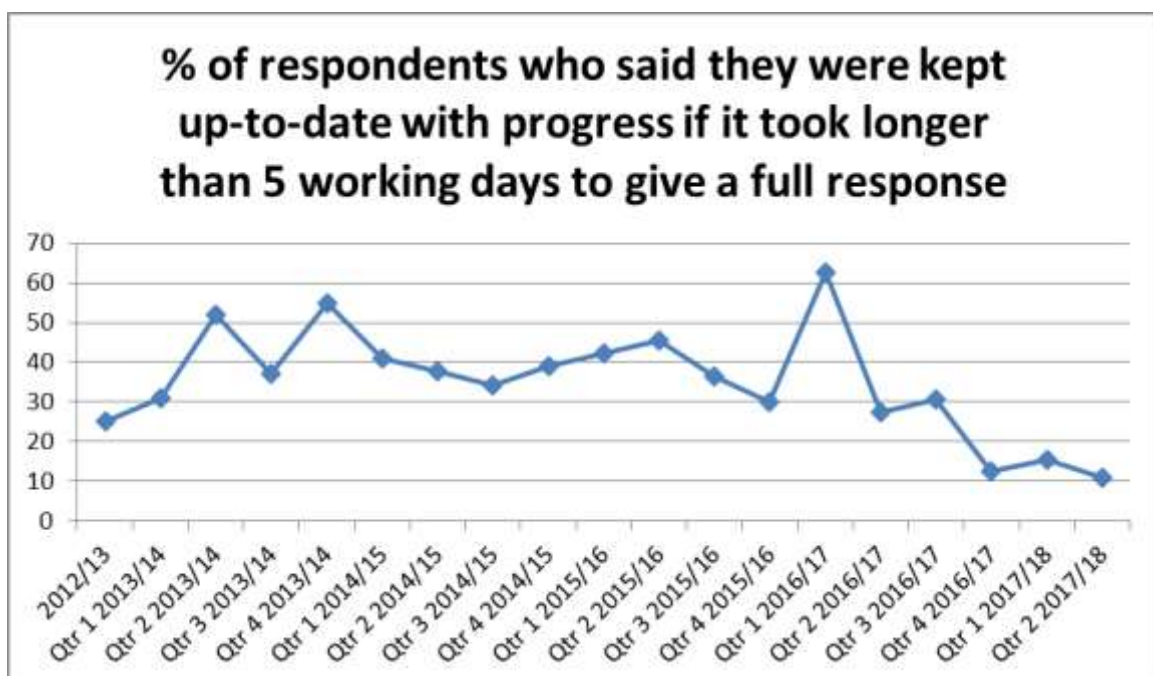


We will review the availability of complaints leaflets in offices and check that the information on the website about making a complaint remains prominent and clear.



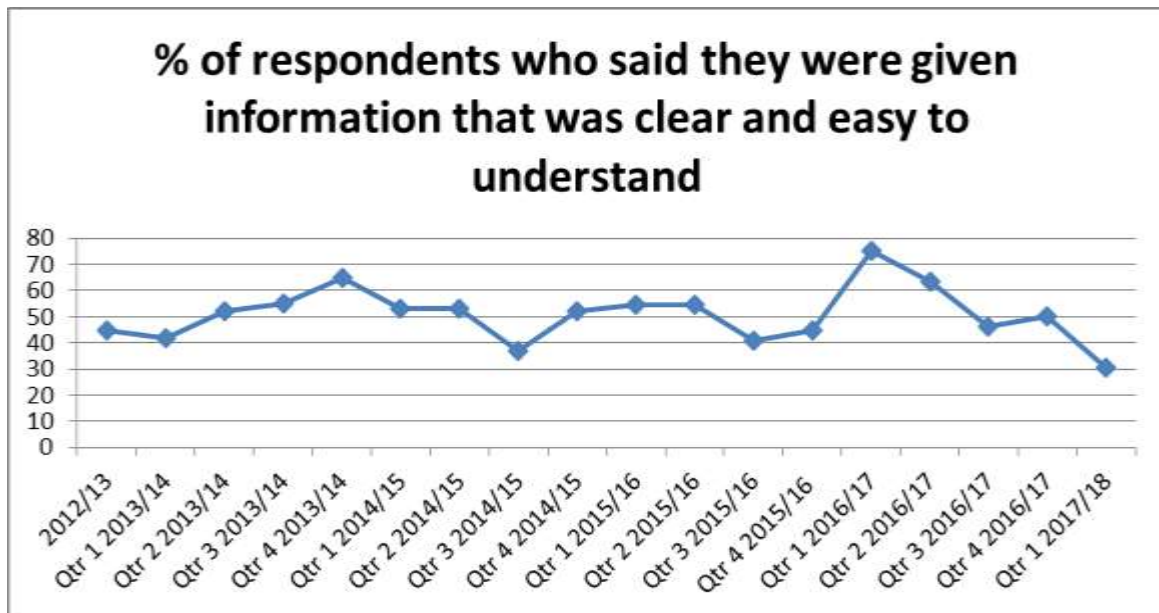


Almost three-quarters of those responding in the latest period said they were 'very dissatisfied' with the time taken to deal with their complaint. Members of the Council Management Team have been asked to continue to reinforce to officers the importance of dealing with complaints as quickly as possible,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

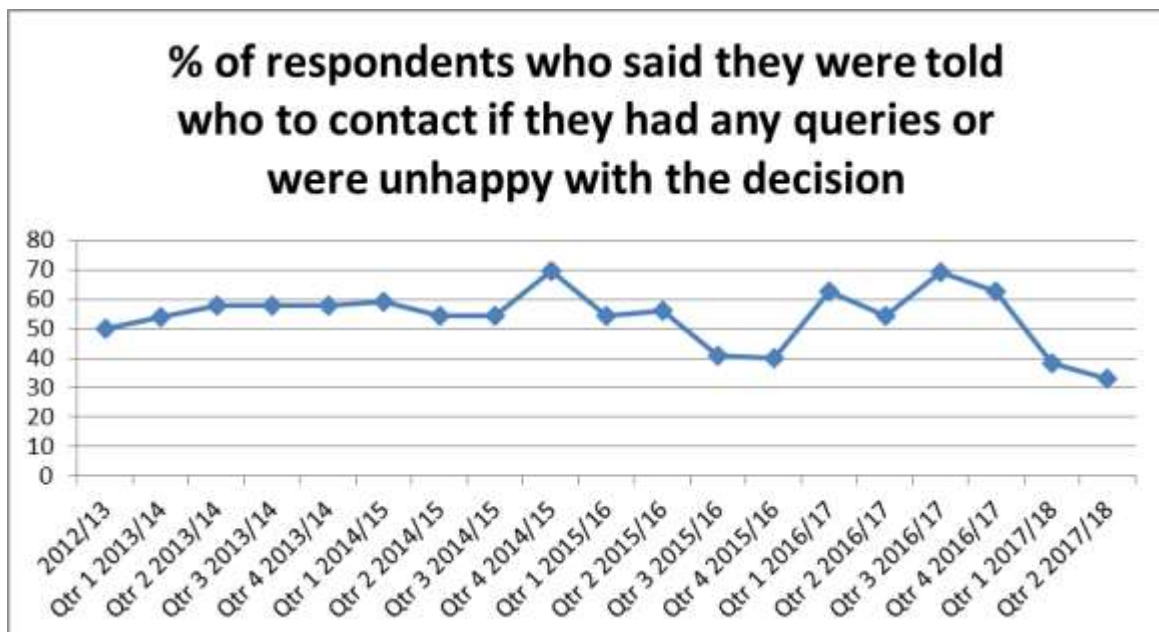


The Management Team has been asked to reinforce to staff the importance of keeping complainants up-to-date with progress on complaints which take longer than the target number of days to resolve and this will be reinforced in training for staff.

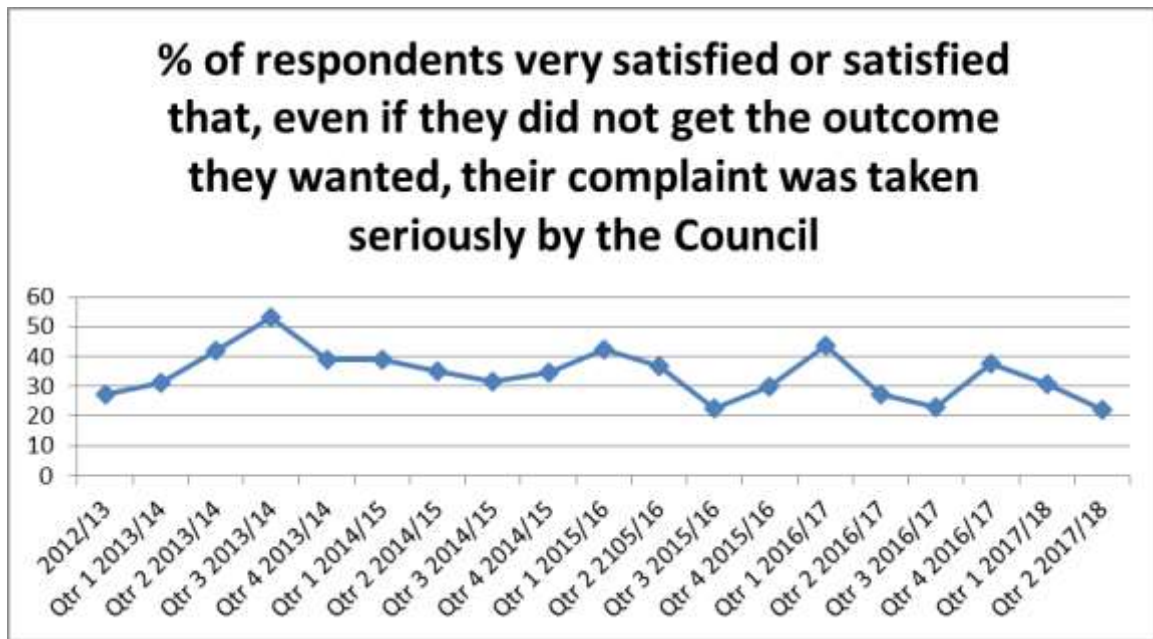




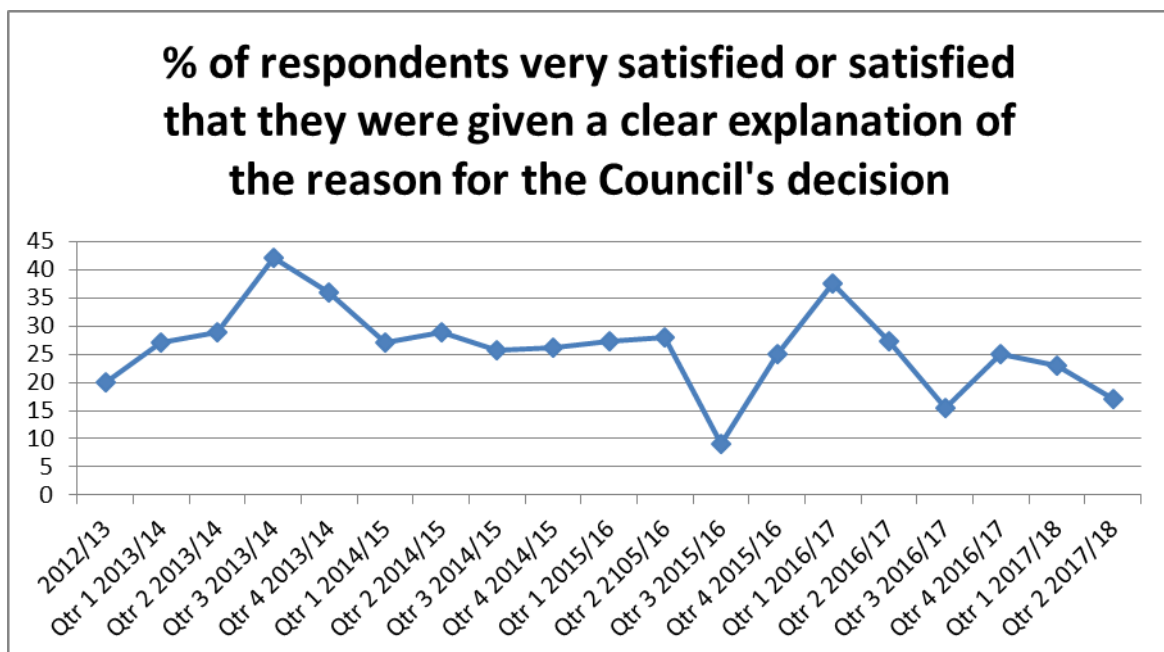
We continually reinforce to staff the importance of using plain English and techniques such as bullet points, headings etc to make complex explanations easier to read and understand.



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.



Just over 60% 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.



Over half of respondents said that they were '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.

