

Executive Board – 22 September 2020

Subject:	Have Your Say Complaints Annual Assurance Report – Including Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter 2019-20
Corporate Director(s)/Director(s):	Richard Henderson
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Sally Longford, Portfolio Holder for Energy, Environment and Democratic Services
Report author and contact details:	Vanessa Jenkins – Customer Experience Lead Vanessa.jenkins@nottinghamcity.gov.uk Ext 61527
Other colleagues who have provided input:	Dominic O'Melia – Customer Experience Manager Patrick Skeete – Social Care Complaints and Representations Manager Dave Halstead – Director of Neighbourhood Services
Subject to call-in:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Criteria for Key Decision:	
(a) <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditure <input type="checkbox"/> Income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings of £1,000,000 or more taking account of the overall impact of the decision	
and/or	
(b) Significant impact on communities living or working in two or more wards in the City <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Type of expenditure: <input type="checkbox"/> Revenue <input type="checkbox"/> Capital	
Total value of the decision: Nil	
Wards affected: All Wards	
Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s):	
Relevant Council Plan Key Theme:	
Nottingham People	<input type="checkbox"/>
Living in Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Growing Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Respect for Nottingham	<input type="checkbox"/>
Serving Nottingham Better	<input type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users): Report reflecting on Annual Local Government Ombudsman Review 2019-20 and Complaints	
Exempt information: None	
Recommendation(s):	
1 To note the contents of this report	

1. Reasons for Report and Recommendations

1.1 This report provides a reflection on the complaints received

- under the Have Your Say (HYS) process
- under the statutory Social Care complaints process
- about the School Admissions appeals process

and the decisions made on these complaints about Nottingham City Council by

- Nottingham City Council (NCC)
- the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO or LGO)

for the period of 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020. The information is taken from NCC records and the LGO Annual Letter, which is issued to all Councils and is published on the Ombudsman's website.

- 1.2 Capturing customer experience and learning from complaints is important, it enables the Council to reflect on feedback about its services and facilitate service improvements and innovation. An outcome of an upheld complaint could be identifying a recommendation for a service or process improvement, which is welcomed as another source of reflection and learning for the organisation. The Council's Customer Charter promises that we will use customer feedback to improve our services, and the Have Your Say feedback plays a vital role in achieving this.
- 1.3 Whilst it is important to capture customer experience, we also need to be mindful that each complaint represents time which the officer investigating and responding could have used on other activities. This is particularly relevant as the Council's resources are shrinking. The Customer Experience team therefore aim to support colleagues to achieve lower complaint rates, by acting on insight and increase productivity, to help services get things right the first time and in keeping with the Council's Customer Charter. This report helps to identify the level of success in achieving this aim within Council services.
- 1.4 We also note that a citizen's opinion of Council services in general can be affected by their experiences with an individual service, so by providing a satisfactory service (and in some cases by effective communication of a well-organised, complete, and timely complaint investigation), colleagues can improve the Council's reputation and future contact with citizens.
- 1.5 We continue to maintain a good working relationship with the LGO Assessment and Investigation teams. The Customer Experience Lead acts as a Link Officer between the LGO and NCC to liaise with Council services and ensure deadlines are met.

2. Background

- 2.1 To enable Nottingham City Council to deliver high quality services it is important that we record and listen to feedback from people using Council services. Through the Have Your Say (HYS) process, we aim to handle comments, complaints and compliments in a fair and consistent way, maintaining openness and transparency. Complaints can help us identify any trends in service failures and make improvements by learning from root cause analysis.
- 2.2 There are currently two complaints teams within Nottingham City Council. One team handles the statutory complaints in relation to Children and Adults Social Care Services, and the HYS team handles the complaints and feedback for all other Council services. There are some areas that cannot be dealt with by the HYS complaints process as they are covered by another process or legal procedure. These exemptions include:
 - Appeals against refusal of planning permission or against conditions placed on a grant of planning permission
 - A complaint about social care services (children and adults)
 - A school admission or exclusion appeal
 - A complaint about a school
 - A complaint from a City Council employee about an employment matter
 - An appeal against the issue of a penalty charge notice by the parking enforcement team and the recovery process which follows
 - Dispute a fixed penalty for environmental crimes (including dog-fouling)
 - Dispute a penalty charge notice for Bus Lane Contravention
 - Any appeal against the exercise of a police power
 - A complaint about the refusal of disabled badges for parking exemption

- A complaint about the independent Rent Officer
- A complaint about Anti-Social Behaviour
- A complaint about Nottingham City Homes
- Appeals regarding Resident Permits/Dispensation Access Permits

2.3 The LGO oversee some but not all of the HYS exemptions. This includes Social Care complaints and School Admissions appeals. They do not oversee the exemptions where there is a right to appeal or take legal action, such as Housing Benefit tribunals.

2.4 Refreshed in 2016, the HYS service operates a two-stage complaints handling process. At Stage 1, the customer's feedback is triaged to the appropriate service for investigation and response/remedy. If the customer remains dissatisfied once the complaint has completed the first stage of the process, they can request a review of the complaint handling at Stage 2, which is carried out by the Customer Experience Lead. Prior to 2016, there was a lengthier 4 stage complaints handling process, which was reviewed and replaced with the current 2 stage model, which enables the Council to act on customer insight and improve the outcomes for citizens through analysing feedback.

2.5 The following analysis is reported by volume of complaints so that Councillors can understand better the experience of customers.

3. The Local Government Annual Review

3.1 On July 29th 2020 the LGO launched their annual review of local government and social care complaints for 2019-20. Following from last year they have provided data to show how they are helping to improve local services. They are now showing data for compliance with recommendations they have made, and the number of cases where each authority has provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the LGO. This section looks at the overall LGO data compiled in these years Annual Review Letter, and further sections give further context of how overall, this data is a very small percentage of the actual complaint handling dealt with by Nottingham City Council.

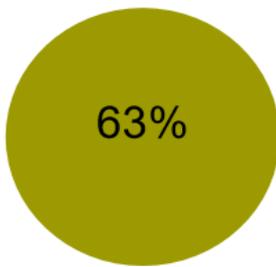
3.2 Nationally the LGO received 17,019 complaints and enquiries about councils in England (it does not cover Scotland or Wales). Of those complaints 4,217 had detailed investigations and 61% were upheld. This compares to 16,899 complaints and enquires received in 2018-19, of which 4,232 had detailed investigations and 58% were upheld.

3.3 This year's LGO Annual Review statistics tells us that over a third of the complaints and enquiries they received were about Education and Children's Services. The highest proportion of complaints they investigated relate to Adult Social Care and the fewest complaints investigated were about Benefits and Tax.

3.4 The LGO publishes the information for the Annual Review on an interactive map, which is called 'Your Council's Performance.' This tool, which was implemented in 2019, gives a snapshot of the service improvement recommendations and highlights the key statistics and how they compare to similar authorities.

3.5 The link to the council performance interactive map is as follows:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/nottingham-city-council/statistics>

3.6 The snapshot data published on the interactive map for NCC is shown as:



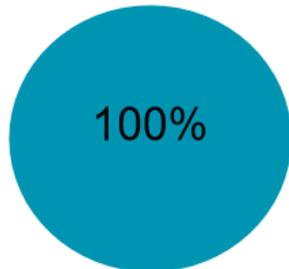
63% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of 56% in similar authorities.

12 upheld decisions

Statistics are based on a total of 19 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

This is an improvement to last year where there were a higher number of detailed investigations of 26 cases, and 69% of these were upheld.

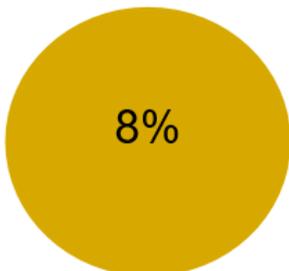


In 100% of cases we were satisfied the authority had successfully implemented our recommendations.

This compares to an average of 99% in similar authorities.

Statistics are based on a total of 11 compliance outcomes for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

Nottingham City Council also achieved 100% satisfactory compliance outcomes last year.



In 8% of upheld cases we found the authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

This compares to an average of 11% in similar authorities.

1 satisfactory remedy decision

Statistics are based on a total of 19 detailed investigations for the period between 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020

This is an improvement on last year in which Nottingham City Council had provided a satisfactory remedy in 6% of cases before the complaint had reached the LGO.

3.7 The following key facts and figures will provide an in-depth analysis of the LGO's data published for NCC so that Councillors can identify areas that are performing well and areas for improvement considerations as well as see the root causes for these trends.

4. LGO Review Letter – Key Facts and Figures

4.1 The LGO Annual Review Letter shows that they received 75 complaints and enquiries about NCC for the 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020 period and 86 were assessed and issued with decisions (this number is higher due to decisions issued to any cases pre-dating the 2019-20 financial year period). 29 were treated as premature, 2 were requests for advice, 3 were either incomplete or invalid and 33 were closed after initial enquiries. 19 complaints involved detailed investigations by the LGO and 12 of these were upheld.

4.2 This data shows a decrease in upheld complaints from last year. The table below outlines the results of the LGO Annual Review for 2020 in comparison to the previous three years:

Annual Letter	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>
Received	100	103	104	75
Decided	98	98	98	86
Upheld	8	4	18	12
Not Upheld	15	11	8	7
Closed	75	83	72	67
Uphold Rate	35%	27%	69%	67%

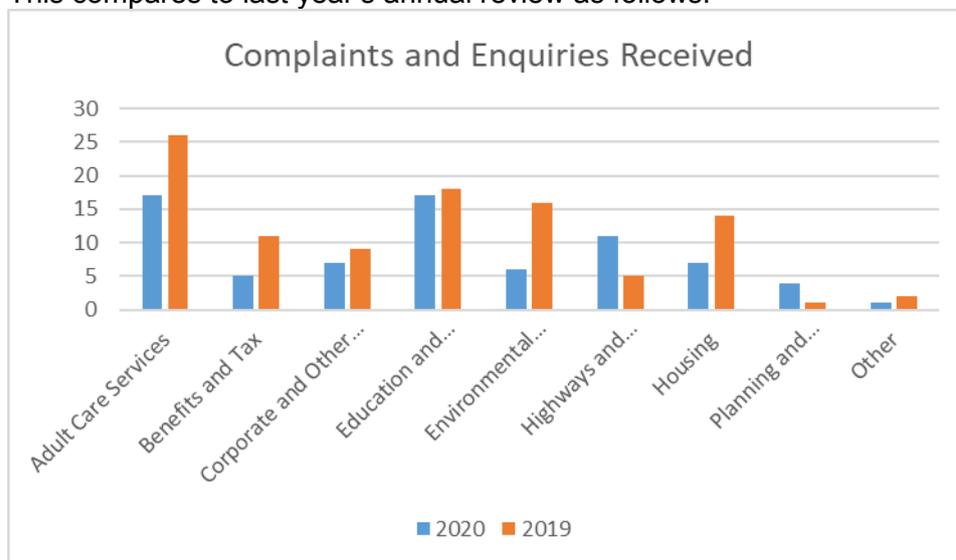
4.3 We recognise that the 19 cases investigated is a very small sample of all complaints dealt with by NCC and that statistically it may not be representative of our complaints process. However we have attempted to identify any learning applicable.

4.4 Looking at the figures above, we can see that the upheld decisions in 2019 and 2020 were higher than previous years. These upheld decisions were predominantly in Social Care cases, 8 out of 12 in 2020, and which will be reflected on in their section of this report.

4.5 The LGO categorise the complaints they receive. Looking at the 2020 data in more detail, a breakdown of the information published in by the LGO in their given categories is shown as follows:

Service Category	Received	Decided	Upheld	Not Upheld	Premature/Closed/Incomplete/Invalid
Adult Care Services	17	20	6	1	13
Benefits and Tax	5	7	2	1	4
Corporate and Other Services	7	10	0	1	9
Education and Children's Services	17	17	2	3	12
Environmental Services and Public Protection and Regulation	6	8	2	0	6
Highways and Transport	11	12	0	1	11
Housing	7	8	0	0	8
Planning and Development	4	3	0	0	3
Other	1	1	0	0	1
Total	75	86	12	7	67

4.5 This compares to last year's annual review as follows:



4.6 It is important to note that the categories defined in the LGO review data do not accurately reflect the department and service area that the complaint would relate to within NCC. For example, 2 cases that was categorised by the LGO as 'Highways and Transport' actually related to complaints submitted about the Community Protection and Insurance and Risk Services.

4.7 To better understand the areas for focus from the LGO statistics, it is important to look at the complaints decision statements and public reports in more detail in order to define the service area that it falls within at NCC.

4.8 In some cases the LGO will not publish the decision statement for an investigation. We also do not have all data on complaints to the LGO that were incomplete/invalid or premature so this report will reflect in more detail on the data for the 52 decisions that were published.

4.9 After reviewing each individual case's decision statement summaries, the complaints have been identified as follows:

NCC Service	Decision Statement	Public Report	Upheld	Not Upheld	Closed after initial enquiries
Adult Social Care	14	0	6	1	7
Children's Integrated Service	7	0	1	3	3
Commercial Infrastructure & Energy Services	2	0	0	0	2
Community Protection	4	0	1	1	2
Education Strategy	4	0	1	0	3
Housing Aid	3	0	0	0	3
HR & Customer	2	0	0	1	1
Legal & Governance	3	0	0	0	3
NCH	1	0	0	0	1
Neighbourhood Services	3	0	0	0	3
Planning	2	0	1	0	1
Revenue & Benefits	5	0	2	1	2
Sports, Culture & Parks	1	0	0	0	1
Traffic & Transport	1	0	0	0	1
Total	52	0	12	7	33

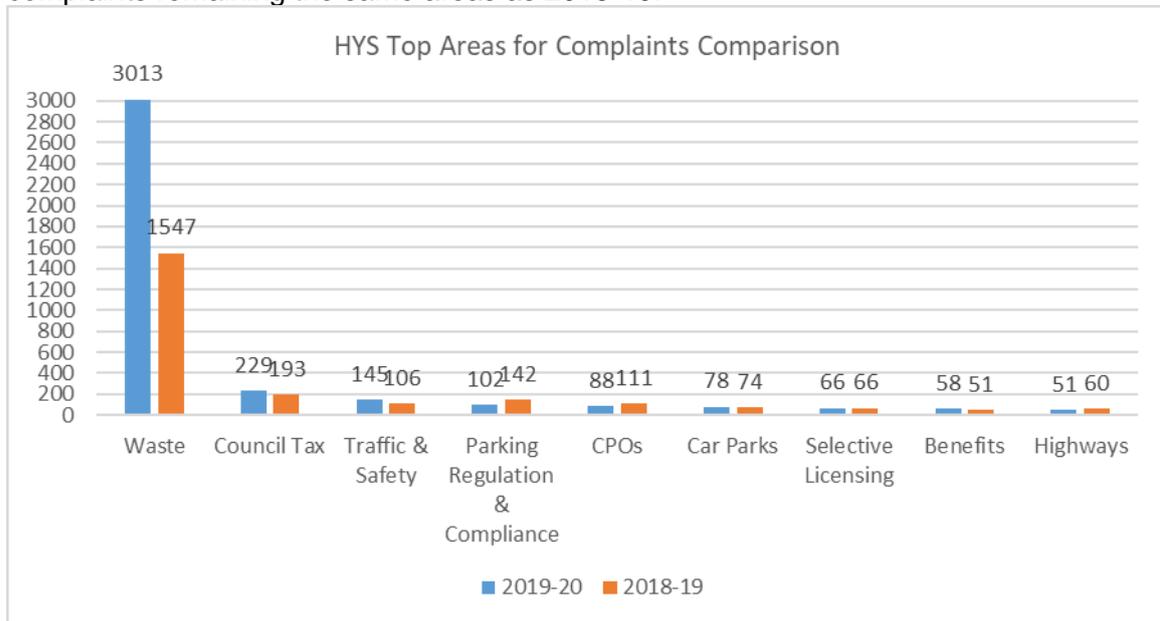
- 4.10 This breakdown of the data gives a clearer picture about which Council service the LGO complaints and outcomes relate to, and allow us to accurately identify service failures and improvements by carrying out root cause analysis.
- 4.11 Reflecting on the information breakdown and the 52 cases issued with a decision statement, we can identify that the services with the most upheld cases are within Adult Social Care, with an 86% uphold rate. The number of upheld complaints has decreased from last year, which is an improvement, but remains higher than the three years prior to that. From this analysis of the data, the increase in upheld complaints are within Adult Social Care and School Admissions which are not areas currently covered by the HYS Complaints Process. The HYS process covered 26 of the cases with a 15% uphold rate.
- 4.12 Since April 2018, it is reported the Council has agreed to make improvements to services following an investigation from the LGO on 9 cases. This includes 5 for Social Care, 3 for School Admissions and 1 for Safer Housing. These are highlighted on the Council's performance page on the LGO website here:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/nottingham-city-council/serviceimprovements>
- 4.13 In the last five years the LGO have published 1 Public Interest Report against Nottingham City Council. This related to a complaint investigation concerning a Schools Admissions Appeal. The full report can be viewed here:
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2018/jul/city-council-told-to-reconsider-school-admission-appeal-after-ombudsman-investigation>
- 4.14 A closer look at the complaints data held by NCC will help us to understand the complaints trends and address where things have gone wrong. This will be broken into the HYS complaints, Social Care complaints and School Admissions complaints.

5. HYS Complaints – Key Facts and Figures

- 5.1 Here at Nottingham City Council we work very hard to deliver a huge range of services to high standards, but inevitably in a city of 300,000 residents, we won't always get it right or meet everyone's expectations.
- 5.2 The Have Your Say complaints process focuses on early resolution and as such the vast majority of issues are resolved in this way. We have helped to minimise the number of cases being referred to and upheld by the Local Government Ombudsman by also offering people who remain unsatisfied an independent review to resolve things, before involving the Ombudsman.
- 5.3 The latest figures of upheld complaints from the Ombudsman represent just 0.2% of the complaints received by NCC and this demonstrates our commitment to working positively with citizens and is one of the lowest rates amongst core cities
- 5.4 From April 1st 2019 to 31st March 2020 the HYS service have processed 5163 Stage 1 complaints and 99 Stage 2 complaint reviews.
- 5.5 The top ten areas for complaints dealt with by HYS were:
- Waste 3013
 - Council Tax 229
 - Traffic and Safety 145
 - Parking Regulation & Compliance 102
 - CPO's 88
 - Car Parks (Pay+Display/Barriers/Contracts) 78

- Selective Licensing 66
- Benefits 58
- Events 54
- Highways 51

5.6 This is comparable to the previous year's reporting, with nine of the top ten areas for complaints remaining the same areas as 2018-19.



5.7 Comparing to last year's figures, we can see there has been a significant increase in the volume of complaints dealt with by HYS from 3328 Stage 1's in 2018-19 to 5163 in 2019-20. And 69 Stage 2 Complaint Reviews in 2018-19 to 99 in 2019-20.

5.8 Looking at the top areas for complaints we can see that the level of complaints have remained on par with last year in most areas, and the increase has been in the number of complaints relating to the Waste service.

5.9 The high volume of HYS complaints for waste are primarily residents complaining about issues with their bin collection. It is important to note that these are not missed bin reports (which are logged as a service request not as complaints) but are complaints about frequently missed collections, the Assisted Pull Out service and replacement bins. The highest volume of complaints were in relation to missed recycling and garden bin collections.

5.10 This area of complaints is currently being reviewed by the Neighbourhood Services Senior Management team who have since established a weekly Task and Finish group with Customer Services to look at Waste complaints. They have provided observations for this report to reflect on the complaints data, focussing on the areas that saw the highest increases as follows:

5.11 Replacement bin complaints up from 226 to 380

This year, NCC introduced a charge for replacement bins which customers have raised objections to. A further issue is that with this charge, customers feel the service they receive around the timeliness of receipt of new bins is not acceptable. This has largely been caused by stock control issues.

5.12 Missed Bin Failures complaints up from 138 to 330

Staff absences have impacted missed bin collections and a resourcing review and monitoring will be a priority for the service once the Covid-19 pandemic allows.

5.13 Missed domestic bins complaints up from 157 from 393

The Waste Service are working with Customer Services to analyse reports and complaints using management information and data to understand issues and use this insight to further improve services to citizens. For context there are almost 9.5m kerbside collections every year, with 99.6% success.

5.14 Missed recycling and garden bins complaints up from 234 to 590

Complaints around non collection of contaminated recycling bins is the main factor in this category and significant work is underway to improve understanding amongst customers around recycling and to further analyse hotspots such as student and HMO areas. Changes to garden waste collections for Oct/Nov 2019 also created confusion with customers and it takes time to embed new collection regimes.

5.15 We can identify from the HYS data that the primary reason for complaints over the last three years continues to be around service delivery by Neighbourhood Services. However as there were no detailed investigations by the LGO for complaints within this service area, it is evident that the complaints were resolved at stage 1 or stage 2 within the HYS process.

5.16 The Have Your Say team provides monthly reports to Heads of Services regarding customer feedback statistics, to highlight any trends in complaints and assist with root cause analysis.

5.17 Of the 5163 Stage 1 complaints handled through the HYS process, 99 were reviewed by the Customer Experience Lead at Stage 2. With only 2% of the total complaints progressing to Stage 2, this demonstrates that overwhelming majority of complaints were resolved at the early stages and that the HYS quality assurance of complaint responses is an effective process.

5.18 There were 4 upheld decisions for LGO complaints that were covered by the HYS process. This is a good indicator that the HYS two-stage complaint handling process ensures most complaints are remedied at the early stages. Only a very small percentage (0.5%) of the total complaints dealt with have been investigated and upheld by the LGO.

6. Social Care Complaints – Key Facts And Figures

6.1 The Social Care Complaints Service manages the statutory social care complaints procedure for both Children and Adult services. The statutory processes are different for both service areas.

Children's integrated Services

6.2 In 2019/2020 a total of **240** new complaints were received and considered about Children's Integrated Services. This is a slight increase compared with the previous reporting period when 232 complaints were received.

6.3 The children's statutory social care procedure has three distinct stages; local resolution, investigation and independent review.

6.4 At the first stage, (local resolution) the Social Care Complaints Service refers complaints onto operational managers in order for them to consider and respond to the complaint. The Social Care Complaints Service records and monitors these responses. As with previous years, over 90% of complaints were resolved at this stage.

6.5 At stage 2 the Social Care Complaints Service allocates an independent investigator to look into the complaint. There were 8 stage 2 investigation requests received

during the last reporting period, compared with 11 in the previous year. Following a gradual improvement over the last few years, this year, for the fourth year in succession, 100% of the investigations were completed within the statutory timescale, which marks a significant improvement made over the last few years, and one which we hope will be sustained.

- 6.6 The final stage is an Independent Complaints Review Panel comprising of three Independent People. There were only 2 stage 3 panels during the last reporting period. The panels agreed with the Independent Investigators' findings and recommendations, and made no further recommendations.

Resolutions offered

- 6.7 **Stage 1:** Stage one complaints received a written explanation and where a complaint was upheld or partly upheld an apology was also provided. New or review assessments were undertaken in some instances.

Stage 2: Of the 5 stage two investigations where an element of the complaint was partly upheld, all were offered an apology.

Stage 3: the 2 panels accepted the investigators' findings, and made no additional recommendations.

Local Government Ombudsman investigations

- 6.8 Complainants can make a complaint to the Ombudsman at any time but the Ombudsman will usually ask complainants to complete the local authority complaints process before considering complaints himself.
- 6.9 The Ombudsman considered six new complaints. There was no finding of fault against the council in any of the new complaints reviewed by the Ombudsman. The one upheld complaint that is referred to on page 5 of this report relates to an investigation undertaken in the previous year but where the decision was issued during this reporting period.
- 6.10 The Ombudsman's consideration of one further complaint has been delayed by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Adult Services

- 6.11 In 2019/2020 a total of **213** complaints were considered about adult social care services, which is a reduction from 278 in the previous year.
- 6.12 This is the second year the figure has exceeded 200, but it still represents a marked reduction on the previous reporting period.
- 6.13 The Adult procedure has a one-stage process, which allows flexibility within the management of a complaint. The Complaints Team usually refers complaints in the first instance to operational managers or commissioned services for their consideration and response. Where the complaint has potentially serious implications for either an individual or the Department or it is complex, it may be necessary to undertake/commission an investigation.

Category Of Complaint	Number
Unwelcome or disputed decision	74 (151)
Concern about the quality or appropriateness of the service	55 (67)
Delay in Decision Making	8 (4)
Delivery or non-delivery of services including complaints procedures	7 (11)
Quantity, frequency, change or cost of a service	2 (1)
Attitude or behaviour of staff	27 (22)
Application of eligibility and assessment criteria	0 (0)
Impact on an individual of a local authority policy and Assessment, care management and review	1 (4)
Not Recorded	39 (18)

Note: Previous reporting period's figures in brackets

- 6.14 Complaints about unwelcome decisions and the quality and/or appropriateness of a service continue to be the most common complaints.
- 6.15 The breakdown of complaints was broadly similar to that of the previous reporting period. Where the category of complaint was “not recorded” it is because these were mostly out of jurisdiction complaints, including complaints made by professionals; complaints about other agencies e.g. the NHS or another council; complaints where a citizen’s consent was not forthcoming; and complaints made by those who lacked the sufficiency of interest to be able to make a complaint on someone else’s behalf etc.
- 6.16 24% of complaints about Adult Social Care were either fully or mostly upheld, which is similar to previous years.
- 6.17 Complaints are often resolved by way of a written response, investigation or mediation, with the exception of 16 that were considered by the Ombudsman, which is a slight decrease from 19 considered by the Ombudsman during the previous year. The six upheld complaints referred to on page 5 include a number of decisions issued in respect of complaints investigated by the Ombudsman in the previous year 2018/2019. Of the new complaints made to the Ombudsman during 2019/2020 the majority were not upheld.

7. School Admissions – Public Interest Report 2018

- 7.1 School Admissions appeals are covered by a separate process not covered by HYS or Social Care complaints. However, it is mentioned within this report due to the volume of complaints about this appeals process investigated by the LGO.
- 7.2 On 5th July 2018 the LGO published a Public Report dated 17th May 2018 further to a complaint investigation about a schools admissions appeal. (See paragraph 4.12).
- 7.3 Further to this report, and other LGO investigations about this service area, the School Admissions team have reviewed their Appeals process and made changes which reflect the recommendations set out by the LGO. The report was also brought before Audit Committee and discussed in closed session in July 2018.

7.4 The LGO have been provided with the evidence that the remedies have been carried out which is reflected in NCC's 100% compliance with LGO recommendations.

8. National Comparisons

8.1 Although there are many differences in how local authorities across England will deliver their services, and in the varying demographic of customers they serve, it is still important to consider how we compare to other city councils.

8.2 Comparisons for complaints as whole are currently available. We will continue to seek to source this data.

8.3 Nottingham is 1 of 10 core cities in the UK (8 in England). Due to the low numbers of complaints investigated for each core city, the variation year on year in upheld rate can be significant and a city can go from best to worst performing on this statistic or vice versa in successive years, without the underlying performance of the systems concerned being responsible. The table below shows a comparison of Nottingham City Council's LGO statistics against the other core city authorities of Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle:

	Nottingham City Council	Birmingham City Council	Bristol City Council	Manchester City Council	Leeds City Council	Sheffield City Council	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council	Liverpool City Council
Total LGO Investigations	19	153	33	29	49	38	18	25
Total Upheld Decisions	12	119	20	17	31	34	12	22
% Upheld	67%	78%	61%	59%	63%	89%	67%	88%
Total Satisfactory Remedies	1	5	2	2	4	5	3	4
% Remedied	8%	4%	10%	12%	13%	15%	25%	18%
Total Compliance Outcomes	11	114	7	18	24	15	9	17
% Compliance	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

8.4 As reflected in the Annual LGO Letter and Council Performance Map, Nottingham City Council has performed on par with authorities deemed similar, with there being an overall average of 99% compliance outcomes, 56% upheld decisions and 11% satisfactory resolutions.

9. Summary and Action

9.1 The information compiled in this report aims to provide a clearer understanding of the published LGO statistics for Nottingham City Council in 2019/20. It is important to remember, when looking at the figures, that the Annual Review should form the start of the conversation about measuring corporate health, and low/high volumes do not solely indicate good or bad performance.

9.2 On reflection of the key facts and figures, it is clear that actually NCC resolve the vast majority of the complaints it receives at the early stages. Although the LGO statistics show a complaint as upheld it may have already been resolved by the Council. The

Customer Experience Lead previously raised this with the LGO who provided comment in 2019:

‘A complaint is upheld where there is evidence of maladministration, this is normally following a detailed investigation. However, there are cases where an authority will have already accepted fault and without needing to carry out a detailed investigation we decide the authority has done all it can to put things right. We still mark these cases as upheld, because fault has been identified in a complaint that has come to us. The decision statement, your annual statistics and our interactive map all reflect these cases in a positive light. While the complaint was upheld, the authority provided a satisfactory remedy before the complainant reached the Ombudsman. If an authority has 10 upheld complaints, but has satisfactorily remedied 8, we see that as a positive message where the authority is putting things right early. By then using the learning from upheld complaints, the authority can continue to improve its local services to prevent the same thing happening again.’

- 9.3 The Customer Charter commits to Citizens that we will listen to them and use their feedback to improve services across the Council, work together as one Council, and aim to get it right first time. It is important we utilise the Have Your Say data to effectively deliver those commitments and continuously improve Council services. Looking at the areas of high complaints, such as those in Waste, Customer Service is actively engaging with Service Heads to identify complaint trends and root causes to improve the customer experience and reduce complaint figures for the next reporting period.
- 9.4 The Customer Experience Lead has attended the LGO open course on Effective Complaint Handling and has worked to develop a complaint handling training course for Nottingham City Council. This will aim to increase colleague understanding of the HYS process and to develop a more consistent approach to complaint handling across all council services. The e-learning course on the Council's complaint handling and HYS process went live in July 2020 and is available on the intranet for all Council employees. The Customer Services Management team also helped develop and deliver a new and improved face to face Customer Service training session to both new starters and current employees across all service areas. Support and Information is available on the Intranet to all colleagues and the Have Your Say team continues to support services with complaint handling processes.
- 9.5 Customer Services are in the process of reviewing how HYS captures data about the comments, compliments and complaints in order to develop more efficient methods to analyse and identify trends.

10. Published Documents

- 10.1 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter 2020
Published 29th July 2020
- 10.2 The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Review of Local Government Complaints 2019-20
Published 29th July 2020