

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS

During the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 the Council recorded 191 Step 2 complaints (compared to 258 during 2017/18). An analysis of these complaints reveals the following:

Category of complaints

The subject matter of complaints varies considerably. However, the resolved complaints have been broadly summarised into the following six categories:-

Category of Complaint	Number of Complaints 2018/19
Access to services	24
Injury/ damage to person or possession	16
Quality of service	129
Employee	35
Policy	24
Other	32

(It must be noted, however, that a complaint can fall into more than one category)

Closed Complaints

The total number of closed complaints is 20. These are complaints recorded on the system and subsequently identified and dealt with as issues other than complaints.

Resolution of complaints within target timescales

The Council's target timescale to resolve step 2 complaints is within 20 working days of receipt. The Council aims to resolve the majority of complaints at step 1 - sorting problems out quickly. The procedure and recording system allows service managers to review actual performance at any time and identifies those areas where improvements in response times are necessary. 107 complaints were resolved within the target timescale of 20 working days. This represents 64.9% of recorded complaints less the closed and open complaints. Of the 114 received by the Gateshead Housing Company, 3 were closed, 1 was open and 79 were resolved within the target timescale. This represents 71.8% resolved within the target timescale compared with 74.7% in 2017/18. Of the 77 complaints recorded by the

Council, 17 were closed, 5 were open and 28 were resolved within the target timescale. This represents 50.9% resolved within the target timescale compared with 76.9% in 2017/18.

Number of Complaints that were justified

Of the 165 complaints resolved, 40 (24.2%) were fully justified and 29 (17.6%) were partly justified and appropriate remedies were offered to the complainants. This compares with the position in 2017/18 when of the 235 complaints resolved, 86 (36.6%) were fully justified and 58 (24.7%) were partly justified.

Service Group Analysis

An analysis of the complaints received and resolved by each service group reveals the following:

Communities and Environment

- Recorded 42 complaints, 22% of all complaints recorded
- Development and Public Protection received 33.3%, Transport and Highways received 23.8%, Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance received 7.1%, Council housing, design and technical received 28.6% and environmental health received 7.1% of complaints in this service group
- 50% of complaints concerned quality of service.
- 8 complaints were closed and 3 were unresolved.
- 29% of the remaining complaints were resolved in target timescales
- None of the resolved complaints were fully justified
- 16.1% of resolved complaints were partly justified.

Corporate Services and Governance

- Recorded 1 complaint, 0.5 % of all complaints recorded
- The complaint was unresolved.

Corporate Resources

- Recorded 24 complaints, 12.6% of all complaints recorded.
- Culture, leisure and sport and libraries received 62.5% and customer and financial services received 37.5% of complaints in this service group.
- 70.8% of complaints concerned quality of service.
- 9 complaints were closed and none unresolved.
- 70.8% of the remaining complaints were resolved within target timescales
- 33.3% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 8.3% of resolved complaints were partly justified.

Adult Social Care and Independent Living and Children's Services operate their own separate complaints recording system

Gateshead Housing Company

- Recorded 114 complaints, 59.7% of all recorded complaints
- 78.9% of complaints concerned quality of service.

- 3 complaints were closed and 1 was unresolved.
- 71.8% of the remaining complaints were resolved within the Council's target timescales
- 29% of resolved complaints were fully justified
- 20% of resolved complaints were partly justified

Reviewed Complaints

Complainants who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their Step 2 complaints can request an independent review by the Chief Executive (or the Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company). The Chief Executive undertook 31 reviews of complaints in 2018/19 compared to 27 in 2017/18. The Managing Director of the Gateshead Housing Company undertook 17 reviews in 2018/19 compared with 14 during 2017/18.

Using Complaints to improve performance

The information gained through the monitoring of complaints should be used to improve the provision of the services throughout the Council reflecting the Council's overall approach to value for money and continuous improvement. There were several occasions where the resolution of a complaint led to additional instructions being given to employees to reinforce existing procedures. Changes to the provision of services have also been made as a result of complaints received or the opportunity to improve has been identified.

Compliments received by the Council

The total number of compliments received in 2018/19, as outlined below, is 593, compared to 466 received in 2017/18.

Communities and Environment	130
Corporate Services and Governance	21
Corporate Resources	57
The Gateshead Housing Company	385