



# Annual Complaints Report

2021-2022

November 2022



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# 1. Purpose and Introduction

North Tyneside Council publishes an annual complaints report, which gives an overview of the closed corporate complaints for the year between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.

The aim of the report is to:

- learn from mistakes so that we can improve customer experience and outcomes
- encourage people who have cause to complain, to make comments and suggestions to help us make these improvements
- be transparent about the complaints we've received, how we've responded to them and what we've done as a result,
- learn from the Authority's complaint procedure, continually evaluating and improving this, and
- publicise and explain our complaints procedure

It is useful to review this report, alongside the recent report agreed by the Authority's Cabinet on 17 October 2022 – <sup>1</sup>We Listen, We Care, Customer Service Programme which detailed other feedback on customer experiences of council services and the improvements the Authority is making in response to this feedback.

## 1.1 Complaints defined

A complaint can be wide-ranging but can be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction with the service provided, or lack of action by the Authority or its employees. This can include failure to achieve specific standards of service, such as those set out in the Authority's customer promise.

The Authority's complaint procedure has three routes:

- Statutory children's social care. Childrens social care complaints are governed by the Childrens Act 1989.
- Statutory adult social care. Adult social care complaints are governed by the Local Authority Social Services NHS Complaint Regulations (England) 2009
- All other complaints received by the Authority, investigated using the three-stage investigation process, as set out in the Authority's complaints procedure.

An overview of the Authority's complaint procedure is in Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://democracy.northtyneside.gov.uk/documents/s10006/We%20Listen%20We%20Care%20-%20Customer%20Service%20Programme%20End%20of%20Phase%20Two%20Review.pdf>

Where it is right to do so, the Authority supports customers to raise issues of dissatisfaction or poor experience with the team delivering that service or the Customer First Office, directly. This immediate feedback can provide quick and effective resolution for the customer and helps the service team listen and learn from customer experiences directly, preventing future errors or problems from occurring. Whilst considered carefully, these customer concerns and issues are not processed as part of the Authority's complaint procedure or its three-stage process.

## **1.2 Ombudsman**

The Authority's complaint procedure is supported by both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and the Housing Ombudsman (HO).

The LGSCO can review and / or investigate complaints from members of the public who consider they have experienced injustice because of maladministration by the Authority, typically once the complaint has exhausted the Authority's complaint procedure.

The Housing Ombudsman considers complaints about housing associations and some relevant complaints from Local Authority tenants.

Occasionally a complaint may be considered by both Ombudsman schemes.

The LGSCO went on to investigate 48 of the Authority's corporate complaints in 2021/22, of these, thirteen detailed investigations were carried out. Of the thirteen detailed investigations, the LGSCO:

- agreed with nine of the Authority's initial responses
- made two recommendations on two of the investigations which the Authority quickly and fully complied with, and
- agreed the Authority have provided three satisfactory remedies in response to two complaints before the complaint reached the Ombudsman

The HO reviewed five cases between 1/04/2020 - 31/03/2021 from North Tyneside Council. Of these reviews, the HO:

- agreed with three of the Authority's initial responses, and
- made two recommendations which the Authority quickly and fully complied with.

Data for 2021/22 will be published by the HO in December 2022.

## 2. Why Complaints Matter

Both the Our North Tyneside Plan 2021 – 2025, agreed by Council on 23 September 2021 and the customer service programme, agreed by Cabinet on 28 May 2019, make clear the Authority's commitment to using customer feedback to design, deliver and improve its services.

The customer promise, 'we listen we care', is the articulation of that commitment and sets out what every customer can expect from North Tyneside Council.



The Authority has many ways that it receives feedback about the services it provides. Some are designed to elicit views on specific issues during engagement or consultation; others enable the Authority's customers to ask questions about services and others, to support any customer to comment, challenge or complain about their experience.

Whatever the channel, nature or purpose of this feedback, its benefit is not only to the customer but also to the Authority and delivering its overall ambition for the Borough.

**We listen and we care;** every feedback or enquiry episode, is an opportunity to demonstrate that the Authority listens to its residents and cares about their views and concerns. The way in which feedback is received and responded to, is an important element of a customer's experience and should meet the standards set out in the customer promise, every time.

**Getting it right first time;** failure caused by a failing to get something right first time, not only impacts customer experience but can damage the reputation of the Authority, generate high costs for the organisation, decrease efficiency and can have a tremendous impact on workforce motivation.

**Information, intelligence, and wisdom;** all customer feedback is an insight into what is working well and what is not, and helps the Authority never stray too far from the needs of the communities it serves, especially as those needs evolve. The organisation wide assimilation and analysis of this feedback can then provide one of the most reliable sources of intelligence, to inform future prioritisation, planning, and service delivery.

### 3. Customer First Office

A correspondence team was established in January 2021 by the Authority's Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG), for the North Tyneside Covid-19 Recovery Programme; its purpose was to support customers with Covid-19 related enquiries. The team was shaped on the Authority's values, 'we listen' and 'we care'. The Authority quickly realised that the ways of working, and tools used in the correspondence team, could have real benefits for how it delivered its existing functions for corporate complaints and other customer concerns and issues raised through Elected Members. As a result, the Customer First Office (CFO) was established in July 2022.

The CFO continue to administer the Authority's corporate complaints in line with its procedure but are now delivering the work in line with the lessons learned from the correspondence team; standards in the Authority's customer promise, learning from the customer service programme and ongoing learning from corporate complaints received by the Authority as set out below

- **Single point of contact to improve customer satisfaction and reduce failure demand;** from initial receipt through to final response, corporate complaints are 'owned' by the CFO, as well as the service responsible for investigating the complaint. The aim of the CFO is to look at the complaint through the eyes of our customers and quality assure every step of the corporate complaint procedure.
- **Knowing when a conversation is better to improve customer experience and complaint outcomes;** all complaints are quickly assessed by the CFO to determine which need further clarity or if it is clear that the Authority has made an error or mistake. All customers are contacted to acknowledge the complaint; apologise where needed; fully understand the customer's experience; identify any quick resolution actions and agree clear outcomes.
- **Knowledge and relationships to reduce work for service delivery teams;** the CFO are investing time in developing relationships with other teams across the Authority - understanding how they work, their priorities and their demands. This equips the CFO with up-to-date knowledge, enabling them to help in resolution planning for complaints and carrying out quality assurance of complaint outcomes and responses.
- **Customer first and consistency of response to improve customer satisfaction;** using the customer promise and other standards developed, a more personalised writing style has been introduced, with corporate complaint responses relaying a better understanding and appreciation of the customer's experience, regardless of the outcome to the complaint.
- **Information to inform future decision making and Authority planning;** the combination of corporate complaints, Elected Member enquires and other customer feedback, is beginning to improve the totality of the Authority's understanding of its customers' experiences.

## 4. Summary of Activity and Findings 2021/22

Serving over 208,000 residents, North Tyneside Council delivers millions of individual services and transactions each year, including those to businesses and visitors. Detailed information on the corporate and statutory complaints received about these services in 2021/22, can be found in section 8 of this report. A summary is provided here.

- The Authority received 647 corporate complaints in 2021/22. Whilst this number is low, as a proportion of the services provided, the Authority is committed to learning from corporate complaints raised and is grateful to those who take the time to share their experiences.
- The 647 corporate complaints received, are a significant decrease from 2019/20 (1,069) but an increase from 2020/21 (519), when many of the Authority's services were impacted by national restrictions from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 7.4% of the corporate complaints received this year, were subsequently reviewed by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) or the Housing Ombudsman (HO).
- 81% of council complaints (90% for children's social care) were resolved at stage one of the three stage complaint process.
- The number of corporate complaints resolved outside of the Authority's three stage complaint process, has increased this year. This *may be* linked in part to the customer service programme, which is focused on making it easier for customers to share their experiences with the Authority and receive direct help from a dedicated team to find a resolution.
- Just over half of corporate complaints received this year were upheld by the Authority - acknowledging lower than expected performance in service delivery standards or what our customers should expect from the customer promise. This figure has decreased since a rise during the 2 years of the pandemic but is now lower than in previous years.
- The factors driving complaints are broadly in line with those of the previous three years; the top three reasons are:
  - time taken to receive a service
  - communication, often linked to the first point when waiting for a service to be delivered, and
  - disagreement with a decision made by the Authority, such as priority rating for housing or the outcome of an assessment by a service team.
- Just over 40% of corporate complaints relate to housing, property, and repairs; this includes customer dissatisfaction with decisions on the priority in which council houses are offered to residents.
- There are increasing numbers of customers opting to register corporate complaints online.
- There has been a notable decrease in the number of children and adult social care complaints since 2018/19. However, the pace of reduction in adult social care complaints, has halted this year, with only one fewer complaint received, when compared to 2020/21. This trend will be explored in next year's learning and improvement activity.

## 5. Reflection and Priorities for 2022/23

The information provided for this report has undoubtedly been influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic and the temporary reduction in the number of people using services, due to national restrictions. Trends and patterns of complaints over a number of years have become more difficult to interpret and predict as a result. Other changes made by the Authority in terms of embedding its values of 'we listen' and 'we care', may also be changing how the Authority better responds to initial contact from customers and seeks early resolution of any customer complaints.

Here are some of the factors which may have influenced the patterns and trends of complaint activity over the past four years:

- in line with national guidance or legislation, some services closed for periods, or the service offer notably changed during the Covid-19 pandemic
- customer behaviour changed in response to 'staying safe' during the pandemic and in some cases found different ways to receive a service, such as online payments
- some temporary service changes, driven by national restrictions, have proven very popular with the Authority's customers and have been retained in full or part effect and have transformed the service offer
- some services reviewed and made improvements to how they respond to customer feedback and complaints, and

- a new approach to managing corporate complaints, has recently been established with the Customer First Office.

Work will be undertaken in 2022/23 with Authority services whose corporate complaint patterns have shifted significantly over the past 4 years, to understand the reasons for this.

The Authority remains committed to the prerequisites of a good complaint system. Action will be taken next year to strengthen customer complaint statements, including the outcomes they wish to see and the learning outcomes and actions for services.

A new IT system will assist with easier collation of corporate complaint data and frequency of reporting.

The CFO is still in its infancy and will continue to embed in the year ahead, developing positive and proactive relationships with Authority customers and service teams.

Particular focus will be given to the relationship between the CFO and the Authority's dedicated housing, repairs and property customer experience function. This will explore and test out the relationship between the CFO and dedicated housing, repairs and property complaint's team, to ensure both are working as effectively as possible together, for all customers.



## 6. Key Actions for 2022/23

Priorities for the year ahead reflect the learning from this report and focus primarily on strengthening the processes, practices and recording systems, which support the Authority in making the most from corporate complaint feedback.

Action
1. Develop and implement a new IT system for Authority wide recording of corporate complaint activity, including those outside of the three-stage process
2. Complete a review and if needed, refresh of the Authority's corporate complaint policy and associated procedures, including: a. a review of responses timescales and their monitoring, and b. the scope of different types of corporate complaints and when each should be used
3. Ensure all concerns and issues, resolved without the need for a three-stage complaint process, are accurately captured for analysis and learning.
4. Implement a quality assurance framework, in the customer first office, to further strengthen consistency and fairness for customers
5. Further review the interface between the CFO and the housing, property and repairs customer experience function and provide more detailed analysis of housing, property and repairs complaint activity, into the 2022/23 annual corporate complaint report
6. Explore new approaches to increase the number of customers sharing their experiences about the corporate complaint's procedure
7. Implement a revised reporting schedule of corporate complaints activity and outcomes, for Authority Directors and Elected Members
8. Strengthen the consistency of capturing, monitoring, and reporting corporate complaint outcomes and learning.
9. Social care services to review changes in their complaint activity numbers

## 7. Statutory Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006

The Authority's Statutory complaint procedure is governed by the statutory Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006, The Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and Guidance (Children) and The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and Guidance (Adults)

### 7.1 Social Care

- Care providers commissioned on behalf of the Authority, are always assessed on their approach and practices for customer complaints – this informs the scoring for awarding Authority contracts for care delivery.
- The Authority carries out robust quality monitoring and assurance visits to all commissioned services; this includes a review of how customer complaints have been responded to and any themes or issues for further investigation.
- All services delivered and commissioned by the Authority's children social care teams are regulated by the independent regulator Ofsted, who also review complaint and customer feedback. Adult social care commissioned services are regulated by the Care Quality Commission. The Health and Care Act, which received Royal Assent in April 2022, created a new duty for the CQC to independently review and assess the performance of councils' adult social care duties, likely to start from April 2023.
- Safeguarding alerts, both individual and organisational are consistently reviewed and themes monitored for any required action.
- Joint meetings with CQC / Ofsted and NHS and other partners regularly take place, with a focus on service quality and any areas of concern from customers.
- The Authority has a specialist Advocacy service, who work to ensure the rights of children and young people are upheld. This both avoids issues escalating to formal complaint but also supports individuals through the complaint process when required

### 7.2 Children's Social Care

The number of children's social services statutory complaints for the Authority have notably decreased this year, and the proportion upheld by the Authority have significantly decreased.

### **7.3 Adult Social Care**

Highlighted in its <sup>2</sup>Annual Review of Adult Social Care Complaints (October 2022), which covers both council and independent care complaints, the LGSCO is concerned by the reducing numbers of adult social care complaints it is receiving and feels this may be reflective of the reducing numbers of adult social care complaints being received by all Local Authorities.

In line with LGSCO findings, there has been a notable decrease in the number of adult social care statutory complaints in North Tyneside, using the one stage process, since 2018/19 but conversely, only a nominal decrease of 1, since 2020/21. The proportion of adult social care statutory complaints upheld in full by the Authority, has notably decreased over the past three years in North Tyneside, although numbers for this category are small.

### **7.4 Reflection and Learning**

In the past four years, both the Authority's children's social care and adult social care teams have invested significantly in reviewing their processes and approach to all complaints, and this may account for the changing trends in both the number of complaints received and in those upheld by the Authority.

Working with the Customer First Office both social care service teams will review and reflect on their approach to customer complaints and undertake a self-assessment, based on the LGSCO 'health of the organisation's approach to complaints checklist'.

During the year ahead the Authority's adult social care team will also:

- develop an information dashboard for all adult care providers which will include complaints information and themes
- develop a new service user engagement and experience process
- work with the Customer First Office to provide more information to adult care providers in relation to complaints handling and best practice
- improve the consistency of information provided to customers on the right to make to a complaint.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lgo.org.uk/assets/attach/6312/ASC-Review-2021-22-FINAL.pdf>

## 8. North Tyneside 2021/22 Corporate Complaint Activity

### 8.1 Complaints Received and Channel Used

Table 1 Total Number of Complaints Received

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Social Service Complaints	97	102	68	48
All Other Services Corporate Complaints	973	967	451	599
<b>Total</b>	<b>1070</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>519</b>	<b>647</b>
Complaints to Ombudsman	56	50	29	48
Issues and concerns, resolved not using the corporate complaint process	1105	1107	914	1178

#### Complaints Received

- There has been a higher number of corporate complaints received than the previous year but substantially lower than pre Covid-19 pandemic levels.

Table 2 How Complaints are Received

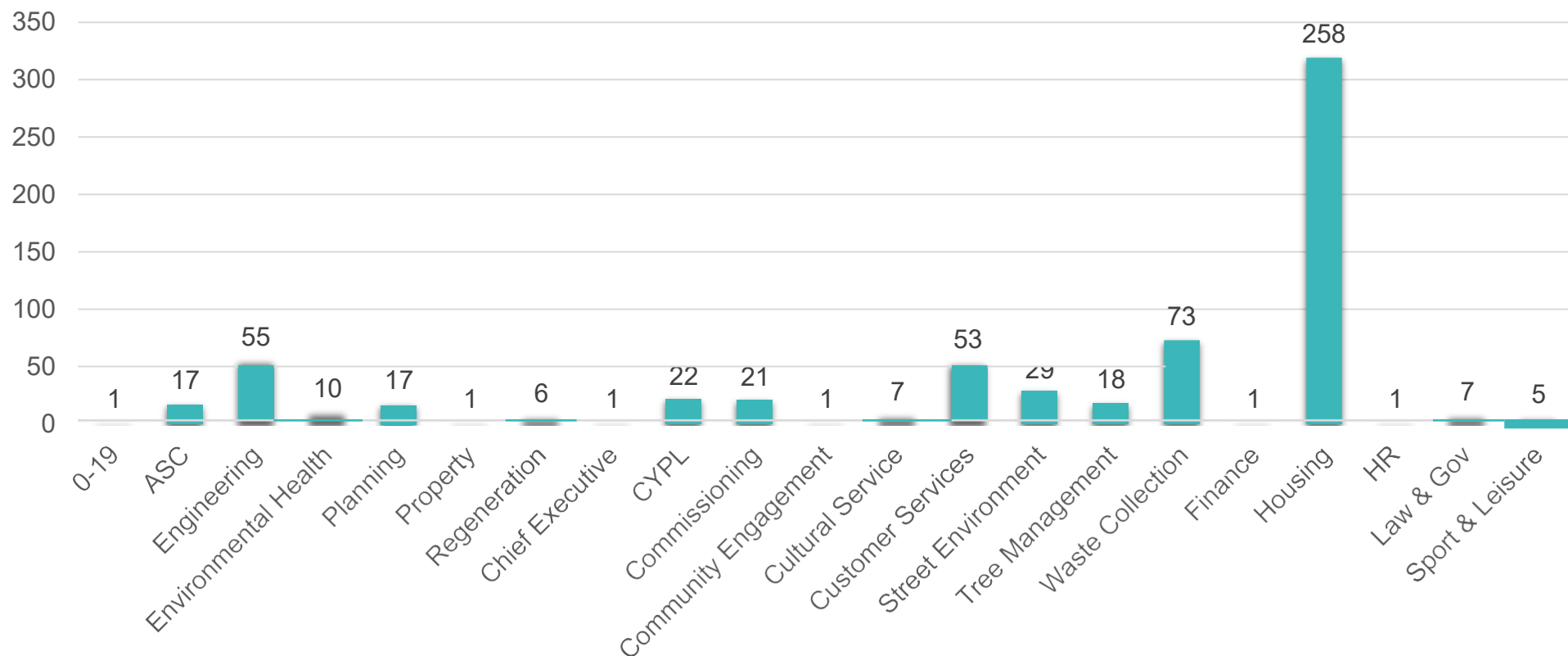
	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Email	287	143	126	131
In person	13	3	2	7
Online	396	460	307	349
Telephone	293	417	63	134
Written	81	46	21	26

#### How Complaints are Received

- Regardless of communication channel, all complaints are acknowledged by email or letter, on the same working day.
- Online is the most frequent method for registering a corporate complaint and this number is growing year on year.

## 8.2 Corporate Complaints by Authority Service Area

Chart 1



- Just over 40% of corporate complaints relate to housing, property and repairs; this includes customer dissatisfaction with decisions on the order and priority in which council houses are offered. Issues impacting this service area in 2021/22 include:
  - global and national supply chain shortages and disruption, and
  - the volume and severity of local storm damage to council housing and properties.

### 8.3 Corporate Complaint Outcomes

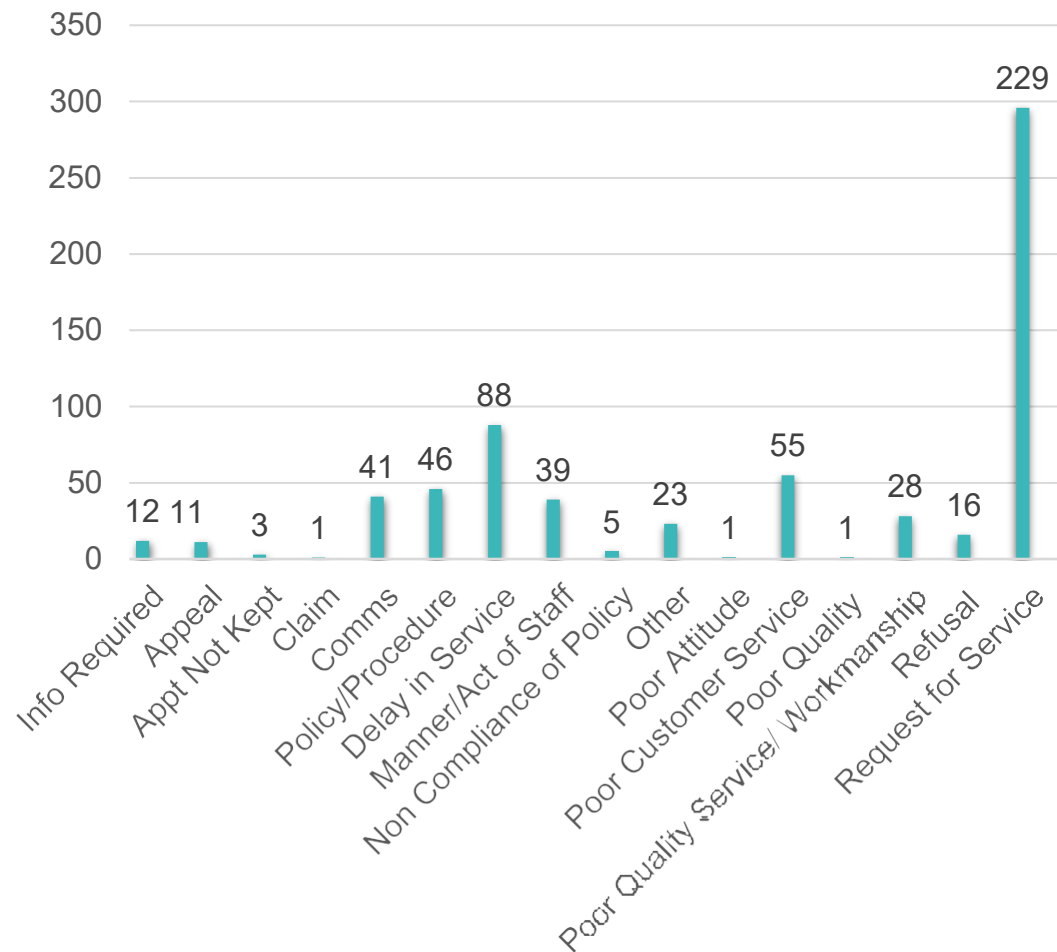
<b>Table 3 Outcomes</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Not Upheld	49%	54%	52%	46%
Upheld in Full	30%	24%	25%	33%
Upheld in Part	21%	22%	23%	21%

<b>Table 4 Corporate complaints resolved at Stage:</b>	<b>2018-19 %</b>	<b>2019-20 %</b>	<b>2020-21 %</b>	<b>2021-22 %</b>
One	85	88	83	81
Two	14	12	17	19
Three	0	0	0	0

- 46% of corporate complaints were not upheld following investigation, but more complaints were upheld in full when compared to previous years.
- 81% of corporate complaints were resolved at stage one of the corporate complaint process. This is less than previous years and may reflect the proactive work to resolve customer issues at an informal stage before they progress to stage one of the corporate complaint process. A new quality monitoring framework for corporate complaints, launched for 2022/23, will explore this trend further.
- As in the previous three years, there were 0 stage three complaints, this is felt to be reflective of the work to find solutions at every stage of the complaints process but again the new quality monitoring framework, will focus on this in 2022/23.

## 8.4 Corporate Complaint Reasons

Chart 2



- Corporate complaint reasons and their volumes are broadly in line with the previous years.
- The main reason 'recorded' for complaints is 'request for service' which primarily relates to:
  - time taken to receive a service
  - communication, often linked to the bullet point above, when waiting for a service to be delivered, and
  - disagreement with a decision made by the Authority, such as priority rating for housing allocation or the outcome of an assessment by a service team.

A new corporate complaint IT system will be developed and implemented in 2022/23, to improve the quality and type of information the Authority has to analyse and learn from corporate complaints.

## 8.5 LGSCO and Housing Ombudsman

<b>Table 5: Complaints to the LGSCO</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Environmental & Cultural Services	9	4	2	5
Highways, Transport & Planning	3	10	6	8
Revenue & Benefits	11	5	2	5
Housing, Property and Repairs	15	3	6	10
Education & Children's Social Care	10	17	10	7
Adult Social Care	4	6	3	9
Other	9	5	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>48</b>

<b>Table 6 Complaints referred to the LGSCO in Tyne &amp; Wear</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Gateshead	51	51	36	54
Newcastle Upon Tyne	67	65	39	65
North Tyneside	56	50	29	48
South Tyneside	49	40	40	48
Sunderland	67	74	34	40

<b>Table 7 Complaints to the Housing Ombudsman</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Housing property condition	5	Published December 2022

- The LGSCO opened new enquires into 48 corporate complaints from North Tyneside Council, of these:
  - 13 detailed investigations were undertaken by the LGSCO,
  - 9 of these investigations upheld the Authority's response, and
  - the LGSCO provided recommendations for 2 complaints, and the Authority fully complied with all recommendations made.
  - 12 were referred back to the Authority for resolution
  - 17 were closed after initial enquiries
  - 6 were invalid or incomplete
- The number of ASC complaints reviewed by the LGO has increased, although numbers are small.
- The LGSCO can take several months to conclude so some data will relate to complaints received in 2020-21.
- The HO opened new enquiries into 5 corporate complaints. This is the first data available from the HO regarding provision of housing services by the Authority. Data for 2021-22 will be published in December 2022.



## 8.6 Children's Social Care Complaints

<b>Table 8 Children &amp; Families Services Categories</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Adoption/Fostering/LAC*	5	4	2	2
Safeguarding	19	33	17	13
Front Door	2	7	3	2
Commissioning and Investment	0	0	0	1
Children with Disability Team	3	4	0	0
Other	13	1	8	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>19</b>

\*Includes partnership across 5 Local Authority's hosted by North Tyneside

<b>Table 9 Children's Social Services complaints resolved at stage:</b>	<b>2018-19 %</b>	<b>2019-20 %</b>	<b>2020-21 %</b>	<b>2021-22 %</b>
One	93	88	83	91
Two	7	10	10	9
Three	0	2	7	0

<b>Table 10 Children's Social Services complaints outcomes</b>	<b>2018-19 %</b>	<b>2019-20 %</b>	<b>2020-21 %</b>	<b>2021-22 %</b>
Not Upheld	40	46	30	90
Upheld in Full	31	20	10	0
Upheld in Part	29	34	60	10

- The Social Services complaint process is governed by the statutory Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006, and The Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006 and Guidance (Children) The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and Guidance (Adults)
- The Authority engages Independent Investigators and Independent Persons for children's social care corporate complaints at Stage two, as set out in the Regulations.
- The majority of children's social care complaints were resolved at Stage 1.
- The number of statutory complaints for children's social care, have decreased, and the proportion upheld by the Authority have significantly decreased. Work will be undertaken in 2022/23 to explore the reasons for these changes and is detailed further in section 7 of this report.

## 8.7 Adult Social Care

<b>Table 11 Adult Services Categories</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Safeguarding	5	4	2	0
Commissioning	4	6	5	1
Personalisation/ Social Work	34	33	23	23
Integrated Services	5	7	6	5
Other	7	3	2	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>29</b>

<b>Table 12 Adult Social Care Complaint Outcomes</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>
Not Upheld	48	55	42	47.5
Upheld in Full	9	7	11	5
Upheld in Part	43	38	47	47.5

- The majority of 2021/22 adult social care complaints related to an individual's specific care package and their allocated social worker.
- In line with LGSCO findings, there has been a notable decrease in the number of adult social care complaints, since 2018/19 but only a nominal decrease of 1, since 2020/21.
- The proportion of adult social care complaints upheld in full, has also notably decreased over the past three years, although numbers for this category are small.
- Work will be undertaken in 2022/23 to explore the reasons for these changes and is detailed further in section 7 of this report.

## 9. Corporate Complaint Customer Feedback Survey

The Authority asks ALL customers using the corporate complaint process, to complete a survey of their experience.

Responses to the survey are incredibly low and whilst this is not untypical for corporate complaint services nationally, we want to do more. Work has already started to review the survey approach; learn from other areas and increase the response rate in future years.

- 50% of customers found their complaint response easy to read
- 35.7% of customers sought help from a council employee
- 39.3% of customers used the Authority's website to find out how to make a formal complaint
- Although all customers are informed of complaint timescales, 35.7% were dissatisfied with this timescale
- 67.9% of customers said they received a receipt of their complaint, 47.4% said that was helpful
- 57.1% of customers said their response letter was clear about what to do if they remained dissatisfied with their response

## 10. Service Learning 2021/22

All completed corporate complaints, should capture any lessons learned. Several changes, generated by complaints, were made to procedures and services during the year. Below are details of some of the themes identified from service areas and action already taken.

Department	Lessons Learned	Improvements Made
<b>Children's Social Care</b>	Improvements to communication between parents and the allocated social worker throughout the assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guidance has been developed to support workers in completion of assessments to include children's and family views.</li> </ul>
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	Some delays in completing the financial assessment process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A review of how the financial assessment process is communicated to customers has been completed.</li> <li>Changes to the financial assessment process have been made, to ensure it is undertaken at the right stage in the care planning journey, to avoid unnecessary delays to customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	The high number of tree issue reports during 2021/22, has highlighted a need for improvements within the reporting and work allocation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is recognised that there were a diverse number of ways that incidents were being received throughout all storm events and that there is a need to consider how the management of incoming incident communications could be improved. The arborist team will undertake to establish a streamlined mechanism to receive and collate information for customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Protection</b>	Responding to, and investigating reports of noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following recommendations from the LGSCO, those administering corporate complaints have now received training on better advising customers on the community protection trigger process.</li> <li>The community protection team implemented a new ASB process, addressing issues raised in the complaint, reviewed by the LGSCO.</li> </ul>
<b>Housing</b>	There have been instances where the coordination of repairs is poorly communicated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A service development group with housing tenants, has been established and has revised the guidance on repair responsibility for both the tenant and the Authority.</li> <li>New performance indicators have been implemented to clearly communicate and monitor the responses times for housing repairs.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1 – The Corporate Complaints Procedure, Including Statutory Services Complaints

Complaints can be made in various ways, Email, Telephone, Online or in person. Complaint details are recorded and agreed as a Statement of Complaint

### Statutory Children's Complaint

#### Stage 1

Statement of complaint agreed.  
10 working days for a response to the customer  
(extended to 20 depending on the issue's complexity)

#### Stage 2

Complainant remains dissatisfied with the response at stage one.  
Request an independent review of the issue. Investigators independent of the council will undertake a stage two investigation.  
25 working days but can be extended to 65 working days depending on the complexity.  
Report is produced at the conclusion of stage two Signed off by the Assistant Director of Children's Services

#### Stage 3

Complainant remains dissatisfied following the result of stage 2 investigation. Request a review of the decision. – should be raised within 20 working days.  
Independent review panel is convened Panel findings are to be reported back to the customer within 5 working days, with a response provided within 15 working days.

### Corporate Complaint

Complaint details are recorded and agreed as a Statement of Complaint including the precise outcome/s from the complainant

#### Stage 1

Service area has 15 working days to respond and attempt to resolve the complaint

12<sup>th</sup> working day – Customer Promise check

Complainant has the right to ask for stage 2 within 10 working days.

#### Stage 2

Senior Manager reviews the complaint, makes changes to service delivery if necessary and attempts to resolve complaint within 15 working days

12<sup>th</sup> working day – Customer Promise check

Complainant has the right to ask for stage 2 within 10 working days.

#### Stage 3

Escalation to stage 3 is at the discretion of the Customer First Manager.  
Referral of complaint for consideration and decision by appeals and complaints committee

### Statutory Adult Social Care

#### Stage 1

A Statement of complaint is agreed. Expectation to respond within 15 working days.

Customers who remain dissatisfied following completion of our local processes can ask the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman or Housing Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) to review their complaint

# We're listening

## Your feedback matters to us and makes a difference.

If you want to know more about our performance, have something to say about this report, or want to suggest an alternative way of receiving this kind of information in the future, please do contact the Customer First Office:

Tel: (0191) 643 2280

Email: [Customerfirstoffice@northtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Customerfirstoffice@northtyneside.gov.uk)



[www.northtyneside.gov.uk](http://www.northtyneside.gov.uk)

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