

Annual Complaints Report 2022 – 2023



North
Tyneside
Council

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1. Purpose and introduction

North Tyneside Council publishes an Annual Complaints Report which summarises the closed and registered customer complaints it has received. This is the report for the year April 2022 to March 2023.

For this report, customers are defined as people who use council services, including, residents, council home tenants (including ex-occupiers), businesses and visitors to the Borough.

The aim of the report is to:

- learn from any mistakes so that the Authority can continually improve customer experience and outcomes
- encourage a culture of feedback, comments and suggestions, to aid service improvement
- be transparent about the complaints received, how they've been responded to and what has been done as a result
- assess the Authority's Corporate Complaint Procedure, evaluating and improving its effectiveness, and
- publicise and explain the Authority's Corporate Complaints Procedure.

North Tyneside Council is here to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors of the Borough; it strives to deliver excellent customer service to keep North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit.

The Authority's Customer Promise sets out what customers should expect of council services and what they can do if things don't go well. The Authority encourages comments and feedback about any of its services, both positive and negative; they provide the opportunity to learn and continually improve how things are done. The Authority is committed to doing everything possible to resolve complaints for its customers fairly, early and as efficiently as possible.

The Customer First Office (CFO) was established in July 2022 and administers the Authority's corporate and statutory complaints, in line with its associated complaints Procedures and using the standards set out in the Authority's Customer Promise.

2. Complaints defined

- The Authority has a Corporate Complaint Procedure for all its services, that satisfies the requirements of both the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO).
- Childrens social care complaints are governed by the Childrens Act 1989 and the Authority has a supplementary but complimentary Procedure for managing these, that satisfies the requirements of the Act, the LGSCO, and associated regulators.
- Adult social care complaints are governed by the Local Authority Social Services NHS Complaint Regulations (England) 2009 and the Authority has a supplementary but complimentary Procedure for these, that satisfies the requirements of the Regulations, LGSCO, and associated regulators.

The principles and commitment of the Corporate Complaint Procedure, guide the way that all complaints are managed by the Authority, regardless of any supplementary procedures used. The Authority's Corporate Complaint Procedure 2023, defines a complaint as an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the services the Authority provides. It can relate to the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Authority, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents and which requires a response.

In addition to complaints, the CFO manages service requests; a request from a customer which requires action to be taken to put something right, but which is not categorised as a complaint. Service requests provide useful, additional information to the Authority about a customer's experience and help with service improvement.

3. Corporate complaint procedure

The Authority's Corporate Complaint procedure is for all services the Authority operates which are not covered by the statutory social services complaints procedures or subject to any exclusions.

This procedure does not cover other ways that customers can ask for services or get in contact with relevant teams to discuss their current or future service provision. It does however include service requests as set out below.

Service Request	<p>A service request is a request from a person to the Authority that requires action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are received by the Authority's Customer First Office. They <u>are not</u> categorised as complaints but are recorded, monitored, and reviewed.</p> <p>A complaint will be raised when a person expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing. The Authority will not stop its efforts to address the service request if the person complains.</p>
Corporate Complaint	<p>Complaints can be raised at any point and will be logged and reported in the Authority's Annual Complaint Report.</p> <p>Complaints must be investigated at Stage One before they can be investigated at Stage Two, and similarly at Stage Two before they can progress to Stage Three.</p> <p>The complainant will always have the right to escalate their complaint to subsequent Stages.</p> <p>Complainants will be asked to write a statement of complaint, describing the complaint and what outcome they would like to see. Help is available if anyone needs that to make the statement.</p> <p>The three complaint investigation Stages are -</p>

Stage One – Is investigated by the manager of the service or team being complained about. The complainant will receive a written acknowledgement, after they have submitted their statement of complaint, including information about the relevant Ombudsman.

A response will be provided within 10 working days from receipt of the statement of complaint for Housing complaints, and 15 working days for all other services. This response will include information about next steps and a person's right to approach the Ombudsman about the decision.

Stage Two – if after Stage One, the complainant remains dissatisfied, they can ask for the Stage One complaint to be reviewed by a senior manager of the service or team they are complaining about. Stage Two is a review of the complaint and the response provided at Stage One. It is also the opportunity for a further investigation if needed.

At Stage Two the complaint cannot be fundamentally different from Stage One and new issues cannot be introduced. New issues will prompt the registration of a new complaint, which will start at Stage One.

A response will be provided within 20 working days for Housing complaints, and 15 working days for all other services. This response will include next steps and information about a person's right to approach the Ombudsman about the decision.

Stage Three – if after Stage Two the complainant remains dissatisfied, the Authority's Senior Complaint Manager and Assistant Chief Executive, will review Stages One and Two and decide if the complaint should be considered by the Authority's Regulation and Review Committee, which is made up of Elected Councillors.

The decision to proceed, or not, to Regulation and Review Committee, and the rationale, is recorded. The complainant is informed in writing as to the rationale for proceeding to Regulation and Review Committee or not.

All Stage Three complaints are responded to within 20 working days, whether reviewed by the Regulation and Review Committee or not. This response will include information about a person's right to approach the Ombudsman about the decision.

	<p>The number of Stage Three requests that are, and are not, reviewed by the Regulation and Review Committee, are shared with the Committee, and are shown in the Authority's Annual Complaints Report.</p>
Social Care Complaints	<p>There are two Procedures for investigating adult and children's social care complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/web-page-related-files/Statutory%20Childrens%20Complaint%20Process.pdf • https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk/sites/default/files/web-page-related-files/Adult%20Social%20Care%20Statutory%20Complaints.pdf
Ombudsman	<p>A complainant always has the right to refer their complaint to the relevant Ombudsman at any point. The Ombudsman may ask that they exhaust the Authority's complaint procedure first.</p> <p><u>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</u> - has jurisdiction of complaints about council services. 0300 061 0614 www.lgo.org.uk</p> <p><u>The Housing Ombudsman</u> - has jurisdiction of complaints about social housing, this includes council tenants. 0300 111 3000 www.housing-Ombudsman.org.uk</p>

4. Ombudsman

The Authority's Complaint Procedures are underpinned by guidance 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 Procedures. 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 received 38 complaint referrals from customers who had been through the Authority's corporate complaints process during in 2022-23, of these the Ombudsman:

- undertook eleven detailed investigations; ten of which upheld the complaint submitted by the customer
- provided recommendations for seven complaints, and the Authority fully complied with all of these
- referred eleven back to the Authority for resolution
- closed fourteen after they made initial enquiries, and
- recorded two as invalid or incomplete.

In two of the ten upheld cases, the LGSCO found the Authority had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

The HO publish data for Authorities who have had five or more referrals investigated. There was no data published for North Tyneside between 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022.

Data for 2022-23 will be published by the HO in December 2023, if they have investigated more than five referrals.

6. Summary of activity and findings 2022-23

Serving over 209,000 residents, North Tyneside Council delivers millions of individual services and transactions each year, including those to businesses and visitors. . The number of complaints raised, is a very small proportion of the overall number of services and transactions delivered.

- The number of complaints and service requests has continued to decrease from 1,825 in 2021/22 to 1,616 in 2022/23. These are complaints investigated using the Authority's Three Stage investigation process and service requests that are administered by the CFO, where swift action is taken to put something right, without using the Three Stage complaint process.
- The number of complaints investigated by the Authority, is almost the same in 2022-23 as it was the previous year, with 645 received this year, compared with 647 the year before.
- Since 2019-20, complaints investigated by the Authority, using its Three Stage process, have decreased from 1,069 to 647 in 2022-23.

Below is further information about the 645, closed complaint investigations in 2022-23.

- 50% of all complaints were for housing, property and repairs.
- Complaint reasons are broadly in line with those of the previous three years; the most frequent are:
 - time taken to receive a service
 - communication, 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.
- The proportion of complaints not upheld by the Authority, has increased from 46% in 2021-22 to 55% in 2022-23; this sees a return to similar levels before the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2019-20 of 54%.
- Fewer complaints were resolved at Stage One in 2022-23 – 76%, compared with the previous year – 81%. More were resolved at Stage Two this year, 24%, compared with 19% in 2021-22.
- The number of requests for Stage Three (excluding social care), has decreased by one in 2022-23 from the previous year. As in the previous four years, there have

been no Stage Three complaints (excluding social care) heard by a panel of the Regulation and Review Committee.

- Once again, the number of cases received by the LGSCO has reduced from 45 in 2021-22, to 38 in 2022-23. The number of complaints where the Ombudsman has upheld the complaint, has increased by one, from nine in 2021-22 to 10 in 2022-23.
- There has been a slight increase in the number of children's social care complaint investigations, from 19 in 2021-22 to 21 in 2022-23; this remains almost half of the numbers seen in pre Covid-19 Pandemic levels, of around 40. Of these 21 complaint investigations, the proportion that have been upheld, in full or in part, by the Authority, has increased notably from 10% in 2021-22 to 42% in 2022-23.
- The proportion of children's social care complaints that have been upheld, in full or in part, by the Authority, has increased notably from 10% in 2021-22 to 42% in 2022-23.
- The proportion of children's social care complaint investigations that are resolved early, continues to

increase – with 96% of complaints resolved at Stage One, this is an 8% increase from 2019-20.

- Adult social care complaints have increased from 29 in 2021-22, to 35 in 2022-23, this remains a reduction from pre Covid-19 Pandemic levels of around 40.
- There has been a notable decrease in the proportion of adult social care complaints upheld in full or in part, from 52.5% in 2021-22 to 40% in 2022-23.

Whilst complaints have remained almost static from the previous year, service requests administered by the CFO, have decreased notably. This may be due to the improvements to the information provided on the Authority's website, which better explains the range of ways customers can raise complaints, report issues and have them resolved quickly.

In addition, there has also been an increase in the number of Elected member enquiries received in the year, that may well be helping to positively address resident issues, before they escalate to a complaint.

The data indicates that the Authority could do more to seek early resolution of complaint investigations at Stage

One, as the percentage resolved at this Stage, has decreased from previous years.

The Authority has reviewed and refreshed its approach to requests for Stage Three referrals (excluding social care). Although proportionally the numbers are very small, 8 of the 11 detailed investigations undertaken by the LGSCO, found the Authority had not provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. The Authority expects to see an increase in 2023-24 of the number of complaints that are heard by a panel of the Regulation and Review Committee.

The Local Government Ombudsman (LGSCO) have stated in their national Annual Report for 2022-23, that they are

less likely to carry out investigations into 'borderline' issues and are therefore finding a higher proportion at fault.

Statutory social care services have invested significant time this year in reviewing the quality, process and outcomes of complaints for their customers. Housing, property and repairs services have complied with new requirements from the Housing Ombudsman and its complaint code of practice and are embedding these changes in service delivery.

The Authority has reviewed and refreshed its governance framework for complaints and in early 2024, a new complaints management IT system will be introduced which will provide improved and real time data, on complaints activity, available to service teams.

7. What we said we would do in 2022–23

The 2021–22 Annual Complaint Report identified nine priorities for action.

1. Review and refresh the Authority’s Corporate Complaint Procedure

A new Procedure has been produced and published on the Authority’s website, this will inform the refresh of customer information available on the Authority’s website, customer information leaflets and complaints training for Authority teams.

2. 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 complaint report

Together the teams have worked closely on complaint resolution for the Authority’s tenants at the earliest opportunity. Further synergy between the teams is thought possible and this will continue to be a priority in 2023–24. Further information and analysis on housing, property and repairs complaint activity has been included in this report in Section 10.

3. Ensure complaints categorised as service requests by the CFO, are accurately captured for analysis and learning

Service requests are now monitored in the Annual Complaints Report and as well as providing customers with quick and simple solutions, they provide the Authority with invaluable insight and learning, for future service delivery.

4. Implement a quality assurance framework, in the customer first office

The framework has been developed and implemented in part, including sample checking of complaint responses. This has increased the consistency and improved the quality of complaint responses, but further work is required, and this will be a continued area of priority in 2023–24.

5. Develop and implement a new IT system for Authority wide recording of complaint activity

A new system has been developed and is currently being tested.

6. Explore new approaches to increase the number of customers sharing their experiences about the Corporate Complaint Procedure

Although the response rate is still small, 2022-23 has seen a 42% increase in customers sharing their experience about the Corporate Complaints Procedure. Every customer that uses the CFO, is encouraged to provide feedback which is used to improve how complaints are managed and how services are delivered. In previous years this was an automated email, the CFO now send a personalised email to every customer with a link to the survey.

7. Implement a revised reporting schedule of corporate complaints activity and outcomes, for Authority Directors and Elected Members

A reporting schedule has been introduced for all Directors, sharing complaint activity, and highlighting any areas of concern through complaint activity. A report of complaint activity is also shared annually with the Authority's Regulation and Review Committee, and Elected Members now receive a twice annual summary of complaints for their wards. A new suite of complaint reports has been developed and are due to be introduced alongside the introduction of the new complaint IT system.

8. Strengthen the consistency of capturing, monitoring, and reporting corporate complaint outcomes and learning

A new governance framework for reporting complaints activity and outcomes has been developed; This will continue to be an area of priority in 2023-24.

9. Social care services to review changes in their complaint activity numbers

In October 2022 the LGSCO Annual Review of Adult Social Care Complaints Report, noted that there had been a national decrease in adult social care complaints received by Local Authorities and referred to the LGSCO. North Tyneside Council had similarly received fewer of these complaints. The Authority carried out a health check of its approach to complaints in both adult and children's social care and is satisfied that there were no barriers to customers submitting complaints. Complaints Procedures are detailed on the Authority's website, and customers within adult and children's services are made aware of their right to complain throughout their journey and time with these services.

8. Key actions for 2023-24

Priorities for the year ahead reflect the learning from this report and continue to strengthen the processes, practices and recording systems, which support the Authority to learn and improve from complaints; ultimately ensuring customers receive the best services possible and a great customer experience.

We will...
1. Implement a new recording and administration system for Authority wide recording of complaint activity, improving the Authority's ability to listen and learn from complaints
2. Communicate the Authority's refreshed Complaints Procedure, ensuring customers have clear and easy access to information on how to make a complaint
3. Continued close working between the CFO and the housing, property and repairs customer experience function, to ensure customers receive a timely and effective complaint handling service
4. Embed the refreshed governance framework for complaints, ensuring good information and learning from complaints, informs future service delivery
5. Review Stage 1 processes and sign off to ensure the Authority is doing everything possible to seek early resolution of complaint investigations
6. Introduce and comply with any changes from the new Joint Code of Practice with the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
7. Full implementation of the quality assurance framework in the Customer First office, to demonstrate consistency, fairness and quality in complaint investigations and outcomes for customers

9. Statutory Local Authority social services

The Authority's Corporate 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)

9.1 Social services complaint practice and approach

- 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.

9.2 Children's social care

The number of these complaints have increased slightly this year from last, the majority are resolved at Stage One of the process. The proportion upheld by the Authority has increased from last year.

9.3 Adult social care

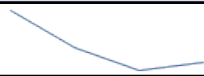


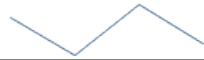


In line with LGSCO findings in 2021-22, there was a notable decrease in the number of adult social care statutory complaints in North Tyneside in that year. 2022-23 has seen an increase but levels remain lower than pre Covid-19 Pandemic levels of around 40. The proportion of adult social care statutory complaints not upheld by the Authority has increased over the past three years in North Tyneside.

9.4 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.

Work is continuing with the Customer First Office in particular with Children Social Care team to review and reflect on their approach to customer complaints. This includes regular reporting into the management team service meetings to review lessons learned.

10. North Tyneside 2022-23 complaint and service request activity

Table 1 Total number of complaints received	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
Social services complaints investigated	102	68	48	56	
Corporate complaints investigated	967	451	599	589	
Total investigations	1069	519	647	645	
Complaints registered as service requests	1107	914	1178	971	
Total complaints (investigations & service requests)	2176	1433	1825	1616	
Complaints to Ombudsman	50	29	48	38	

10.1 Complaints and channel used

Table 2 Method used to complain	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
Email	143	126	131	64	
In Person	3	2	7	3	
Online	460	307	349	528	
Telephone	417	63	134	46	
Written	46	21	26	4	

10.3 Complaint service area and reason during 2022-23

Chart 1 – Complaints registered by service area

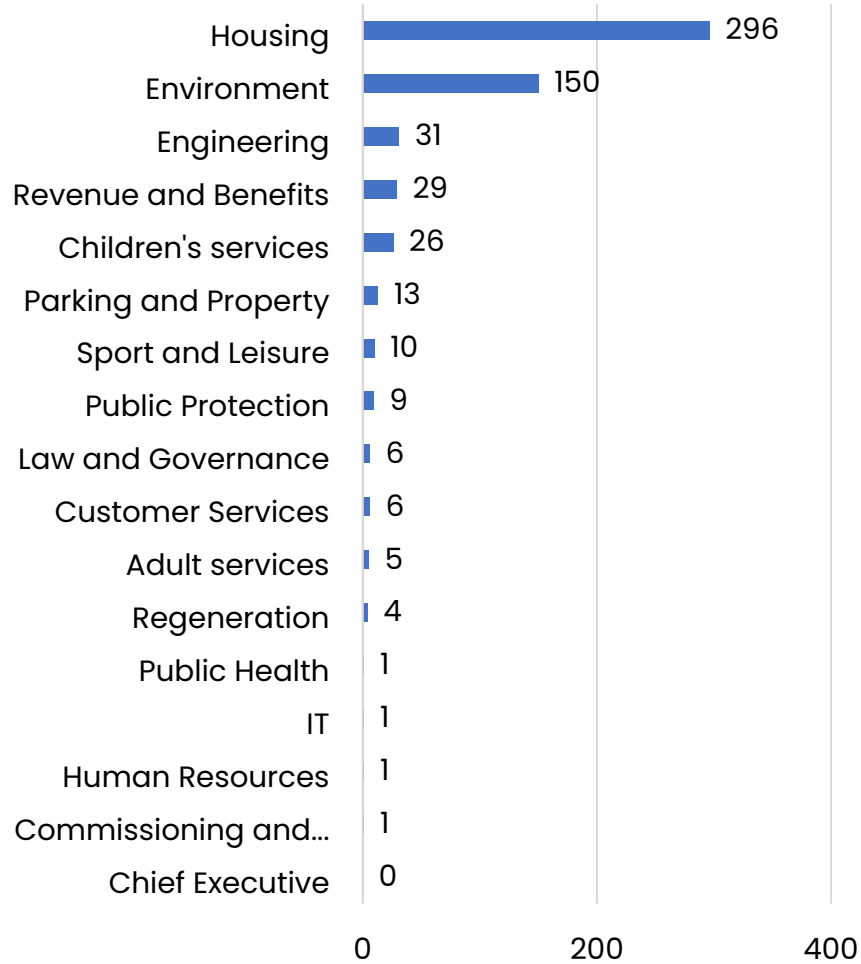
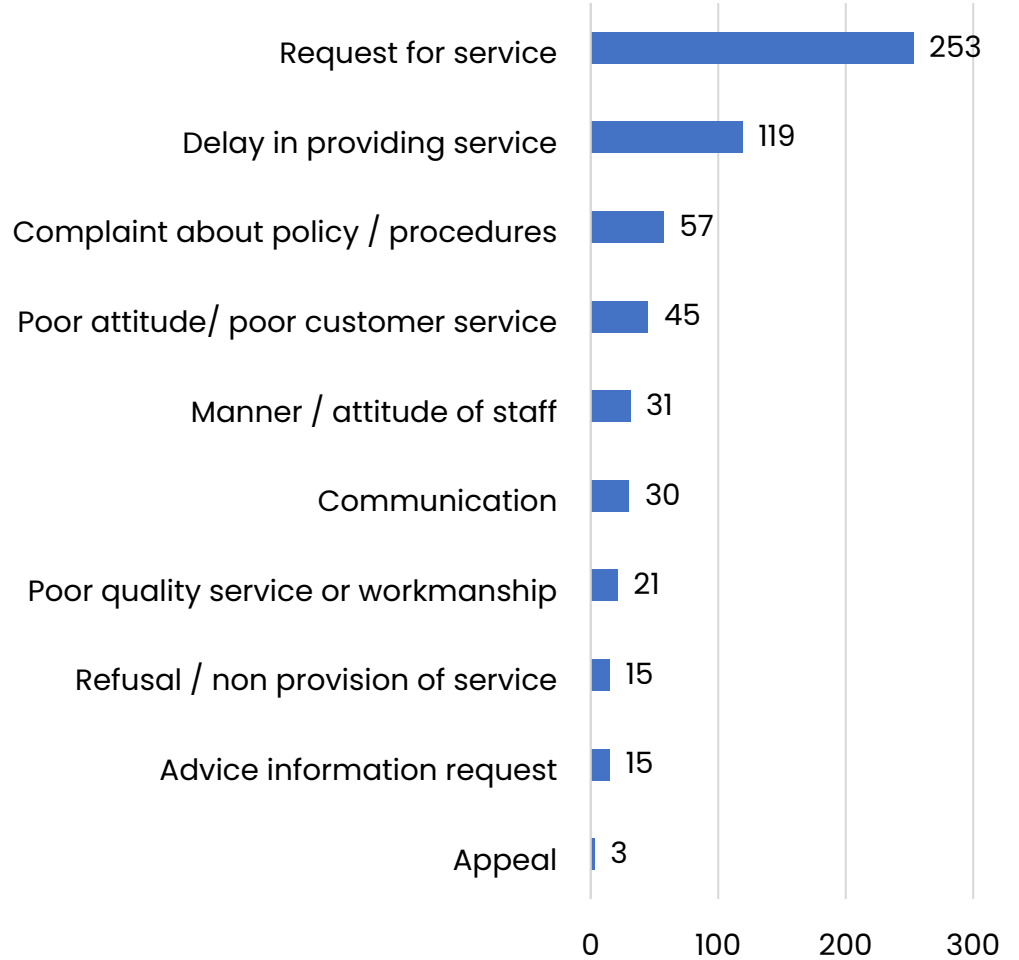


Chart 2 – Reasons for complaint investigations



6.1 Complaint outcomes

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Table 3 Complaint outcomes				
Not Upheld	54%	52%	46%	55%
Upheld in Full	24%	25%	33%	23%
Upheld in Part	22%	23%	21%	22%
Table 4 Complaints resolved at each Stage				
Stage One	88%	83%	81%	76%
Stage Two	12%	17%	19%	24%
Stage Three	0	0	0	0
Table 5 Complaints not progressed to Stage Three				
Number of Stage Three complaints requested	-	-	53	54

6.2 Service requests

	2022-23	%
Table 6 Service requests 2022-23 by service area		
Housing, Property and Repairs	434	44.7%
Environment	422	43.5%
Capita Services	60	6.2%
Adult Social Care	15	1.5%
Children and Family Services	14	1.4%
Equans Services	8	0.8%
Commissioning and Asset Management	7	0.7%
Resources and Corporate Strategy	7	0.7%
Regeneration and Economic Development	4	0.4%
Total	971	100%
Table 7 Service requests 2022-23 escalation to complaints investigated by the Authority under the Three-Stage process		
Proportion of service requests escalated to Stage one	0	0%

6.3 Housing, property and repairs complaints

Table 8 Housing, property and repairs complaints categories	2022-23
Request for Service	131
Delay in Service	75
Failure to follow policy / procedure	24
Customer Service	24
Poor quality workmanship	17
Non provision of service	9
Communication	6
Advice / Information	5
Other	5
Total	296

Chart 3 Housing, Property and Repairs investigation complaints resolved at Stage

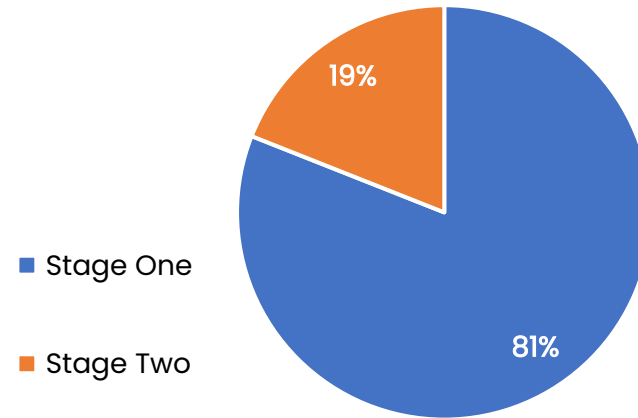
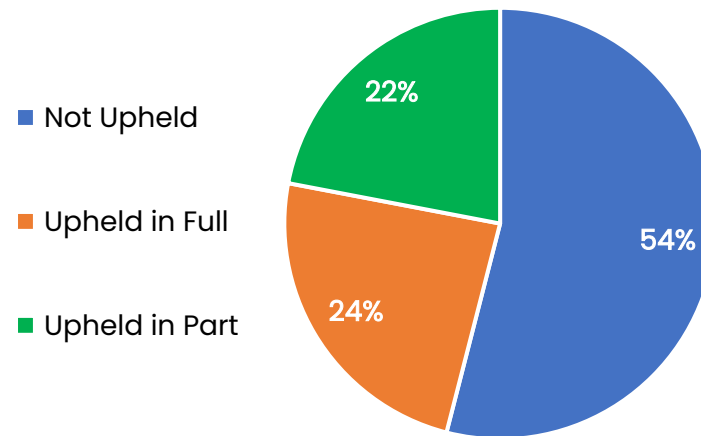



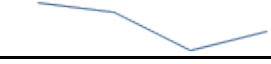
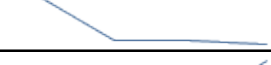

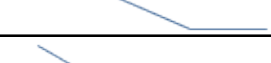

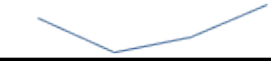


Chart 4 Housing, property and repairs complaints outcomes



6.4 Children's social care complaints

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
Table 9 Children and families' services categories					
Adoption/Fostering/LAC*	4	2	2	1	
Safeguarding	33	17	13	14	
Front Door	7	3	2	3	
Commissioning and Investment	0	0	1	1	
Children with Disability Team	4	0	0	0	
Other	1	8	1	2	
Total	42	30	19	21	
Table 10 Children's Social Services Complaints Resolved at Stage:					
Stage One	88%	83%	91%	96%	
Stage Two	10%	10%	9%	0%	
Stage Three	2%	7%	0%	4%	
Table 11 Children's Social Services Complaints Outcomes					
Not Upheld	46%	30%	90%	58%	
Upheld in Full	20%	10%	0%	4%	
Upheld in Part	34%	60%	10%	38%	

1.1. Adult social care complaints

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
Table 12 Adult services categories					
Safeguarding	4	2	0	1	
Commissioning	6	5	1	3	
Personalisation/Social Work	33	23	23	22	
Integrated Services	7	6	5	9	
Other	3	2	0	0	
Total	42	30	29	35	
Table 13 Adult social care complaint outcomes					
Not Upheld	55%	42%	48%	60%	
Upheld in Full	7%	11%	5%	0%	
Upheld in Part	38%	47%	48%	40%	

6.5 Local Government Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman complaints

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Trend
Table 14 Complaints referred to the LGSCO					
Environmental and Cultural Services	4	2	5	3	
Highways, Transport and Planning	10	6	8	7	
Revenue and Benefits	5	2	5	3	
Housing, Property and Repairs	3	6	10	2	
Education and Childrens Social Care	17	10	7	7	
Adult Social Care	6	3	9	10	
Other	5	0	4	6	
Total	50	29	48	38	
Table 15 Number of complaint investigations carried out by the LGSCO					
North Tyneside	12	8	13	11	
Table 16 Complaints referred to the HO					
Housing Property Condition	-	5	3	Dec-23	

7. Complaint customer feedback survey

The Authority asks all customers whose complaints have been investigated, to complete a survey of their experience. Responses to the survey are incredibly low but the Authority continues to do everything that it can to encourage feedback and make it as easy as possible to do so. Low response rates are not untypical for corporate complaint services nationally and indeed with Ombudsman services.

This year we have seen an increase in the number of customers completing the satisfaction survey to 35 from 17 the previous year. Every customer that comes through the Customer First Office is encouraged to provide feedback which is used to improve how we work and improve our service delivery. In previous years this was an automated email, the Customer First Office now send a personalised email to every customer with a link to the survey.

The Authority collects customer equality data at the start of the complaint process. This is collected either through a telephone conversation or at the time of completing the statement of complaint.

- 19 customers found their complaint response easy to read.
- 16 customers said the customer service they received from the CFO was very good.
- 15 customers sought help from a council employee.
- 13 customers used the Authority's website to find out how to make a formal complaint.
- 10 were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint.
- 26 customers said their response letter was clear about what to do if they remained dissatisfied with their response.
- 17 customers who registered a complaint were female.
- 21 customers were 55 or over.
- 13 customers had a physical / mental health condition.
- 11 customers said their physical or mental condition or illness reduced their ability to carry out day to day activities.

8. Listening to complaints and making improvements 2022-23

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 taken.

Lessons learned	Improvements made
Children's services	
<p>Improvements to be made to communication between parents and the allocated social worker throughout the assessment process.</p> <p>Policy and practice should be reviewed with the Leaving Care Team to ensure systems provide relevant support to vulnerable young people who may need the service from the out of hours service following an incident of crisis.</p> <p>Panel recommendation that the multi-agency Safeguarding Board reviews policies and procedures to ensure a standard practice is in place in terms of notifications, following incidents involving vulnerable young people in supported accommodation provided by the local authority.</p>	<p>Guidance developed to support workers in completion of assessments to include children's and family views.</p> <p>Personal Advisors within teams are clear of the support available out of hours.</p> <p>Revised procedure shared with staff and discussed at Partnership board with partner agencies including the Police.</p>

Environment services

Feedback from complaints showed poor communication following tree surveys contributed to the increased number of complaints around tree management.

Increase in number of reports of detritus and dirt in pedestrianised areas in 2022-23.

Increase in reports of litter and overflowing wastebins throughout the borough

Increase in reports regarding the biodiversity areas across the borough and how they looked unkempt and lacked colour during Spring 2023

'Tree calling cards' introduced, as part of the 'Neat Streets' campaign, to update customers following a tree inspection or any works carried out on trees nearby.

Pedestrian sweeper introduced in early 2023, to attend to areas where previously larger mechanically vehicles could not reach, as well as manual sweeps of the area.

Increased litter bin provision, adding 100 multipurpose bins in addition to existing resources across the borough.

Biodiversity areas continually reviewed. Teams have enhanced biodiversity areas as part of the estate management programme, especially on roundabouts throughout the borough.

Housing and Property services

<p>Increase in complaints year on year attributed to delays in service provision resulting from issues with material supply chain and the ongoing legacy of COVID-19 on the overall availability of resources, including staff.</p> <p>The Housing Service Repairs Policy should be reviewed to reflect current working practices as a result of customer feedback and engagement.</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman's report highlighted the need to improve record keeping and information sharing arrangements.</p> <p>Housing Ombudsman's report highlighted the need to change the approach to damp and mould.</p> <p>Recognise that Housing customers want repairs completed on the first visit.</p>	<p>Introduced a new reporting matrix to ensure early identification of trends in complaint behaviour. Where trends are identified, dedicated service improvement work is undertaken to address concerns immediately.</p> <p>Draft repair's policy sets out our responsibilities as a landlord and our expectations of tenants. Includes our approach to resolving complaints and provision of compensation where required.</p> <p>The Authority is implementing a new IT system to improve record keeping and information sharing between departments and provide customers with a direct interface to access services.</p> <p>Revised the approach to damp and mould to ensure a zero-tolerance approach when reported. Reviewed procedures ensuring any structural works and repairs required to remove the risk of damp and mould in homes are undertaken and support and guidance provided to tenants. Dedicated damp and mould response team established to support these efforts.</p> <p>Functionality to be introduced to enable video calling between the contact centre and tenants, which will allow better understanding of issues reported and allocation of the right resource.</p>
Lessons learnt	Improvements made
Adult Social Care	

Increase in complaints around financial assessments.

Following an LGSCO decision that Authority did not consider information from the mental health team, when considering moving a client from a residential care placement to sheltered accommodation. Recognising the importance of using process if a client doesn't agree with the outcome of assessment.

A complaint highlighted that health wards were giving family members incorrect information regarding the Authority's step-down facilities and services.

New process in place for new clients. This will ensure priority is given to new people and financial assessments completed sooner in the process.

Formalised an improvement process for joint working between social care teams and mental health, and health staff.

Information sessions have been held with ward staff. Detailed information and education of facilities and charges shared at handovers and with Multi-Disciplinary Teams.

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to us and makes a
difference.

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