

**Wiltshire Council**

**Annual Complaints Report**

**2023-2024**

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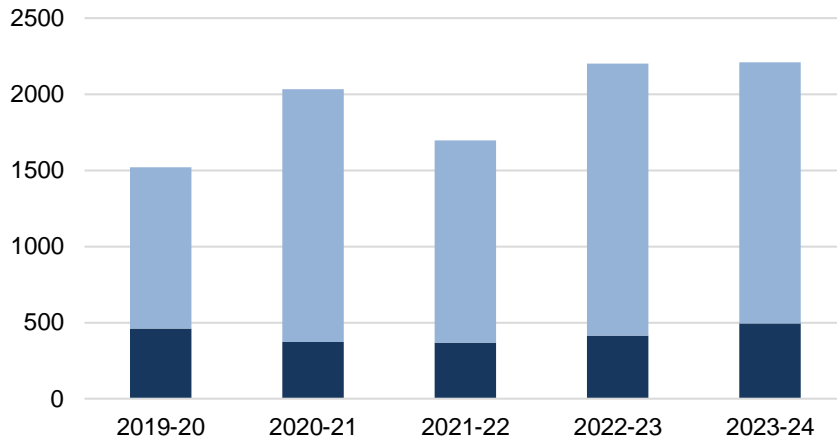
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## Summary

### Complaints and services requests



Since 2022-23...

**Service requests** received by the Complaints team have **decreased** by 4%.

**Complaints** to the council have **increased** by 20%.

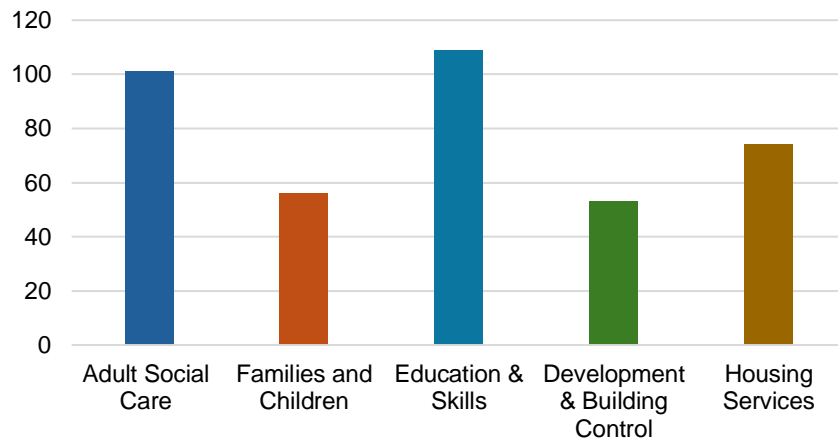
Since 2022-23, complaints about...

**Education & Skills** have **increased** by 12%. 59% of these were upheld or partially upheld by the council.

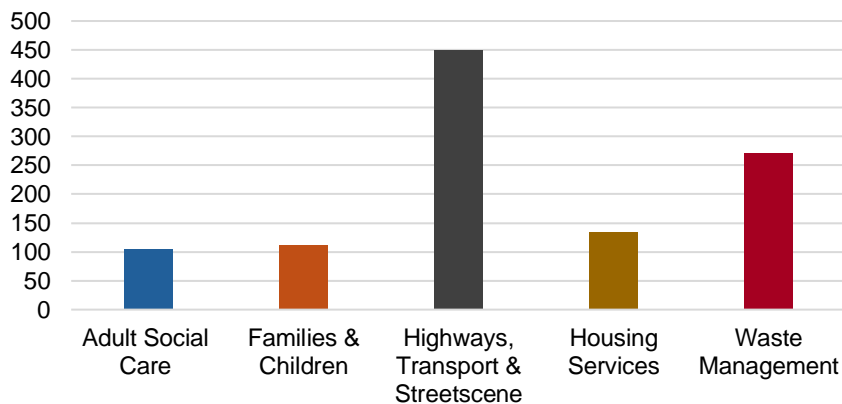
**Adult Social Care** have **increased** by 36%.

**Housing Services** have **increased** by 106%.

### Complaints received by service



### Service requests received by the Complaints team 2023-24



Since 2022-23, service requests to the Complaints team regarding...

**Highways, Transport and Streetscene** (449) have **increased** by 46%.

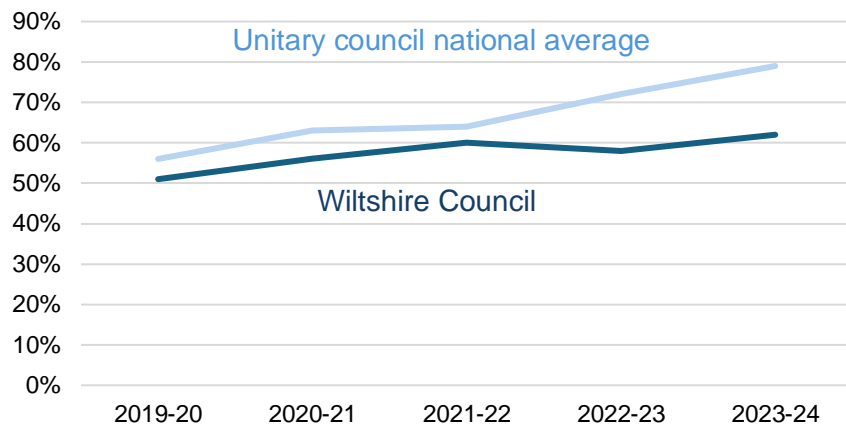
**Waste Management** have **decreased** by 30%.

**Housing Services** have **increased** by 40%.

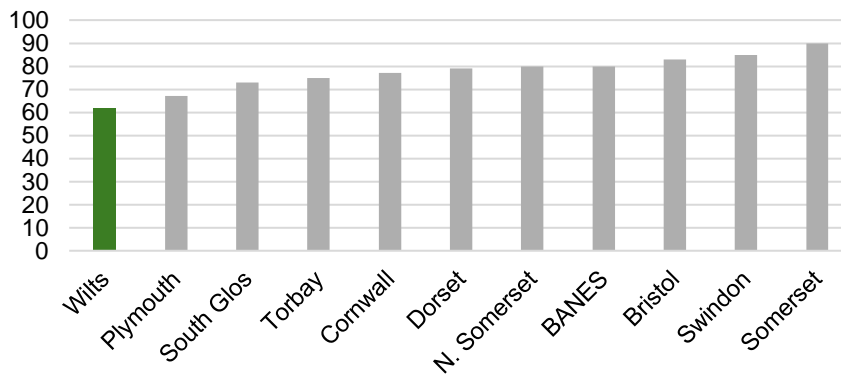
Since 2022-23, the % of complaints about **Wiltshire Council** upheld by the LGSCO **increased** by 2% to 62% (though the actual number upheld **decreased** by 2).

This is significantly **lower** than the 79% average for **unitary councils** nationally.

### % Complaints upheld by the LGSCO



### % Complaints upheld by the LGSCO South West unitary councils



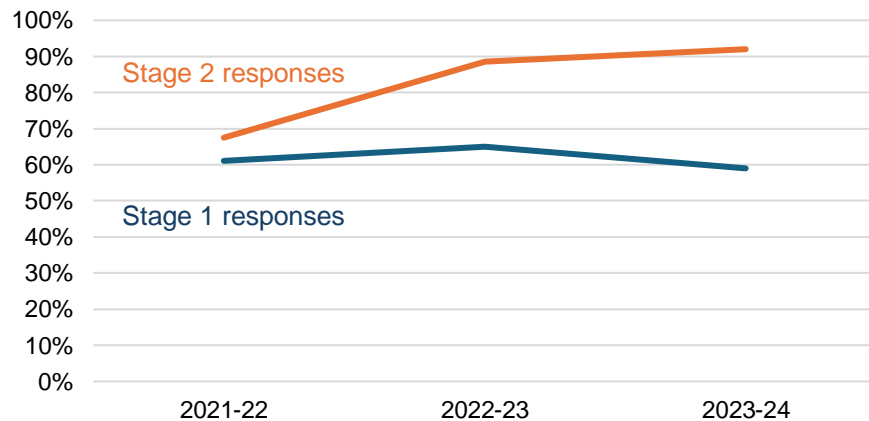
The LGSCO upheld a **lower** percentage of complaints about **Wiltshire Council** than about all **other unitary councils** in the South West.

Since 2022-23...

The % of **Stage 1** complaint responses provided on time **decreased** from 65% to 59%.

The % of **Stage 2** complaint responses provided on time **increased** from 89% to 92%.

### % Complaints responded to within target timescales



## **Introduction**

1. This Annual Complaints Report provides an overview of the complaints Wiltshire Council received between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024 and how we have dealt with them (though we have not published the details of people who have complained).
2. Wiltshire Council welcomes feedback to help us to identify and address problems for customers, and to improve our services. We aim to deliver a complaints function that:
  - is simple for everyone to use and understand
  - is led and supported by the very top of the organisation
  - ensures excellent service standards are delivered
  - fulfils the needs of our customers
  - enables us to learn from customer feedback in order to improve
  - complies with the relevant legislation and council policy
  - focuses on fair, proportionate resolution at the earliest stage
  - works in an open-minded and impartial way.

## **What is a complaint?**

3. Complaints can be wide-ranging, but can be defined as:
  - a failure to provide a service, or an inadequate standard of service
  - dissatisfaction with the application of a council policy
  - treatment by, or attitude, of a member of staff
  - disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure to resolve the matter
  - the council's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
4. It should be noted that when an issue is raised with the council for the first time, where appropriate, it is treated as a request for a service, rather than as a formal complaint. This reflects how the customer's priority is usually to have their issue promptly resolved, rather than to make a formal complaint. However, such service requests can escalate to formal complaints if the customer remains dissatisfied.

## **How do we handle complaints?**

5. The council has a dedicated Complaints team sitting the Legal and Governance directorate. The Complaints team works closely with council services to respond to and address issues raised by customers.
6. To meet its statutory obligations, the council has several complaints procedures. Customers are supported to follow the appropriate route when they submit their complaint. The procedures are as follows:

<b>Wiltshire Council – Complaints Procedures</b>			
	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>
<p><b>1. Complaints Procedure</b> <a href="#">(link)</a></p> <p>For all complaints, except those falling under the procedures outlined below.</p>	<p>Response from the <b>service team</b> within <b>20 days*</b> (can be extended by 10 days)</p> <p>*within <b>10 days</b> for complaints about the council as a housing landlord</p>	<p>Investigation and response from the <b>Complaints team</b> within <b>30 days*</b> (can be extended by 10 days)</p> <p>*within <b>10 days</b> for complaints about the council as a housing landlord</p>	<p>Customer referral to the <b>Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman</b> (<a href="#">LGSCO</a>)</p> <p>or</p> <p><b>Housing Ombudsman</b> (<a href="#">HO</a>) for independent review.</p>
<p><b>2. Children’s Statutory Complaints Procedure</b></p> <p>For complaints under the Children Act 1989, which generally includes assessments and services regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in need</li> <li>• Looked after children</li> <li>• Special Guardianship</li> <li>• Post-adoption support</li> </ul>	<p>Response from the <b>service team</b> within <b>20 days</b> (can be extended to <b>30 days</b>)</p>	<p>Investigation and response from the <b>Complaints team</b>, overseen by an <b>independent person</b>, within <b>25 days</b></p>	<p>Consideration by <b>Independent Review Panel</b> within <b>30 days</b></p>
<p><b>3. Adult Social Care Statutory Complaints Procedure</b></p> <p>For complaints regarding the provision of Adult Social Care services.</p>	<p>Response from the <b>service team</b> within <b>6 months</b></p> <p>(council target 20 days)</p>	<p>Customer referral to the <b>LGSCO</b> for independent review</p>	<p>N/a</p>
<p><b>4. Pension complaints</b></p> <p>For complaints about decisions made by the employer and/or Wiltshire Pension Fund regarding pensions.</p>	<p>Response from the adjudicator<sup>1</sup> within <b>2 months</b></p> <p>Extension permitted</p>	<p>Response from the referee<sup>2</sup> within <b>2 months</b></p> <p>Extension permitted</p>	<p>Complainant referral to <b>The Pensions Ombudsman</b> (<a href="#">link</a>) for independent review</p>
<p>The council also considers complaints about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elected or co-opted members of local councils in Wiltshire</b></li> </ul>			

<sup>1</sup> A person nominated by the body whom the complaint is against.

<sup>2</sup> Cannot be the same as the adjudicator.

- **The Wiltshire Police and Crime Commissioner.**

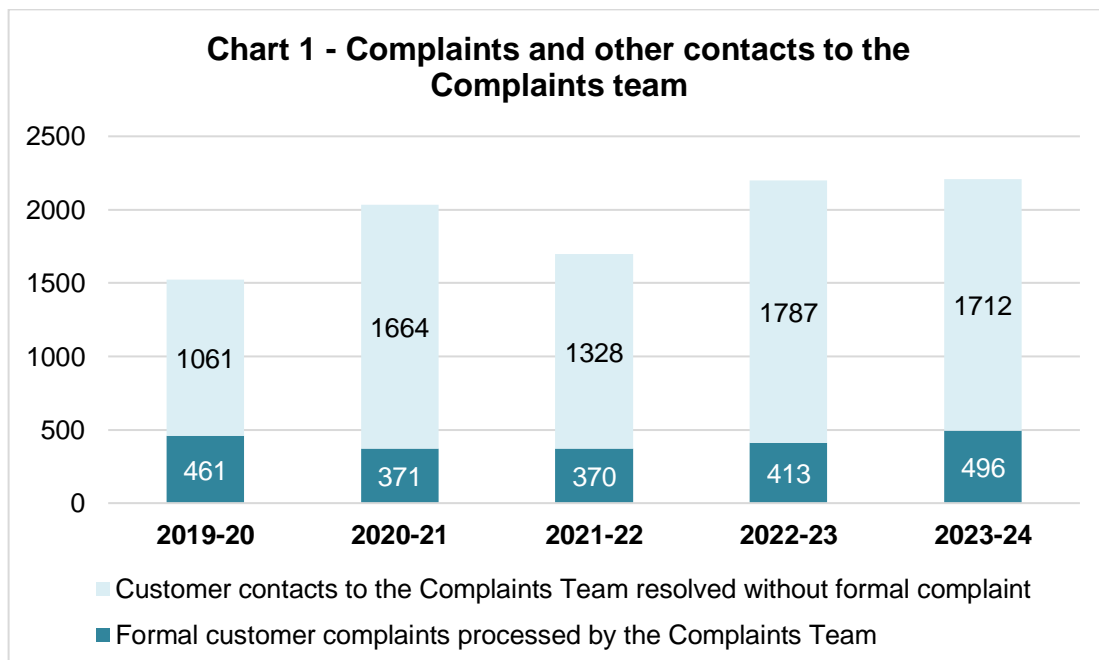
These complaint are dealt with under separate procedures and are not covered within this report. Please see the council's [complaints webpage](#) for further information.

## **Complaints activity 2023-24**

7. This report provides an overview of complaints received by the council during the period **1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**. The report also outlines other contacts received by the Complaints team that were resolved outside of a formal complaints procedure, i.e. 'service requests', where the Complaints team direct the customer to the appropriate service for resolution of their problem.
8. It should be noted that all council teams may receive 'service requests' directly, which are not captured in this report.

## **Number of complaints received**

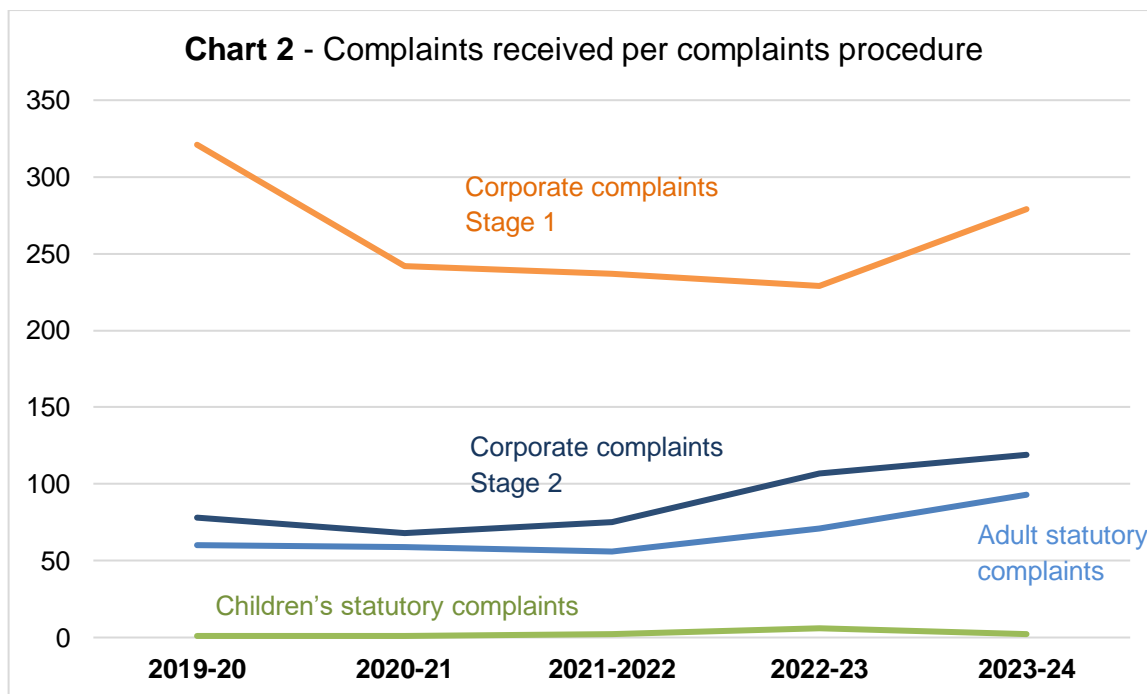
9. As **Chart 1** shows, in 2023-24 the council handled 496 complaints through its formal procedures; an **increase** of 20% on the previous year.<sup>3</sup>
10. 46% (38) **of this increase** results from complaints about **Housing Services**; 33% (27) from complaints about **Adult Social Care**; and 17% (14) from complaints about Highways, Streetscene and Transport.
11. 1,712 service requests were received by Complaints team; a **decrease** of 4% on the previous year. The percentage of contacts to the Complaints team handled as formal complaints increased from 19% in 2022-23 to 22% in 2023-24.



<sup>3</sup> Wiltshire's population increased by 2.2% since 2019-20 and by 0.4% between 2022-23 and 2023-24.

## How the council handled complaints

12. **Chart 2** shows how complaints were handled under the council's various complaints procedures over the past four years.
13. The number of complaints resolved at **Stage 1** and **Stage 2** of the corporate Complaints Procedure **increased** by 22% and 11% respectively.
14. The number of complaints handled under the statutory Adult Social Care procedure **increased** by 31%. This reflects the 36% increase in complaints received about Adult Social Care generally.
15. The number of complaints handled under the statutory Children's procedure continues to be very low.
16. Sometimes complaints are not accepted, due to insufficient information being provided, the complaint having already been addressed through a contractor's complaints procedure, or the matter being outside of the council's jurisdiction.

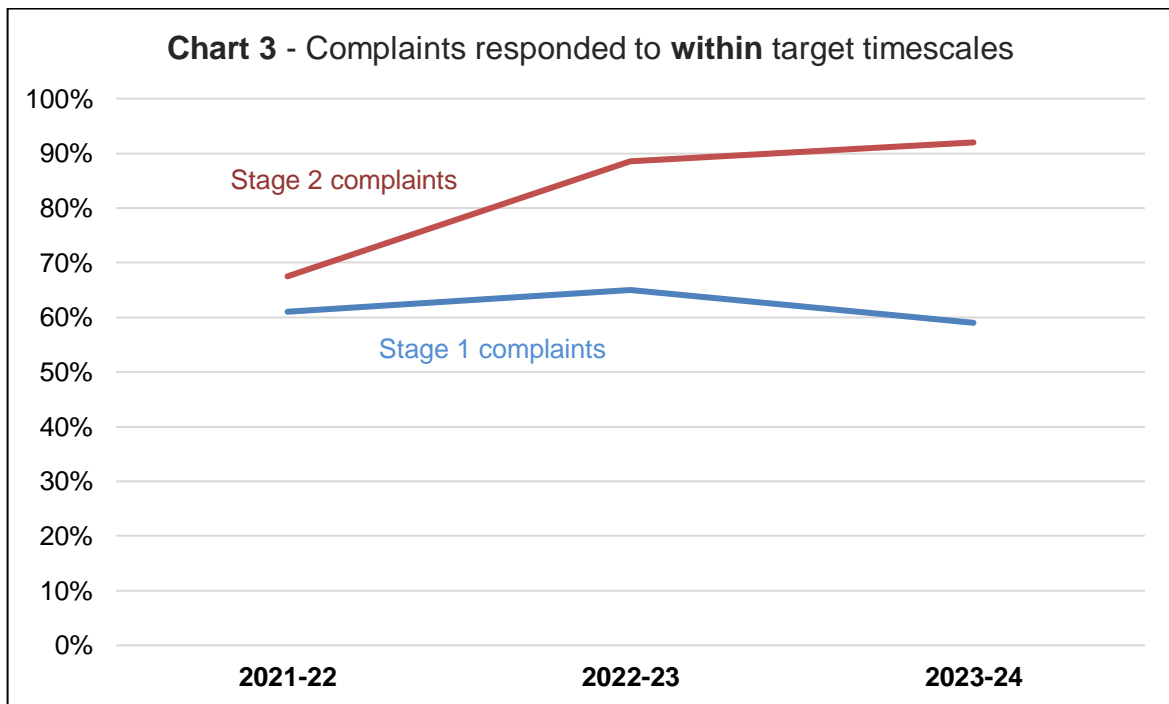


## How quickly the council resolved complaints

17. **Chart 3** shows the percentage of corporate and adult social care complaints for which responses were provided within the target timeframes, which are set out under paragraph 6.
18. Stage 1 responses are provided by the appropriate service area. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, a Stage 2 investigation is undertaken by the Complaints team who then provide a further response.



19. Complaints dealt with under the single-stage Adult Social Care statutory procedure are reflected in the chart as Stage 1 complaints. The statutory timeframe for responding to complaints under this procedure is six months, but the council aims to respond within the same timescales as for corporate complaints.
20. Compared with the previous year, in 2023-24, **fewer** responses to Stage 1 complaints were provided on time (65% to 59%), but **more** responses to Stage 2 complaints were provided on time (89% to 92%). The difficulties services have experienced providing responses on time reflect both the increased number of complaints being dealt with, complaints' increasing complexity and the wider resource pressures being faced.
21. To become compliant with the LGSCO's Complaint Handling Code 2024 ([link](#)), it is anticipated that from 15 October 2024 the council will reduce its target Stage 1 and Stage 2 response timescales by 10 working days each. For Stage 1 complaints in particular, providing responses within these shortened timescales represents a significant challenge and the council is putting in place appropriate support, guidance and training for services to meet this requirement.



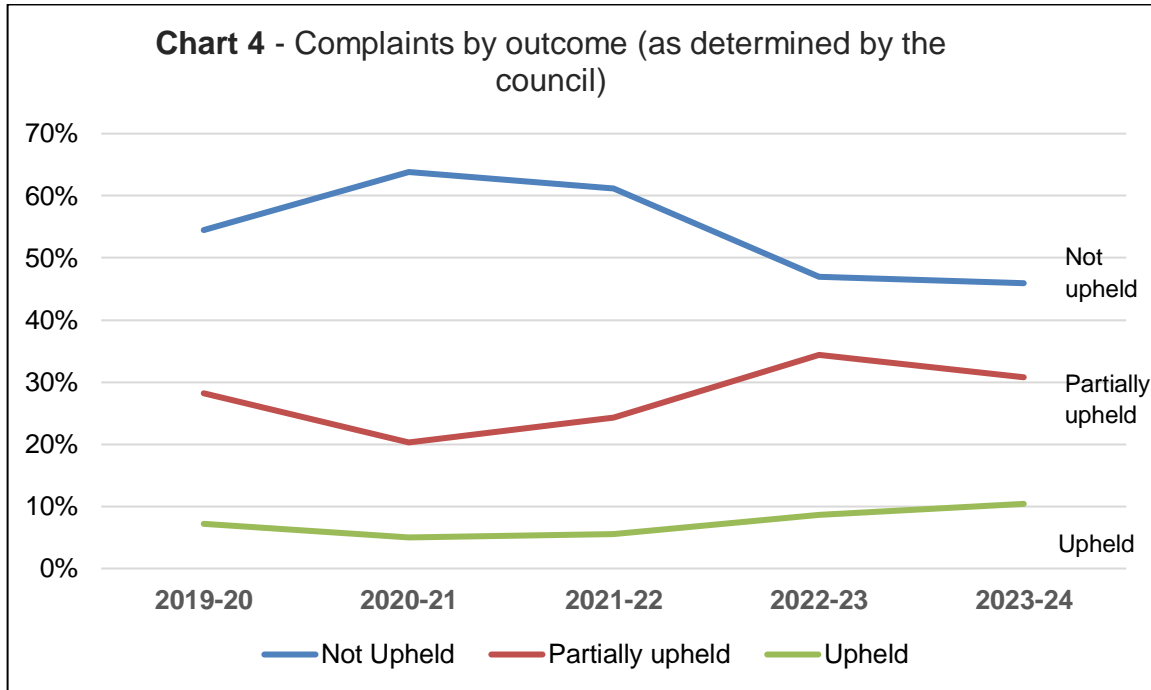
### Complaint outcomes

22. Once a complaint is resolved, it is labelled by the council as 'upheld', 'partially upheld' or 'not upheld'. For those complaints that are upheld or partially upheld, some form of remedial action is taken, such as provision of a service and an apology to the complainant.
23. **Chart 4** shows the outcomes of complaints, as determined by the council<sup>4</sup>:

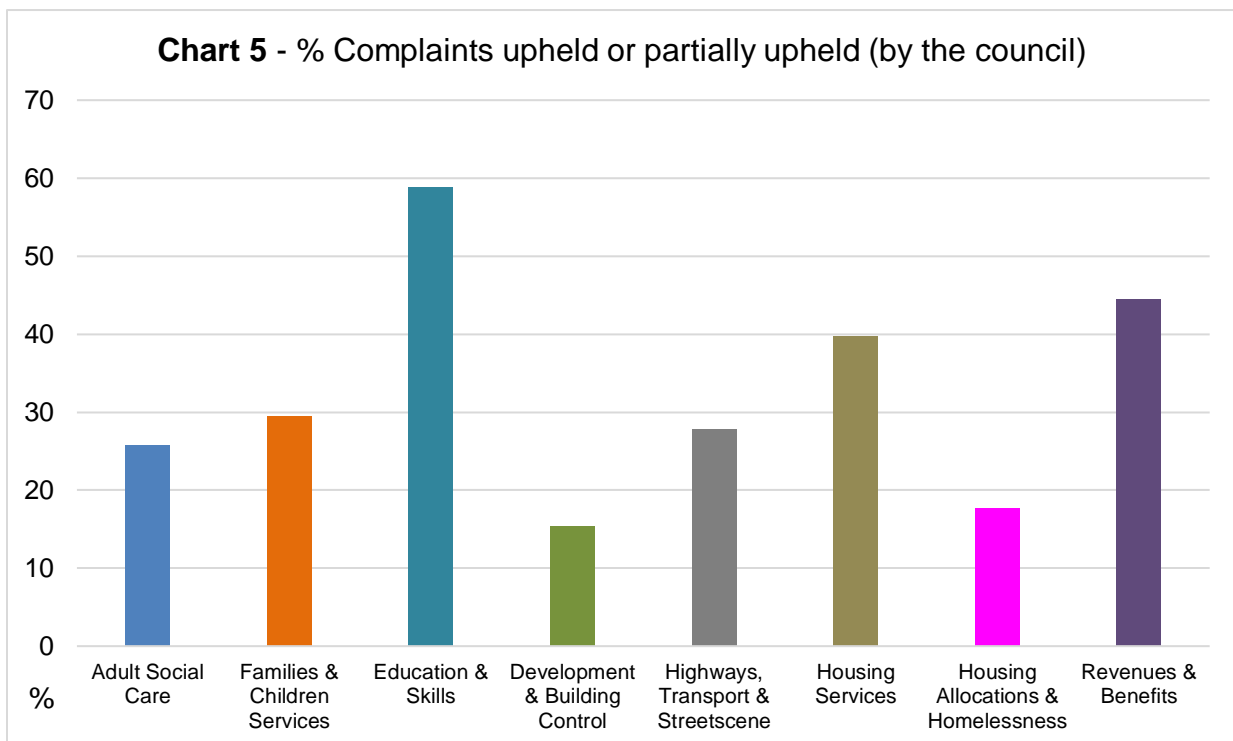
<sup>4</sup> These figures do not equal 100% because some complaints are withdrawn, are superseded by another investigation or do not fall under a council complaints procedure.

- 46% of complaints were **not upheld** by the council
- 31% were **partially upheld** by the council
- 10% were **upheld** by the council.

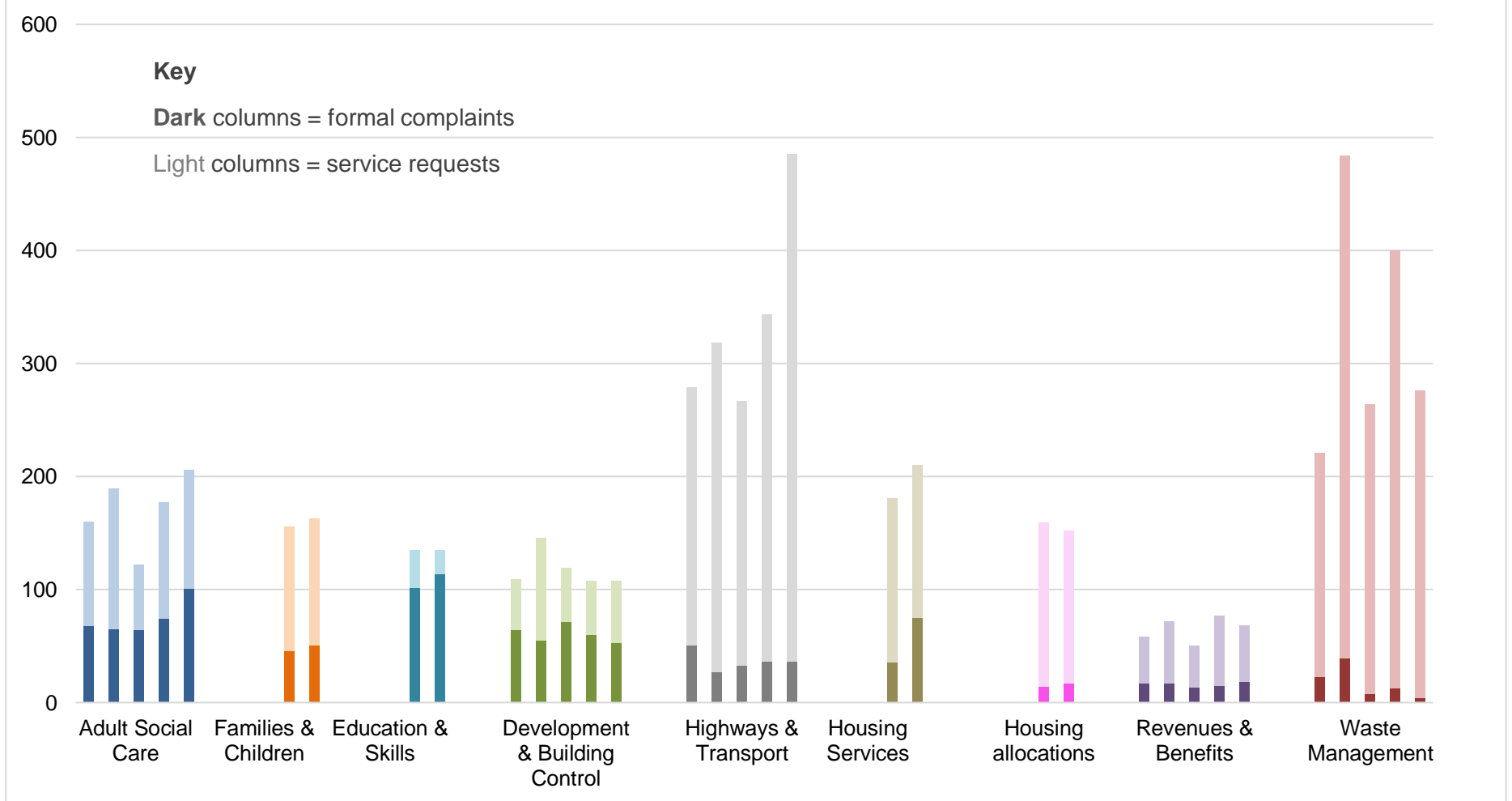
24. This is broadly consistent with complaint determinations by the council in previous years.



25. **Chart 5** shows the outcomes of individual complaints (not *complainants*) broken down by service area. This is described further under the service section below.



**Chart 6 - Complaints and service requests to the Complaints team**



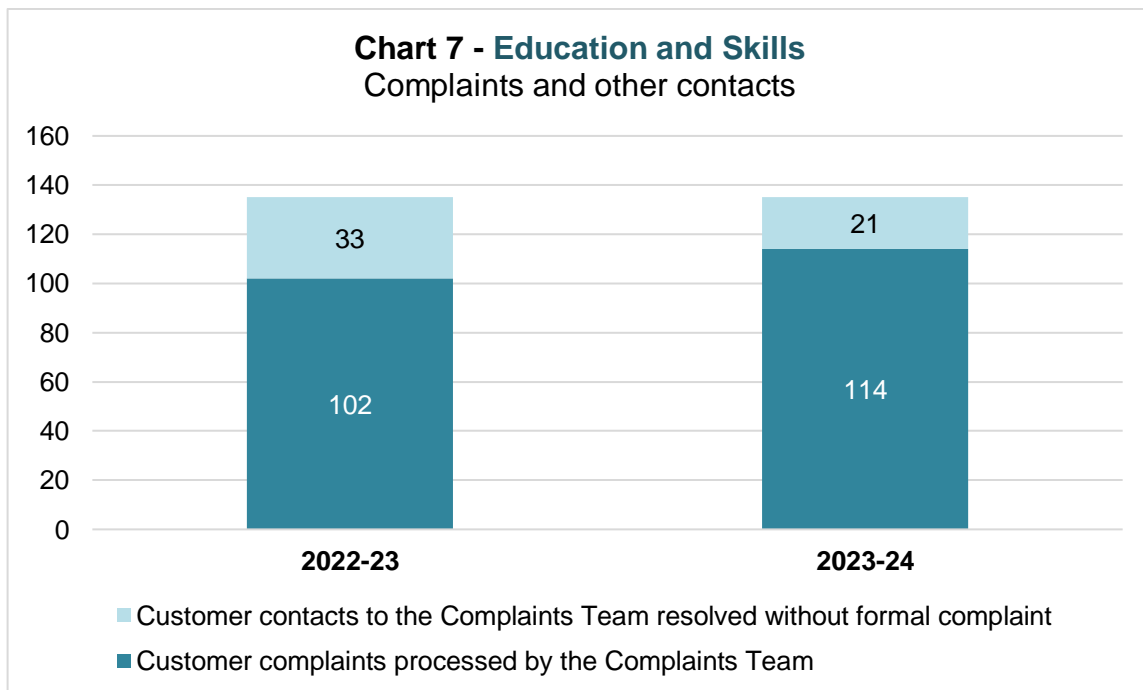
**5-year\* figures: 2019-20 to 2023-24**

(\*This year, Families & Children / Education & Skills, and Housing Services / Housing Allocations & Homelessness, have both been separated for the first time for greater transparency. Therefore only **2 years'** data is available.

## What did we receive complaints about?

26. **Chart 6** (above) shows how complaints and service requests to the Complaints team were distributed across the **nine** council service areas that attracted the highest number of such contacts over the last five years.
27. It is important to note that the number of complaints received is significantly influenced by the number of residents who access the service, its importance in their lives and the impact of service decisions.
28. For some areas, the number of complaints is low, while the number of service requests is high. This reflects how, for those services, most customers want to resolve their issue (e.g. address a missed bin collection) but not pursue a formal complaint.
29. The nine service areas are presented below in descending order of the most complaints received. Where particular issues have been identified through the complaints received, services will produce actions plans setting out how these will be addressed.

### 1. Education and Skills



Complaints	
Number of complaints received 2023-24	114 (23% of total / rank 1)
Change since 2022-23	12% increase

% upheld or partially upheld by the council	59% (rank 1)
Common complaint topics	SEND: 96%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received 2023-24	21 (1%)
Change since 2022-23	36% decrease
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant <sup>5</sup>	22 (rank 1)
Change since 2022-23	41% decrease
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24 <sup>6</sup>	36% (rank 1)
Remedy payments recommended by the LGSCO	2023-24: £9,750 2022-23: £8,200

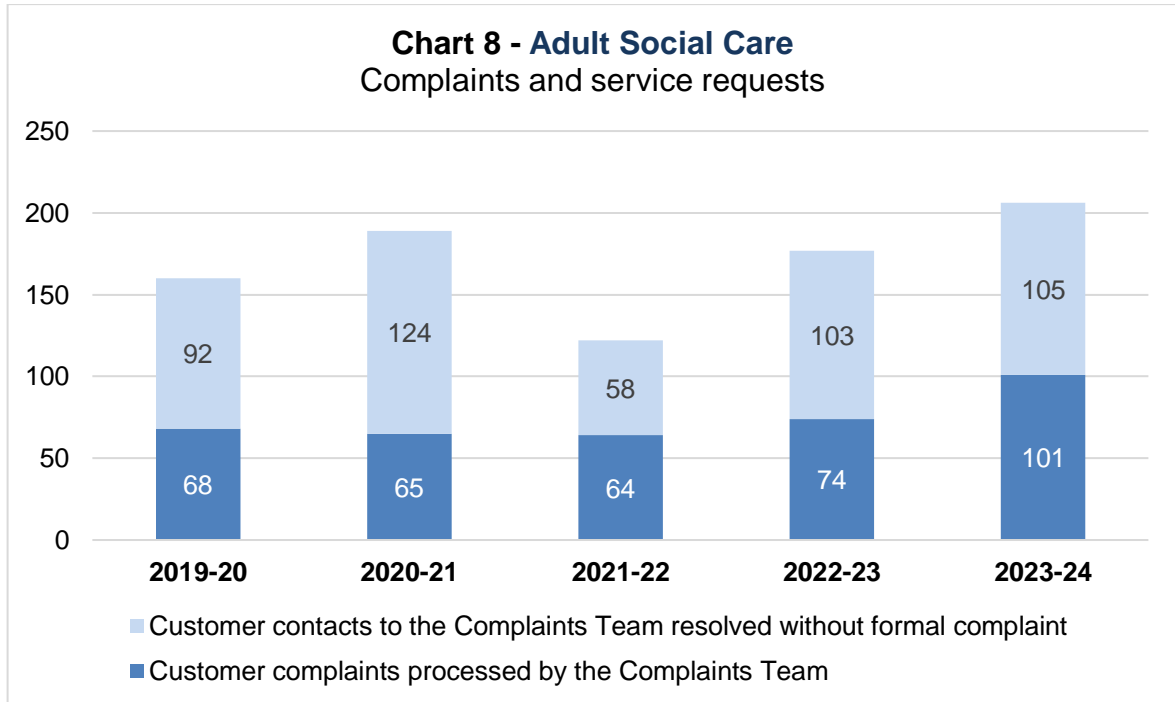
30. Of the seven complaints upheld by the LSGCO, six were regarding delays in the issuing or implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). All of the £9,750 financial remedies recommended by the LGSCO also related to this issue.
31. The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service has continued to experience significant volumes of requests for statutory Education, Health and Social Care Needs Assessments. These Assessments should be completed within a 20-week timeframe and compliance against this measure, though improving, did not start gaining momentum until early 2024. The Service has a clear plan to improve timeliness, which has been fully reported upon to the SEND & Alternative Provision Board and High Needs Block Sustainability Board. The Council has deployed considerable additional financial resource, facilitating recruitment of new Assessment Team staff and Agency Educational Psychologists. Work is also being undertaken to ensure children, young people and their families feel supported in 'waiting well'. Work in this area is ongoing and incremental, but as the backlog of overdue Assessments reduces, it is anticipated that complaints will also reduce.

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<sup>5</sup> Figure includes Families & Children

<sup>6</sup> As above

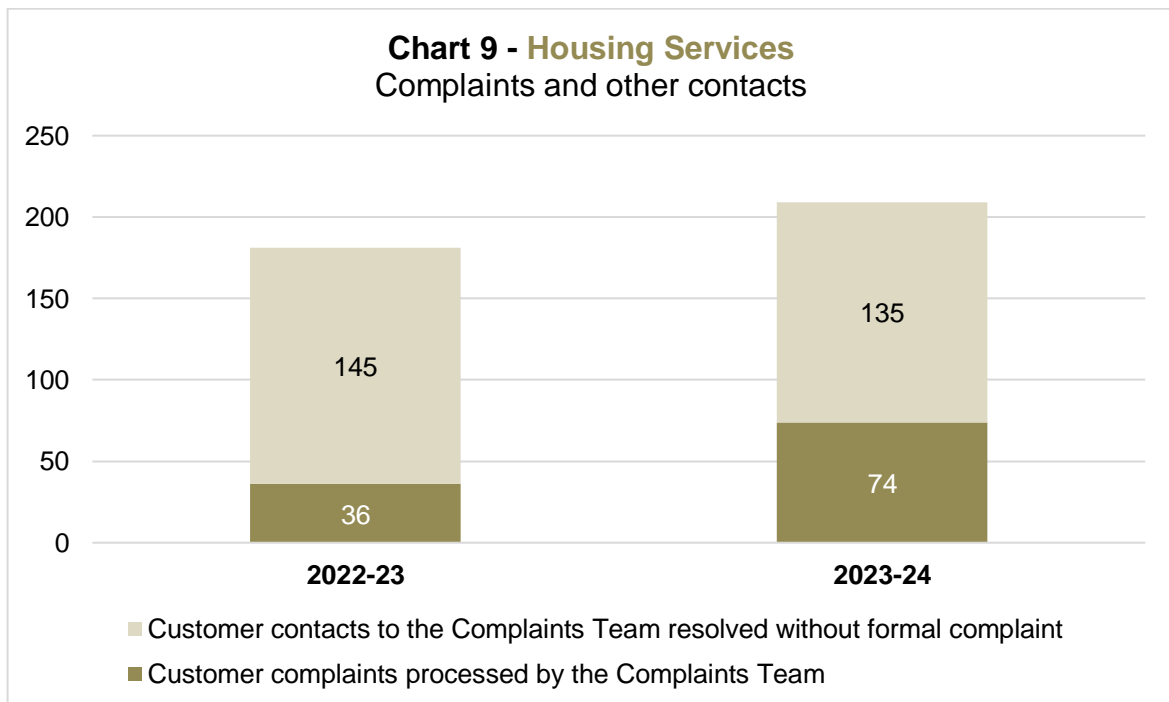
## 2. Adult Social Care



<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	101 (20% of total / rank 2)
Change since previous year	<b>36% increase</b>
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	26% (rank 6)
Common complaint topics	Ongoing Support 42% ASC Finance 33%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	105 (rank 5)
Change since previous year	<b>2% decrease</b>
Share of service requests received by the council	6%
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant	21 (rank 2)
Change since previous year	<b>38% increase</b>
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	10%
Remedy payments recommended by the LGSCO	2023-24: £950 2022-23: £800

- 32. The increase in complaints is consistent with the increases in demand that Adult Social Care continues to experience. There is also an increase in the complexity of the needs of people requiring these services, which is having additional impact on the department.
- 33. The process followed for Adult Social Care complaints has been improved, with the Adult Social Care Quality Assurance Team taking on responsibility for the management of complaints from 1 August 2024. The new process enables increased ownership of complaints within the department and will ensure that all complaints are managed in accordance with the timeframes.
- 34. Complaints are cross-referenced with the revised practice standards to ensure that learning from complaints is thematicised and they are being used to improve practice.
- 35. A new appeals process was launched in April 2024 to manage concerns raised at a team manager level. The appeals process is effective in ensuring that concerns can be raised and addressed without the requirement for people to raise a formal complaint.

### 3. Housing Services

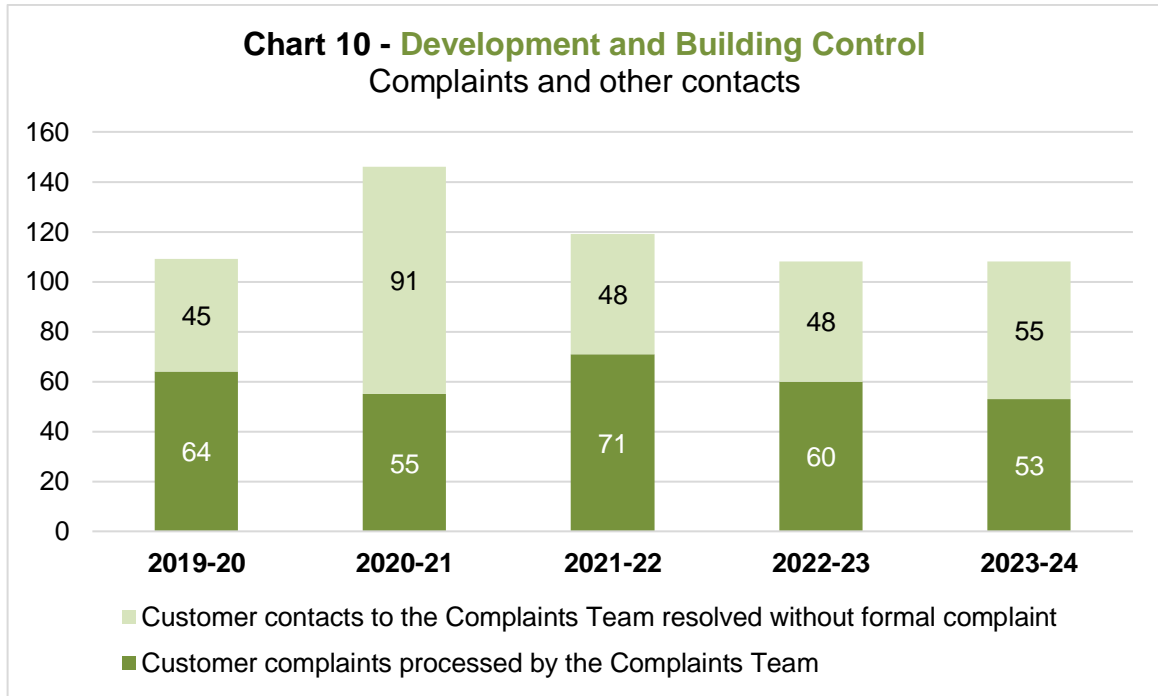


<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received 2023-24	74 (15% of total / rank 3)
Change since 2022-23	106% increase
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	40% (rank 3)
Common complaint topics	Repairs 68% Tenancies 22%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received 2023-24	135 (8% / rank 3)
Change since 2022-23	7% decrease
<b>Housing Ombudsman</b>	
Complaints investigated by the Housing Ombudsman	0

36. The Housing Ombudsman requires member landlords like the council to handle complaints about its landlord functions in compliance with the Complaint Handling Code ([link](#)) and to undertake annual self-assessments that demonstrate how it is doing so. The council's 2024 self-assessment was reported to the Housing Board and can be viewed online ([link](#)).
37. Housing teams use complaints data to develop services, eliminate waste and enhance customers' experience, with service improvements reported to the Housing Board ([link](#)) when appropriate.
38. Across the social housing sector, it is understood that the number of complaints from tenants have increased and the council is considered to be consistent with the overall sector. The increases seen are driven by an increase in complaints reporting across the sector, improved recording of complaints, along with increased promotion of how to report social housing complaints (such as the "Make it Right" campaign).
39. Significant work and training has been recently undertaken by all staff within the Housing department, to address the increased expectations of the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator of Social Housing.
40. Repairs issues remain the primary complaint topics. This is consistent with other Housing providers across the sector. The Housing service is working to address a number of these areas and conducts a regular complaints review meeting every month to address issues.
41. The service is expanding in key areas, including a "Customer Experience Manager", who will lead on learning from complaints and addressing complaint issues at source. This is likely to be in place by December 2024.



#### 4. Development and Building Control

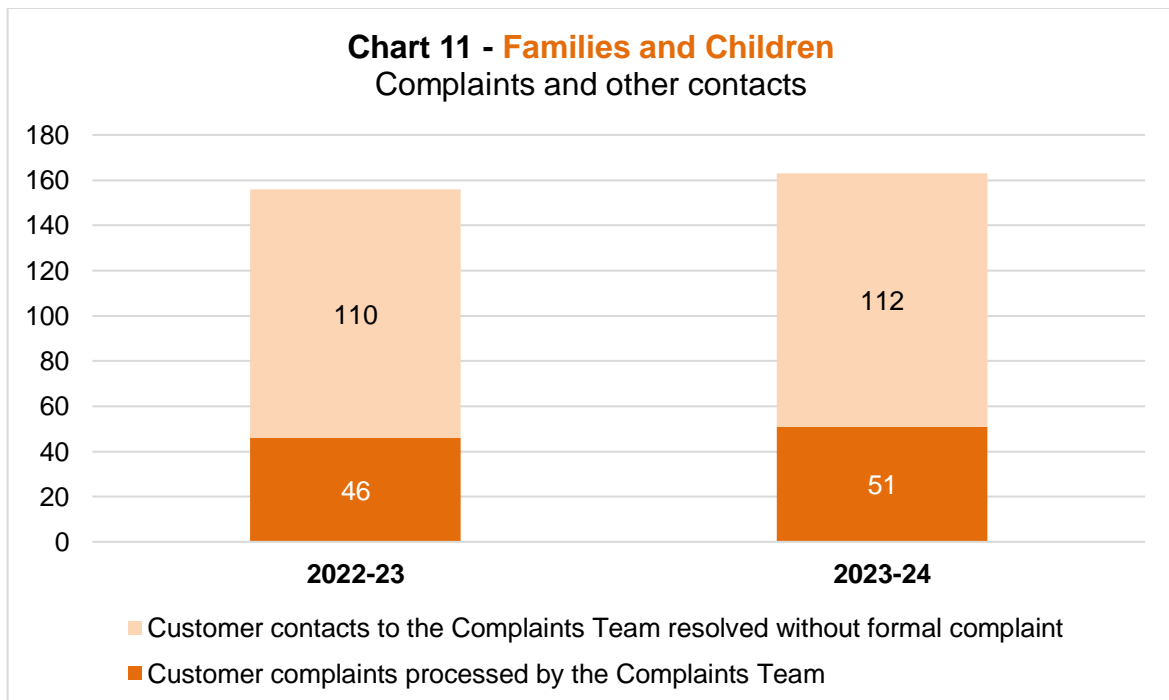


<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	53 (11% of total / rank 4)
Change since previous year	12% decrease
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	15% (rank 8)
Common complaint topics	Development Management 38% Planning Enforcement 32% Building Control 17%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	55 (3%)
Change since previous year	15% increase
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant	16
Change since previous year	15% decrease
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	31% (5)

Remedy payments recommended by the LGSCO	2023-24: £10,000 2022-23: £0
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42. Planning complaints often relate to situations where there has been disagreement between officers and interested parties on the merits of planned development or the expediency to take enforcement action. When making decisions officers must consider the policies of the development plan and planning case law, as well as the circumstances of the site.
43. In some circumstances, complaints are received about the time it has taken to handle planning or enforcement matters. Often these matters are complex and require input from a range of people both within and external to the council.
44. The service is currently implementing an ambitious Planning Improvement Programme which will be making improvements across all areas of planning, through five projects focusing on workforce, ways of working, governance, customer service, and place-shaping. Part of this work will be looking at complaints and feedback to help shape future ways of working.
45. The remedy payments recommended by the LGSCO relates to for four different planning applications. All decisions have been shared with staff and the appropriate training undertaken with staff.

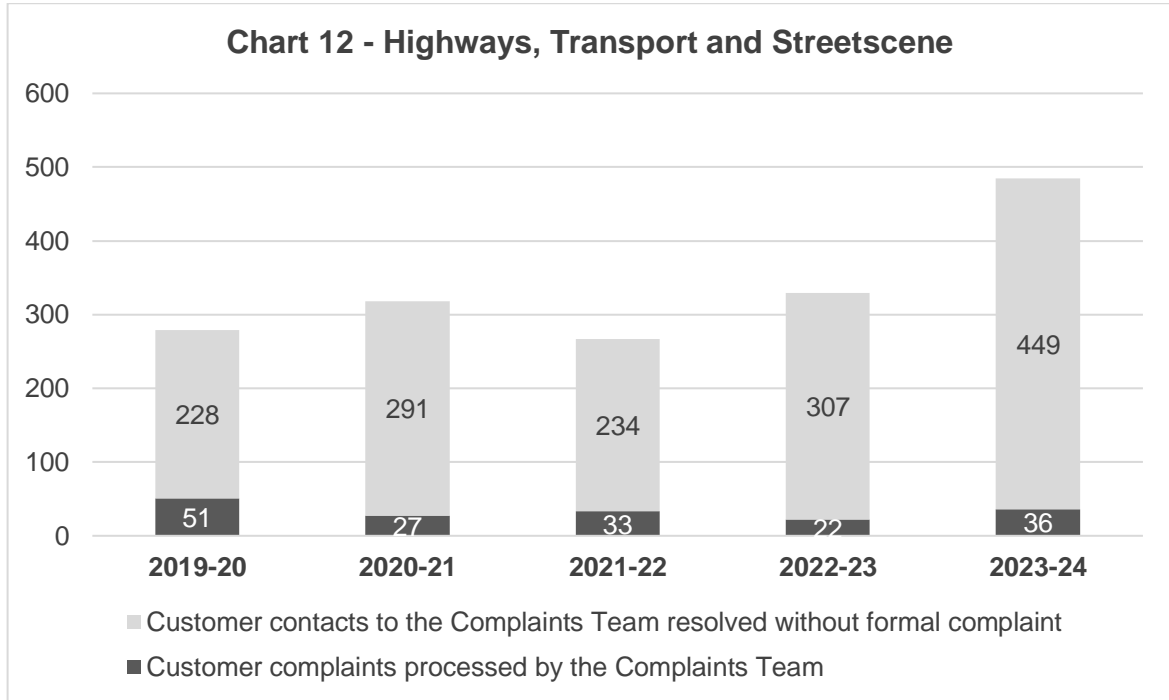
## 5. Families and Children



<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	51 (10% of total / rank 5)
Change since previous year	11% increase
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	29% (rank 4)
Common complaint topics	Safeguarding 58% MASH 22%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	112 (7%)
Change since previous year	2% increase
<b>LGSCO referrals</b> (figures also include <a href="#">Education &amp; Skills</a> )	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant	22 (rank 1)
Change since 2022-23	41% decrease
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	36% (rank 1)

46. An analysis of complaints within the Families and Children evidences strong performance within the service although there has been a 2% increase since 2022-23 in overall volume:
47. Of the 17 complaints considered at Stage 2 of the Procedure, nine were partially upheld and none were fully upheld. Of those nine that were partially upheld, no issues were identified regarding the safeguarding of children or young people or the support provided to families.
48. In terms of overall learning from these complaints, there were a few examples of slight inaccuracies of personal information within several assessments. However these did not impact upon services received, safeguarding of children or the quality of practice for the children and families we support.
49. The service is proactive in responding to concerns that arise and operational managers are skilled and confident in having one-to-one discussions with service users. This prevents a large number of issues from escalating to become formal complaints.

## 6. Highways, Transport and Streetscene



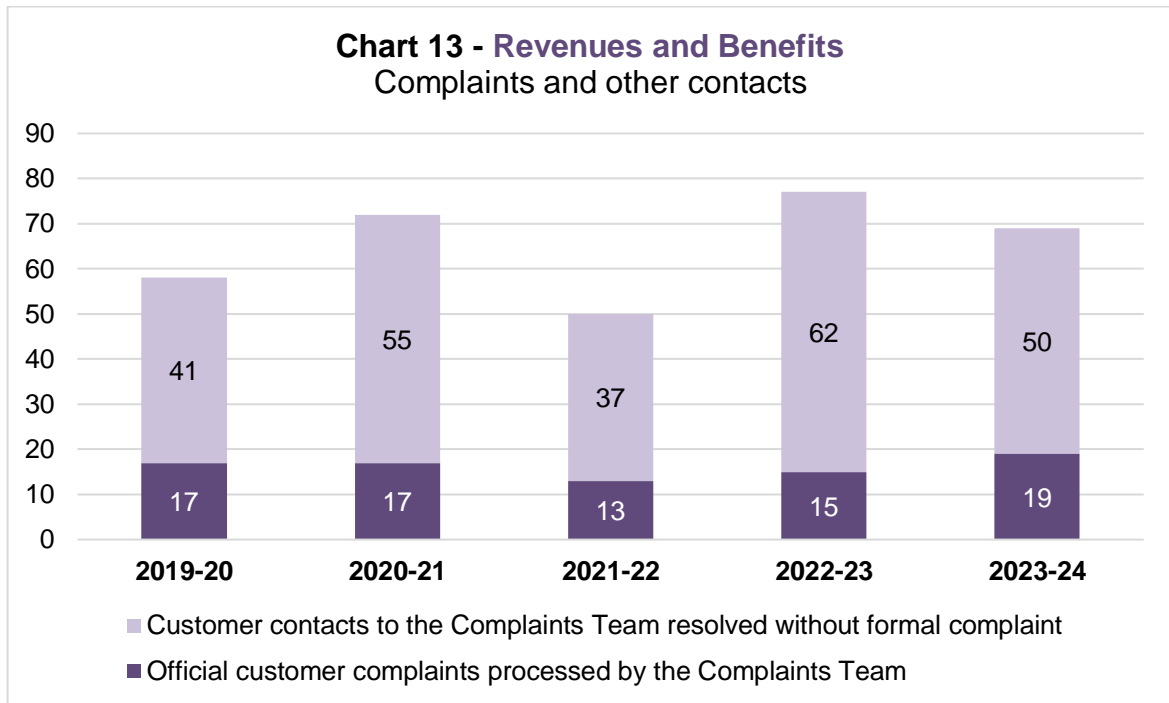
<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	36 (7% of total / rank 6)
Change since previous year	No change
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	28% (rank 5)
Common complaint topics	Highways 46% Public transport 33%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	449 (26% / rank 1)
Change since previous year	46% increase
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant	10
Change since previous year	60% increase
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	0%

50. The service maintains over 4,400km of road and related infrastructure, along with 6,000km of public rights of way. Prevailing weather conditions of the last two winters have had an extremely detrimental effect on both highway condition and incidence

of flooding. This has meant that customer reports of defects have increased drastically and this is reflected in the number of service requests received. There has been significant increased investment in highways to address the issues raised.

51. Public transport coverage across Wiltshire remains high when compared with other similar local authorities. Many of the complaints received relate to buses not arriving, or arriving late. Shortages of drivers and the availability of resources can affect delivery of passenger transport functions, which can result in increased complaints and continues to be an issue, particularly in the Salisbury area. Other complaints around the condition of bus shelters and bus stops in general continue to be an issue. Where an immediate risk to safety is identified, these are rectified. A programme of identifying and prioritising bus shelter / bus stop condition is underway.
52. Following customer feedback, Highway Operations has reviewed its services, with the following outcomes:
  - Parking Services the replacement of parking machines is underway providing more a more reliable service, but also allowing all forms of payments to be undertaken;
  - Increased funding has allowed increased cleansing and enforcement of waste offences.
  - All the council's public electric vehicle charging points have been replaced.
  - Increased community support in partnership with its Streetscene contractor idverde.
  - Increased, and award winning, awareness cleansing campaigns.
  - Changes to services to meet the local demands, including more sweeping, weed treatment and grounds maintenance.
  - More local street scene service provision directly through the local town and parish councils to allow a more focused delivery, including the transfer of services in Trowbridge and working with Westbury Town Council for a delegation in 2025.

## 7. Revenues and Benefits

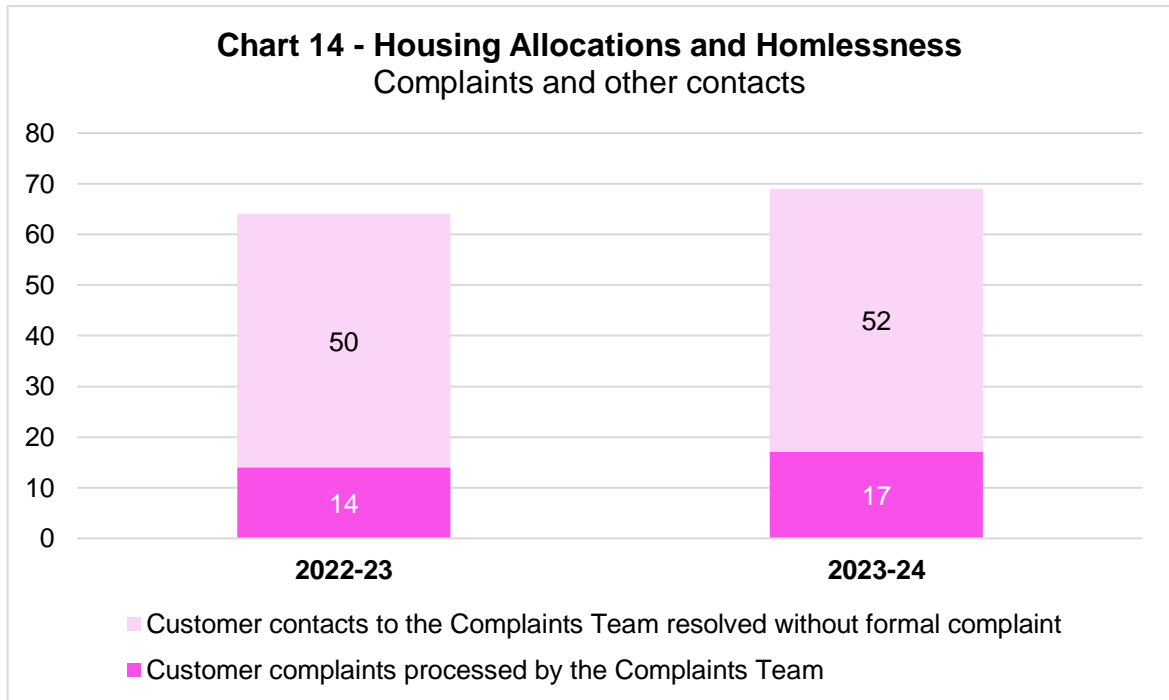


<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	19 (4% of total)
Change since previous year	20% increase
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	44% (rank 2)
Common complaint topics	Council tax / NDRs 83%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	50 (3%)
Change since previous year	19% decrease

53. The increase in complaints is consistent with the additional support schemes that the team had to deliver in response to the Cost of Living crisis; specifically the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) and Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) scheme, which were both complex to administer, delivered at short notice and drew resources away from business-as-usual work. Ensuring households received the support they needed was often complicated, leading customers to question and challenge decisions. These schemes ended mid-way through the financial year when the team was able to focus on its core business.

54. The Service continues to receive complaints in respect of payment of council tax and the administration of benefit claims and faces a growing challenge from a small number of customers who persistently dispute their liability to paying council tax. It is hoped that with fewer support schemes to deliver the number of complaints will fall in 2024-25.

## 8. Housing Allocations and Homelessness

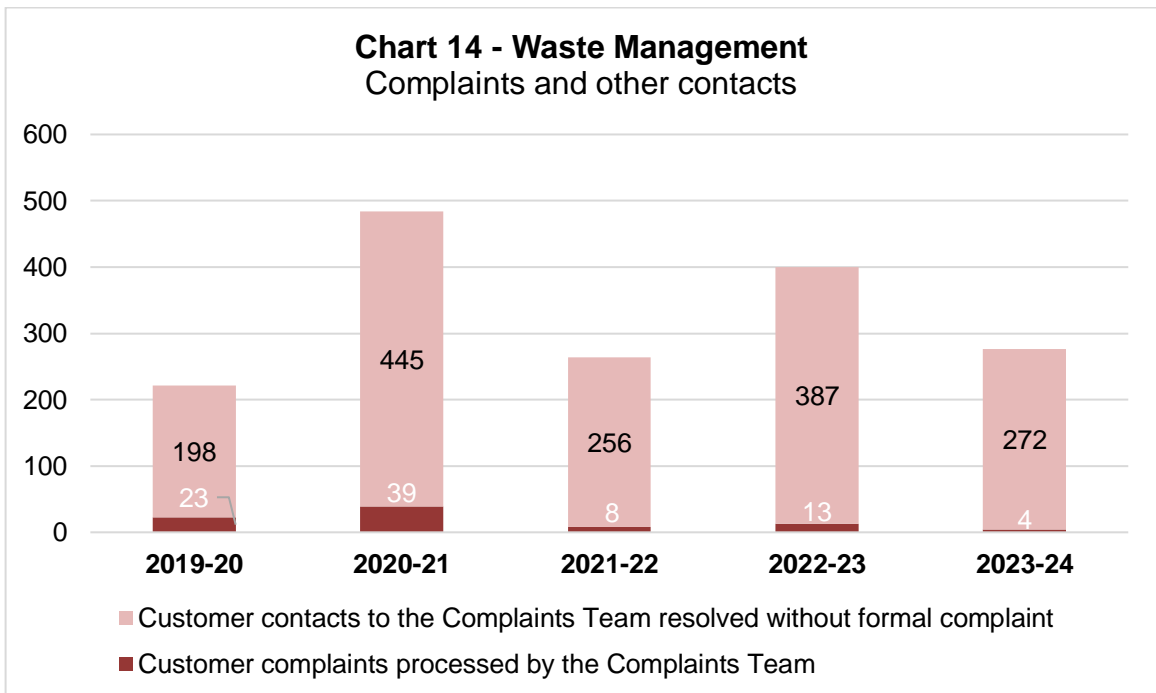


<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	17 (3% of total)
Change since previous year	21% increase
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	18% (rank 7)
Common complaint topics	Homelessness 53% Allocations 47%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	52 (3% of total)
Change since previous year	4% increase
Share of service requests received by the council	3%
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant	10

Change since previous year	25% increase
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	10%

55. The small increase in complaints is much lower than the significant increase in demand that Housing Allocations and Homelessness continues to see due to continued issues associated with cost of living, domestic abuse and Section 21 notices asking families to leave their homes. We have also seen an increase in the complexity of the people requiring housing services, which is having additional impact on the department. It is also reassuring that 75% of the contacts with the Complaints team have been handled as service requests without the need to process a formal complaint.

## 9. Waste Management



<b>Complaints</b>	
Number of complaints received	4 (1% of total)
Change since previous year	69% decrease
% upheld or partially upheld by the council	0%
<b>Service requests</b>	
Number of service requests received	272 (rank 2)



Change since previous year	30% decrease
Share of service requests received by the council	16%
<b>LGSCO referrals</b>	
Complaints referred to LGSCO by complainant <sup>7</sup>	1
Change since previous year	83% decrease
Complaints upheld by LGSCO 2023-24	0%

56. Waste Services regularly transact with every Wiltshire household, typically providing over 1 million collections of waste, recycling and garden waste every month. Whilst most households receive a regular collection of residual waste and dry recycling, around 35% of Wiltshire households also choose to subscribe to an optional garden waste collection service, which is subject to an annual charge.
57. The service regularly monitors the level of ‘successfully completed scheduled collections’ achieved by our contractors, Hills Municipal Collections Ltd, and for 2023-24 this was 99.89%. The high level of service delivery and reliability will have made a considerable contribution to the reduced number of service requests and the very low number of complaints. In addition, the systems that support the annual renewal of chargeable garden waste subscriptions have worked well, with subscribers now better versed in the need to open a My Wilts account before renewing their garden waste subscription and far fewer service issues arising from this than in the previous year.
58. The service is also responsible for the management and processing of all waste collected, including the operation of ten household recycling centres (HRCs) across the county, which typically generate around 1 million visits per year by Wiltshire residents. The figures shown in the report therefore need to be considered in the context of the scope and scale of all the services provided, plus the significant public and media interest that they attract. It is therefore pleasing to see the decrease in contacts compared with the previous year.
59. During 2023-24, Waste Services also implemented two public-facing initiatives that may have been expected to drive additional contacts, both under the “Recycling - Let's Sort It!” campaign banner. Firstly, from April 2023 a project aimed at improving the quality of materials presented by residents for kerbside recycling was launched, whereby recycling bins are now “rejected” where the contents are seen to be badly contaminated with non-recyclable items. Also from October last year, residents using the HRCs have been encouraged to sort their waste before arrival to ensure more waste is recycled at the sites. Where mixed waste has not been separated, sorting tables are now provided to allow residents to do this necessary material

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<sup>7</sup> Includes all complaints tagged by the LGSCO as regarding ‘Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation’

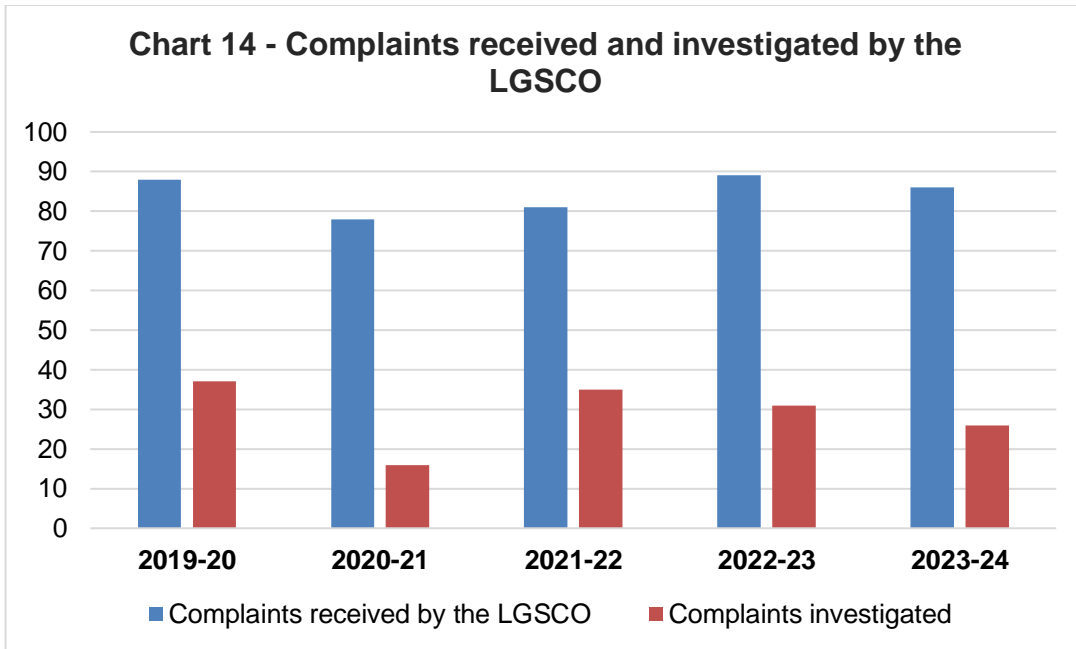
separation on site. Both schemes were actively supported by a targeted educational and promotional campaign, jointly developed by the service and Communications colleagues, and which was later nationally recognised after winning a national Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) award for “best local authority recycling campaign”. The service credits this education campaign, backed up by resident engagement by the Waste Technical Officers and Engagement Officer, with ensuring that service users were informed of changes and supported with relevant information regarding why these new interventions were necessary, and therefore limiting unnecessary contact in the form of complaints.

### **Ombudsmen findings**

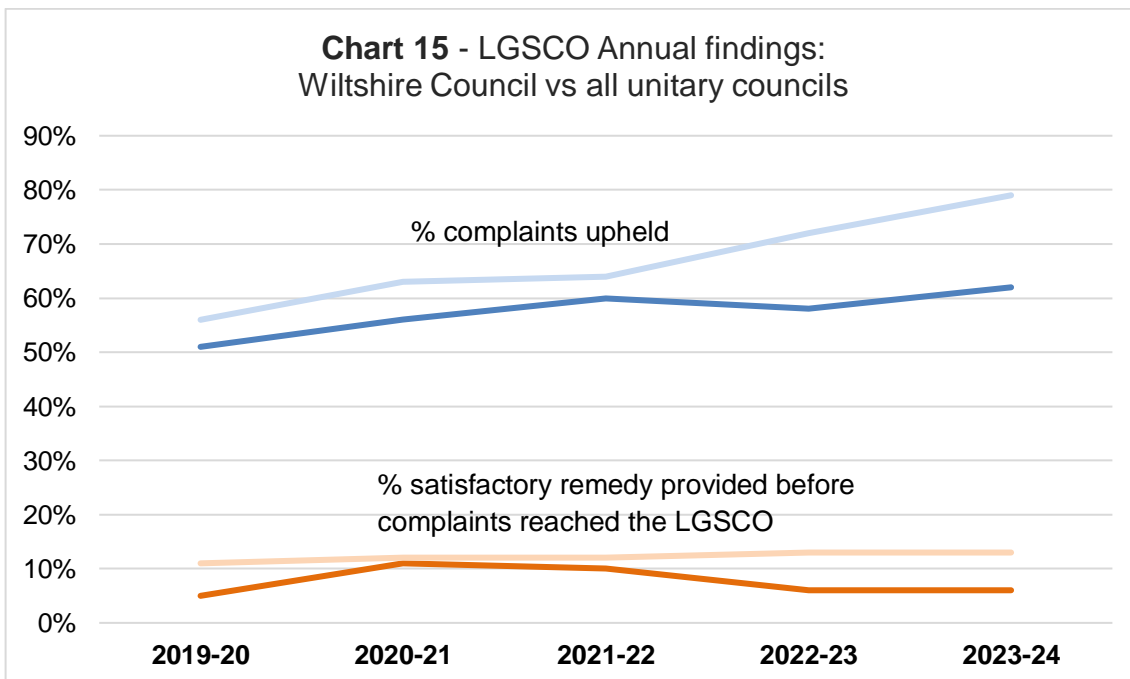
60. When residents are not satisfied with a local authority’s handling of, or response to, a complaint, they can ask the [Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#) (LGSCO) to consider the matter. When the complaint relates to the local authority’s responsibilities as a housing landlord, the complaint should be referred to the [Housing Ombudsman](#). When the complaint relates to pensions, it should be referred to the [Pensions Ombudsman](#). Normally, the appropriate Ombudsman will only consider complaints when all stages of the local authority’s complaints procedure have been completed.

### **Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)**

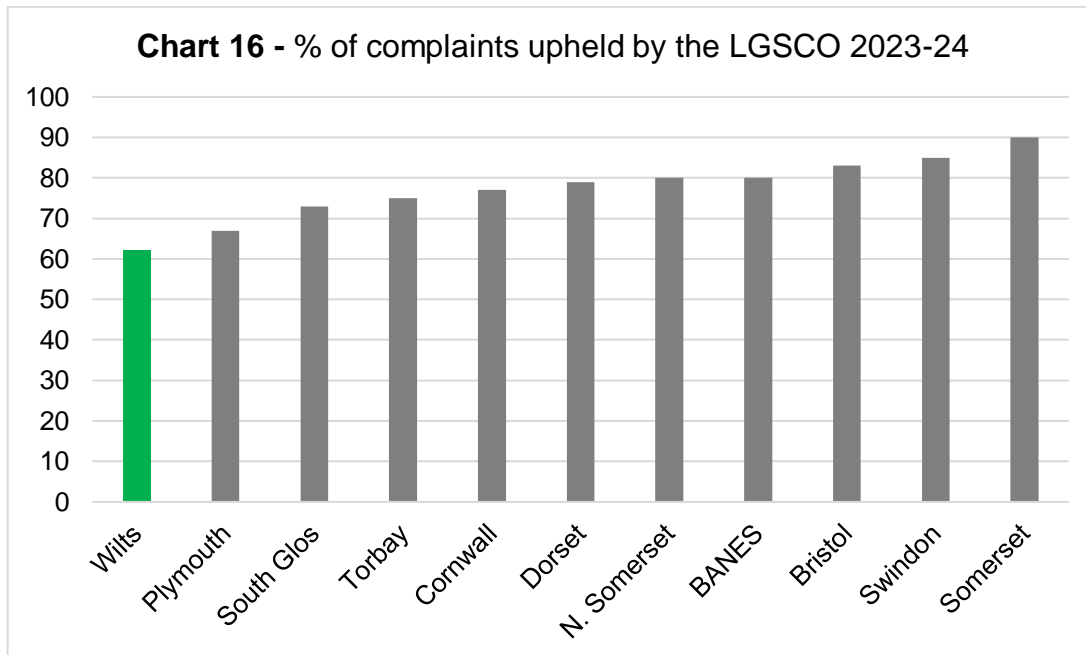
61. The LGSCO produces an review letter each year providing a summary of the complaints made to the LGSCO regarding every council, and the LGSCO’s findings in relation to those complaints that they investigated. The council’s 2023-24 letter and all previous letters are available on the LGSCO website ([link](#)).
62. In 2023-24, the LGSCO received 86 complaints regarding the council a slight **decrease** on the total received in 2022-23 (89) (see **Chart 14**).
63. Of the 86 complaints received, the LGSCO decided to investigate 26, a **decrease** on the number investigated in 2022-23 (31).



64. 62% of investigated complaints about the council were upheld by the LGSCO (16 of 26 investigations) (see **Chart 15**). This is:
- A small **increase** on the **percentage** upheld in 2022-23 (58%).
  - A **decrease** on the actual **number** upheld in 2022-23 (18).
  - **Better** than the average of 79% upheld against **unitary councils** nationally.
  - The **lowest** percentage of all unitary councils within the South West region (see **Chart 16**).



Light lines = unitary council average



65. In 100% of the complaints about the council that the LGSCO upheld and made recommendations about (16), the council complied with all LGSCO recommendations.

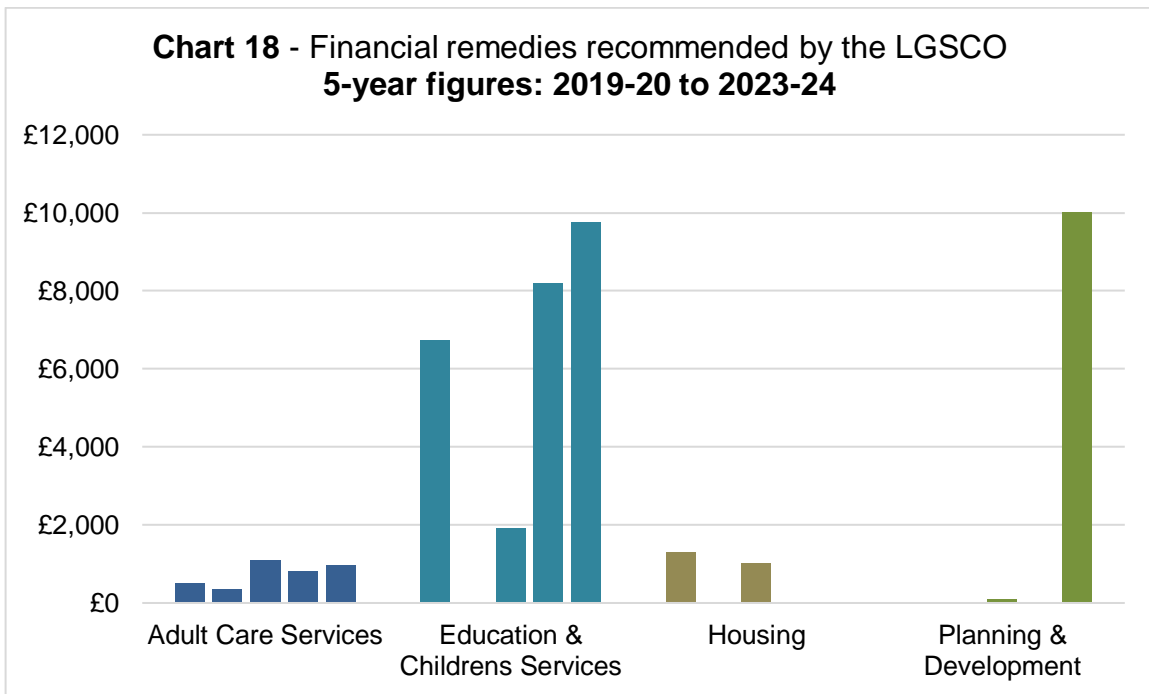
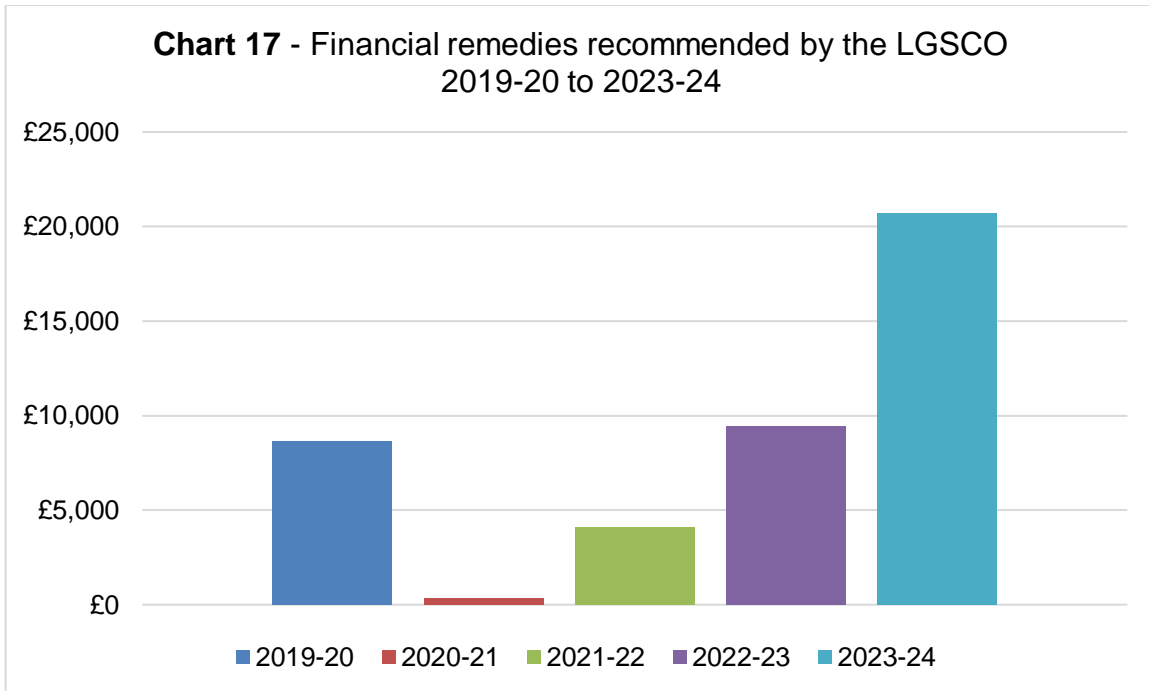
- This maintains the 100% shown for the past five years.
- This matches the 100% shown for all unitary councils.

66. In 6% of complaints the LGSCO upheld (1 of 18), the council had already provided a satisfactory remedy **before** the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

- This is the **same** as in 2022-23 (6%).
- This is **lower** than the 13% figure for all unitary councils nationally.
- Due to the low numbers involved, 13% compared with 6% represents only **one** additional satisfactory remedy.

67. Of the 16 complaints upheld by the LGSCO, 7 were regarding delays in the issuing or implementation of Education, Health and Care Plans (requiring £9,750 of remedial payments to complainants). 5 were regarding 'Planning and Development' (requiring 4 payments totalling £10,000 – see paragraph 45).

68. The total remedial payments required by the LGSCO was £20,700, an increase of 119% on the previous year (see **Charts 16 and 17**). National data on the remedy payments made by local authorities is not produced by the LGSCO so comparisons are difficult. However, it is reported that in 2023-24, Surrey County Council (which serves a population roughly double that of Wiltshire), paid £540,000 in remedial payments.



## Housing Ombudsman

69. The Housing Ombudsman publishes annual landlord performance reports only for landlords with **five or more cases**. For 2023-24, the Housing Ombudsman did not investigate any complaints about the council.

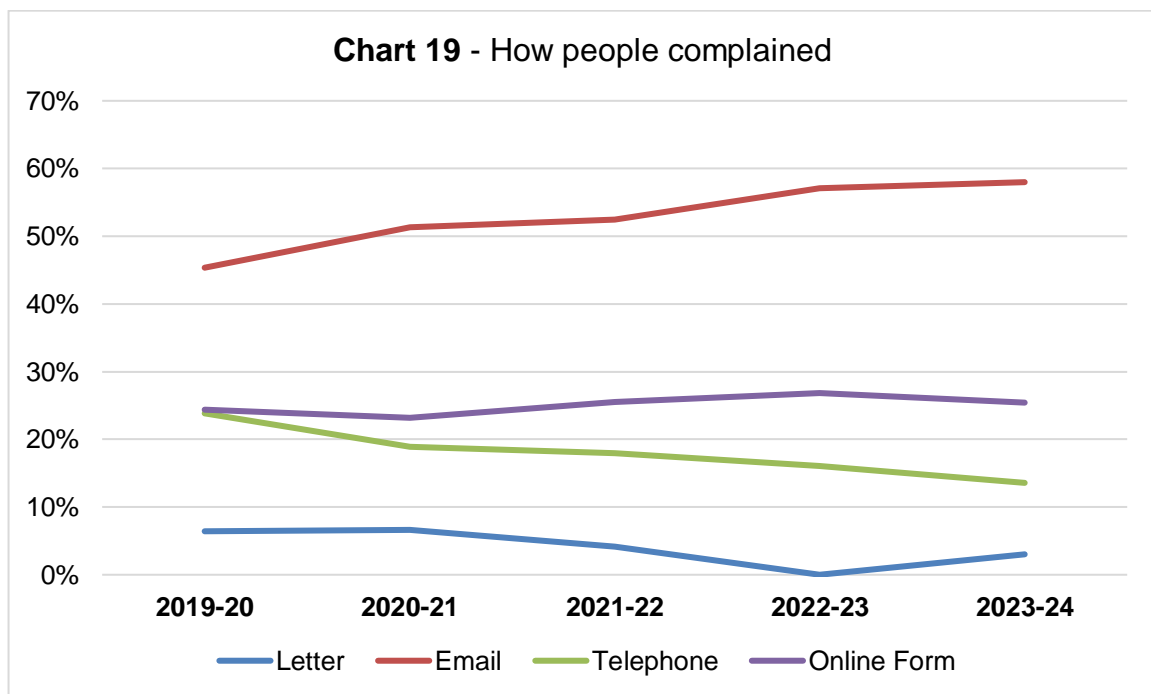
70. The Housing Ombudsman requires member landlords like the council to comply with its Complaint Handling Code ([link](#)), to promote its Scheme ([link](#)) and to conduct an annual self-assessment against the Code ([link](#)).

### **Pensions Ombudsman**

71. In 2023-24, no complaints about the council in regard to pensions were considered by the Pensions Ombudsman.

### **How people complained**

72. **Chart 19** shows that email continues to be the most popular method of submitting a complaint. No complaints were made in person.



## **Contact**

If you would like further information, please contact Wiltshire Council's Complaints team:

Email: [complaints@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@wiltshire.gov.uk) Tel: 01225 718400

## **Further information**

- Wiltshire Council Complaints webpage ([link](#))
- Wiltshire Council's corporate Complaints Procedure ([link](#))
- Making a complaint about Adult Social Care ([link](#))
- Children's social care: getting the best from complaints ([link](#)) (guide to the statutory Children's complaint procedure)
- LGSCO Annual Review Letters for Wiltshire Council ([link](#))
- Housing Ombudsman ([link](#)), its Complaint Handling Code ([link](#)) and Scheme ([link](#))
- Wiltshire Council's Self-Assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code ([link](#))
- Pensions Ombudsman ([link](#))