

Customer Feedback Annual Report

Children's Services

2023/24

Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council
September 2024



1. Introduction

The report covers Children's Services formal feedback and representations for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. The report details the comments, compliments and complaints reported to, and formally recorded by Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team. The annual report is designed as a public document, and in addition to annual reporting, regular internal reporting is carried out. This regular monitoring of formal feedback enables any issues to be addressed early and focuses attention on ongoing improvement.

The Children's Act 1989 and NHS and the Community Care Act 1990 require all local authorities with social services responsibilities in England and Wales to have a complaints procedure. 'Getting the Best from Complaints' provides guidance for local authorities on implementing the Children's Act. This report is produced in line with national guidance.

Statutory complaints relate to the provision of social care and are handled in line with the national regulations referred to above. These statutory complaints follow the Council's Statutory Complaints Procedure for children's services, the key stages of which are set out in section 2 of this report: stage 1 - local resolution; stage 2 – investigation; stage 3 - review panel and section 4 - referral to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Few complaints progress through multiple stages of the procedure, and Shropshire Council aims to provide thorough investigations and responses at stage 1 and 2.

The remainder of complaints for Children's Services fall under the Council's corporate complaints procedure, for example these may be complaints about educational improvement services, a support service or administrative process rather than social care. Corporate complaints are investigated at stage 1, reviewed at stage 2 and customers may choose to progress their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman as a final stage. You can find out more in the Council's Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report.

You can give us your views in several different ways. Please use the one that suits you best. If you are a child you can make the complaint yourself, request an advocate or ask an adult you trust to make a complaint on your behalf. You can:

- Speak to a member of staff
- Telephone Customer Services
- Email: customerfeedback@shropshire.gov.uk
- Fill in the form on the Council's website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback>

Complaint

We aim to make it as easy as possible to make a complaint. A complaint is a written or verbal expression of dissatisfaction about a service provided. Family members and advocates may also make a complaint on behalf of one of our customers. We will ask for consent to ensure that the complaint is not being made against the customer's wishes.

Compliment

Many people get in touch with a compliment when the information or support they have received has exceeded their expectations. It is helpful to learn when a service has been provided well or when a member of staff has done a great job. We like to recognise compliments alongside any complaints. It is good for us to say 'thank you' to our teams and staff members too.

Comment

Feedback about a service could be:

- a suggestion to improve it.
- a question as to whether something could be done differently.
- an idea for delivering a service differently.

2. The Children's Complaints Process (Statutory)

Feedback Received

Shropshire Council encourages children, parents, carers and others to give feedback and highlight any concerns so that they may be addressed as quickly as possible. Children can speak to someone they trust such as a social worker, teacher or other adult. Support is also available from complaints officers based within Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team.

Telephone: 0345 678 9000

Email: customerfeedback@shropshire.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback/children-and-young-peoples-complaints/>

Online: Log into the My Shropshire portal



Acknowledgment

Complaints will be acknowledged within 3 working days of being received and we let the complainant know how their complaint will be handled.



STAGE 1

The Statutory Complaints Officer or a colleague will contact the appropriate team manager within Children's Services and ask them to investigate the complaint. The complainant will be provided with a written response within 10 days for statutory complaints (sometimes we may have to ask for longer if the issues are more complex and may need 20 working days to complete the investigation). If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the complaint response, they may request to go to stage 2.



STAGE 2 - Review

If a complaint is not resolved at Stage 1, and the complainant or their representative remains dissatisfied with the investigation or response, an external Independent Investigating Officer and an external Independent Person are commissioned by Children's Services to further investigate the complaint.

The Investigating Officer and Independent Person will aim to produce a report within 25 working days. However, if the case is complex, they can have a maximum of 65 days in which to produce their reports. Once the reports have been finalised, they are sent to the adjudication officer (usually the Head of the Service) who will, after careful consideration of the reports, provide the complainant with a written response to the complaint.



STAGE 3 - Panel

If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the decision/outcome following the independent investigation, they can ask to have their complaint reviewed by a Complaints Review Panel. The Complaints Review Panel is made up of three external people who will review the complaint, but they will not reinvestigate or consider new complaints. The complainant can attend the panel meeting if they choose to and can bring a friend or someone they can trust.



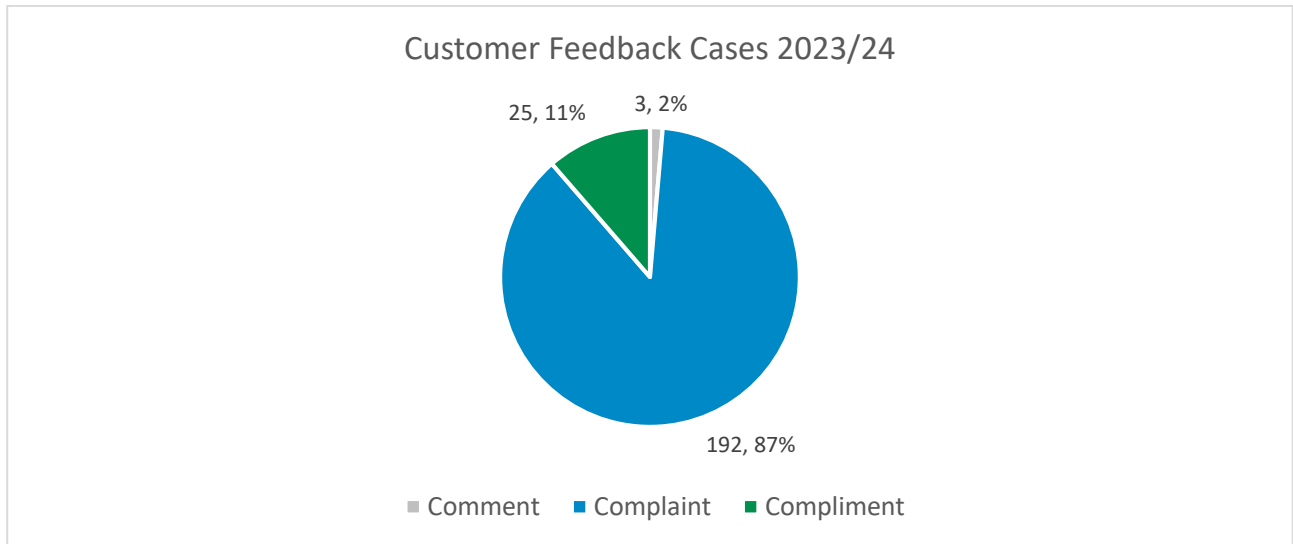
Ombudsman If a complaint cannot be resolved locally it can be investigated by the Ombudsman. The Council has a timescale of 28 calendar days to provide a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). Responses are often complex, lengthy and require a large volume of appendices to be collated, catalogued and returned to the LGO. Complainants can request to go to the Ombudsman after stage 2.

The Shropshire Council Annual Customer feedback report includes a similar diagram to outline the corporate complaints process: stage 1 - investigation, stage 2 – review, final stage - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

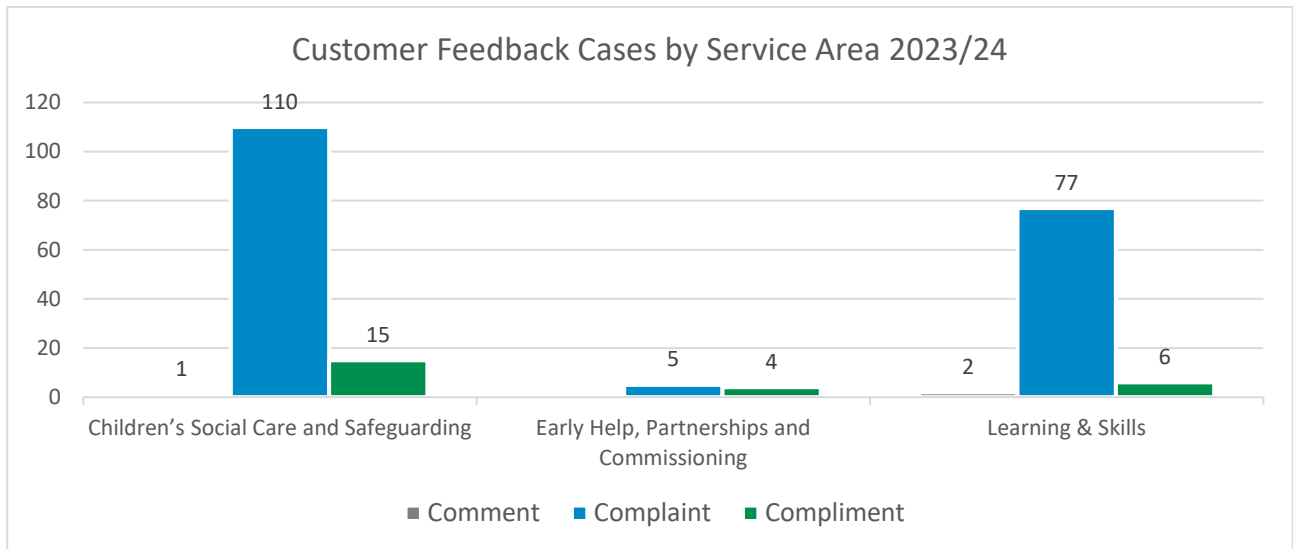
3. Customer Feedback 2023/24

In 2023/24 there were 220 cases of feedback recorded for Children’s Services. There were:

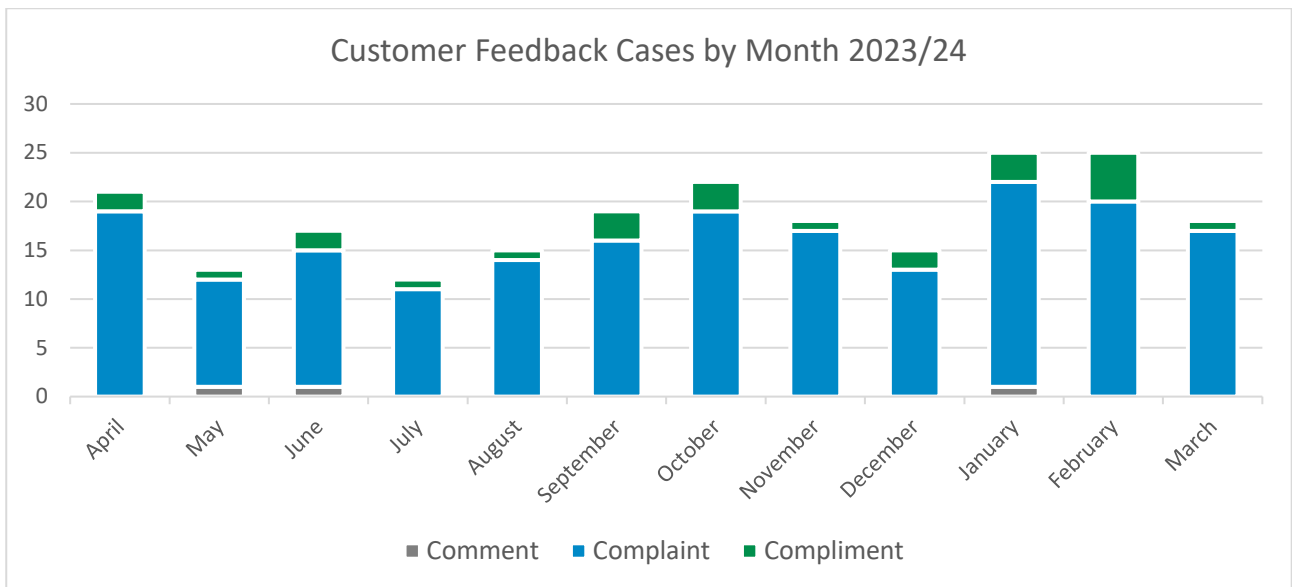
- 25 compliments
- 3 comments or other types of enquiry
- 192 complaint cases



The chart below illustrates how this feedback was spread across service areas. The chart shows that children’s social care and safeguarding, as the largest area of service provision, receives more feedback.



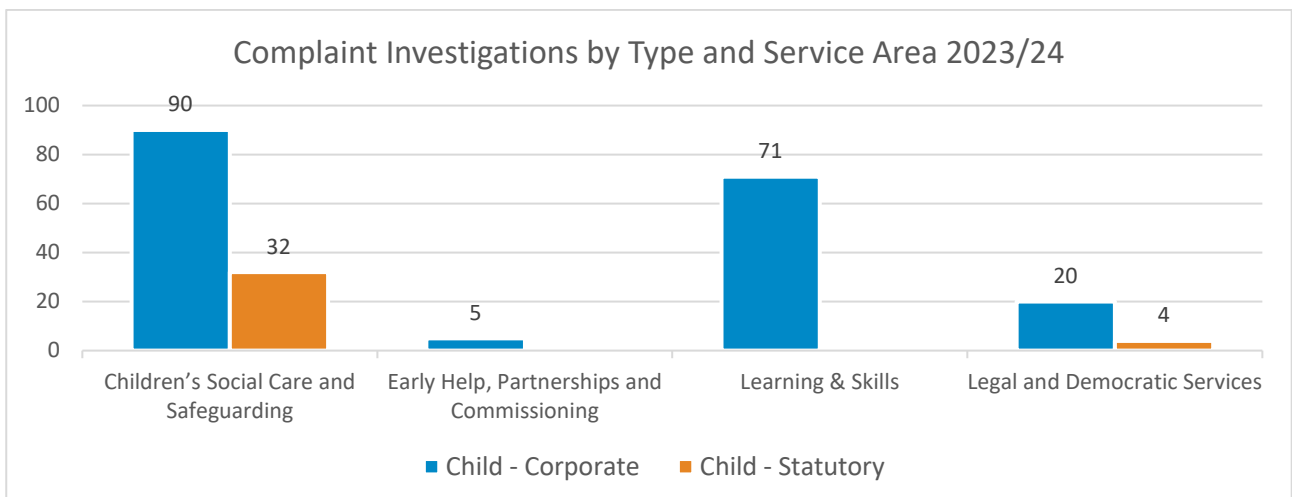
The average number of customer feedback responses recorded per month during 2023/24 was 12 (the same average as last year). October, January and February saw higher than average cases of feedback, a very different pattern to the year before. May and July were the months with the least feedback. Monthly feedback volumes were greater in quarter 4 (quarter 4 is often the quarter with the greatest volumes of feedback).



Most customer feedback recorded takes the form of complaints rather than comments or compliments (this may be due to recording practice, with staff members less likely to more formally report a compliment). Of all the customer feedback recorded, 87% of cases were complaints.

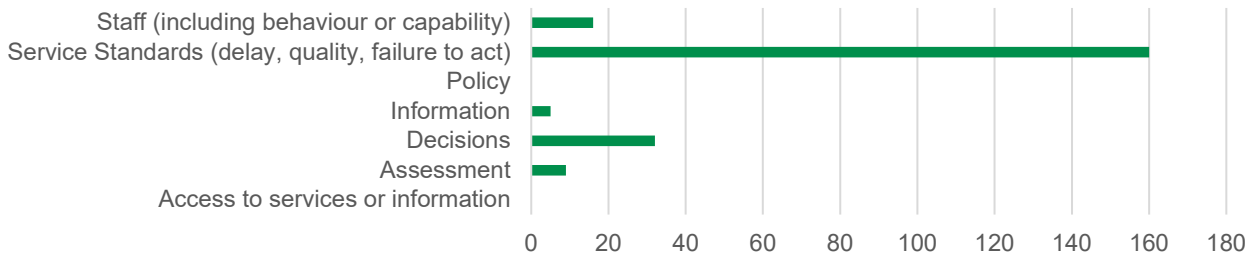
Complaints are considered in more detail at the investigation stage and the data we use to consider performance is based on information captured within complaint investigations. There were 192 complaint cases and 222 complaint investigations (a small number of complaints were withdrawn or closed prior to investigation and other cases covered multiple teams/services and multiple stages of the process, so resulted in more than one investigation).

Of the 222 complaint investigations carried out within the year, 186 were corporate (84% of all complaints investigations) and 36 were statutory complaints (16%). 193 were stage 1 complaints. It should be noted that these totals are very slightly higher than the council wide corporate annual report (due to differences in the way this is reported and due to small number of late cases reported). The process on page 3 highlights the statutory complaints process and timescales for children’s services.



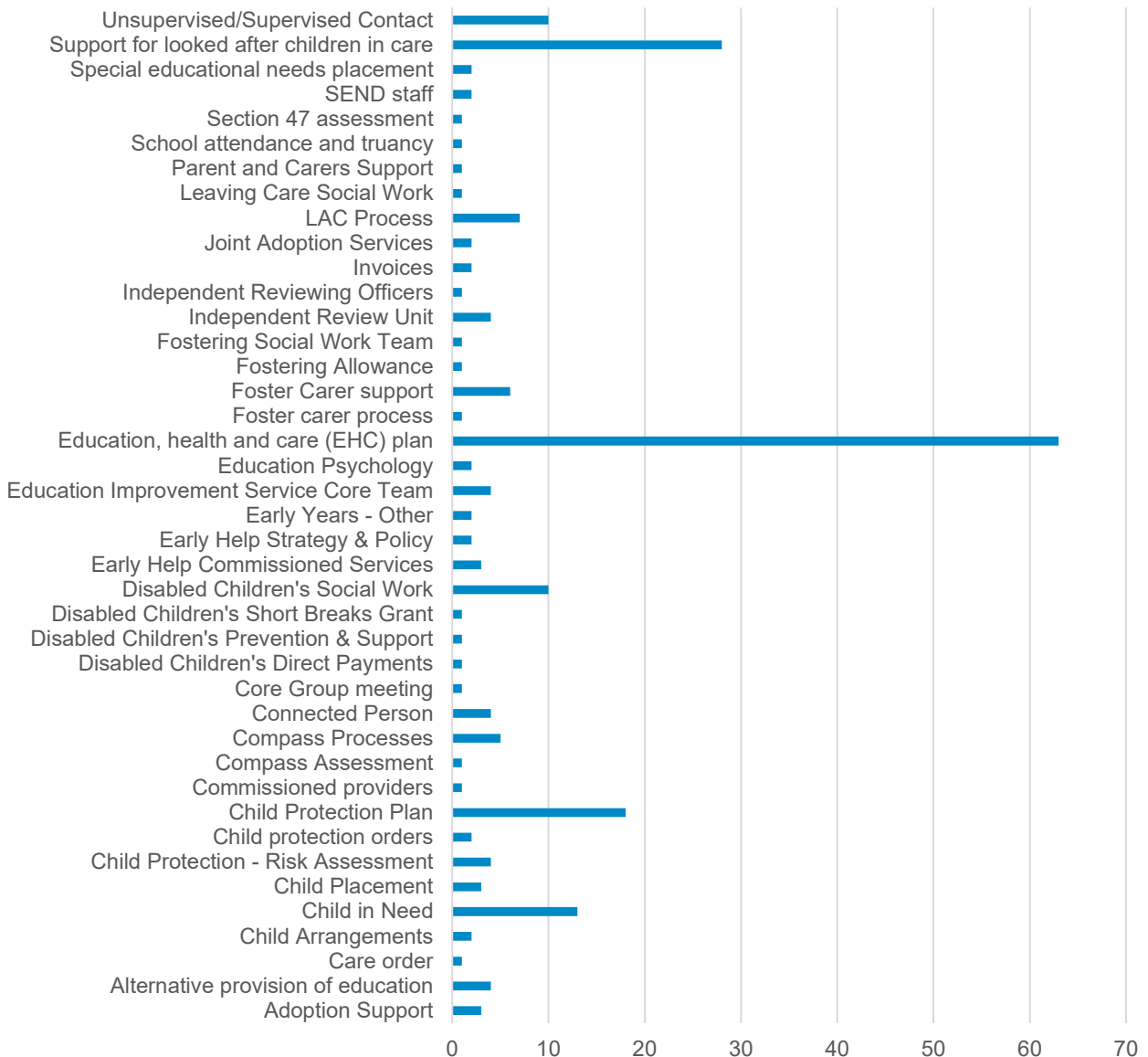
The main problem category for complaints received during 2023/24 were concerns relating to service standards, this includes sub-categories covering poor quality of work/service, failure to provide a service/take action, communication (failure/poor), delays, poor customer care and concerns over inappropriate/ incorrect action. There weren’t any complaints related to policy or access to services or information during the year, and very few complaints related to assessment. This suggests good performance in these areas.

Complaints by main problem category 2023/24



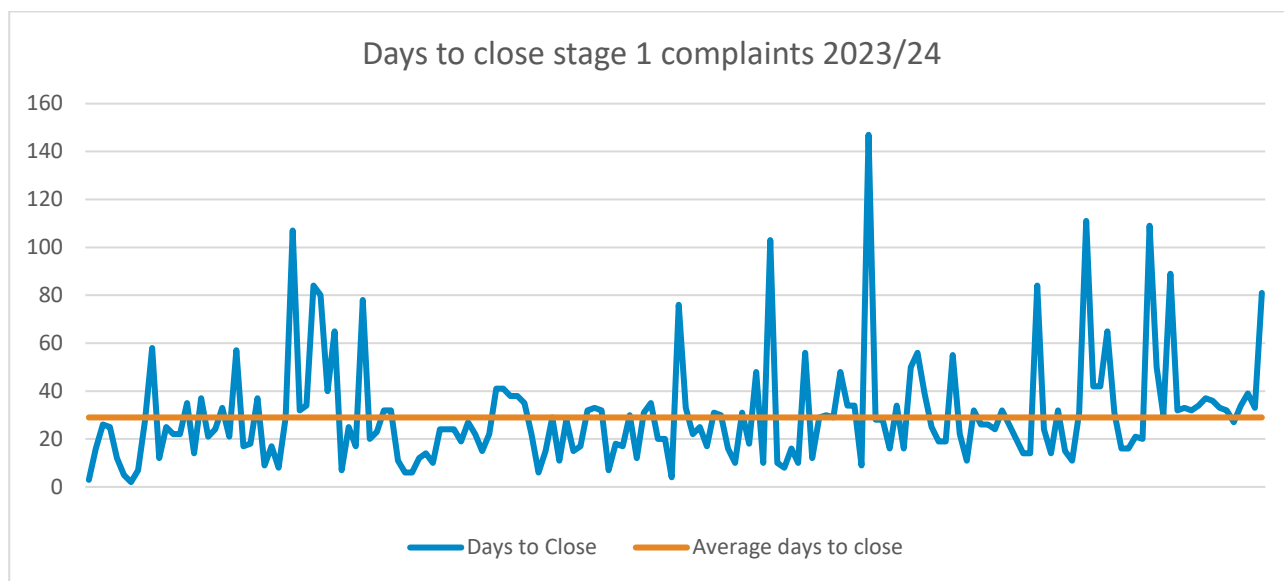
In addition to 'problem category' recording, work also takes place to try and determine themes within complaints. These themes can support proactive work to address concerns early and try to minimise numbers of complaints on similar topics. There are a large number of different themes due to the huge range of different services offered by Children's Services. The chart below displays the themes recorded for Children's Services complaints in 2023/24 with more common themes including Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans, support for looked after children in care, Child Protection Plans, Child in Need, unsupervised/supervised contact and disabled children's social work.

Complaints by theme 2023/24



The data highlights that there are repeat complainants making regular complaints and remaining in touch with Shropshire Council over long periods of time. There can be challenges managing these cases when customers have been responded to but remain persistent on the same/similar issues. 43 of the complaints were made by customers with more than one complaint for investigation. 8 of the complainants required 4 or more complaint investigations during the year.

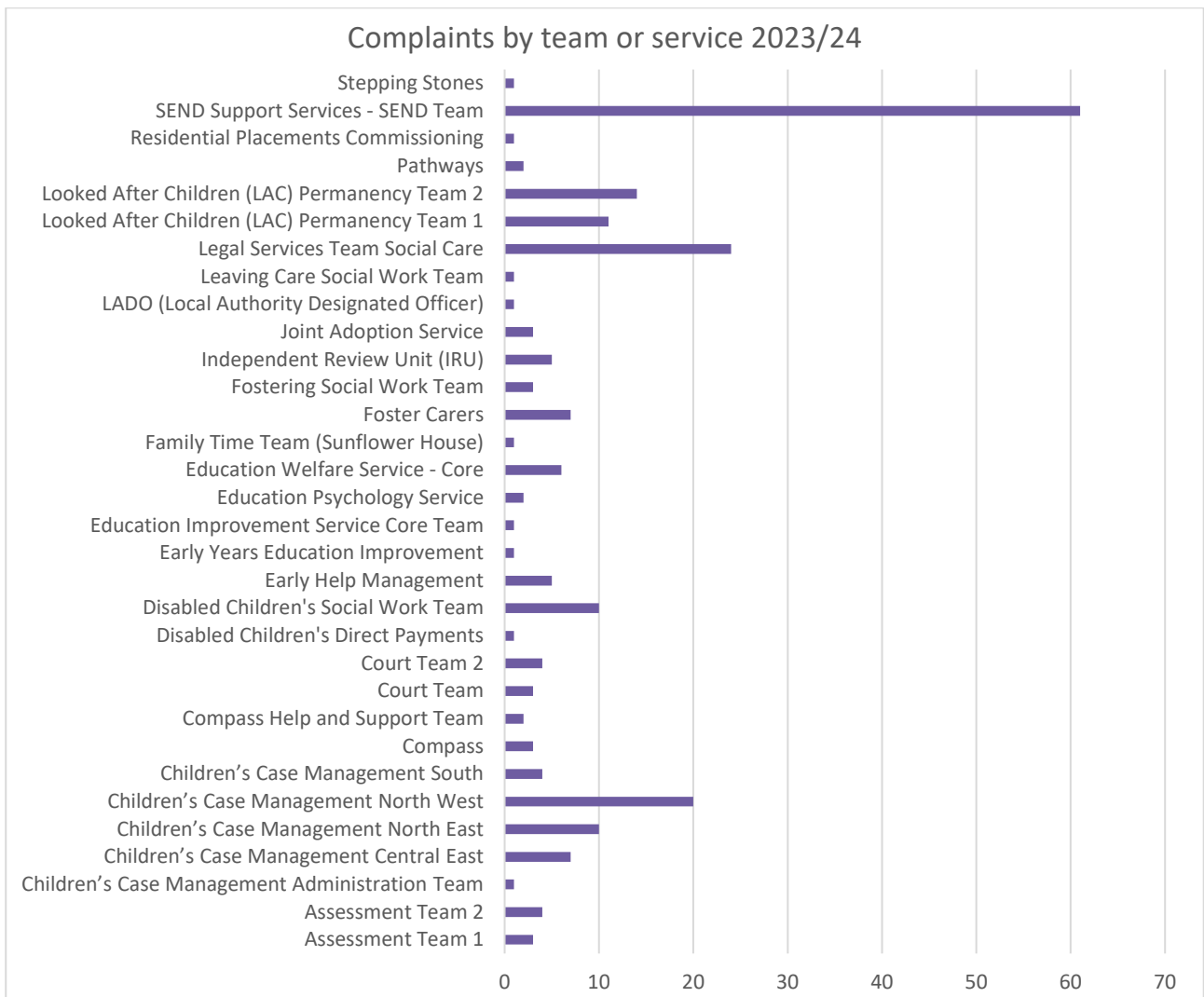
During 2023/24 Children's Services took an average of 29 days to close all stage 1 complaints. Corporate complaints took an average of 30 days to close (just on the 30 working days timescale). Statutory complaints took an average of 18 days to close suggesting that too many cases extended beyond the initial 10 working days timescale. Over the last year, days to close performance has been an area of focus within regular performance monitoring. Improvement is evident over the last 12 months of data for Children's Services. Performance will continue to be monitored.



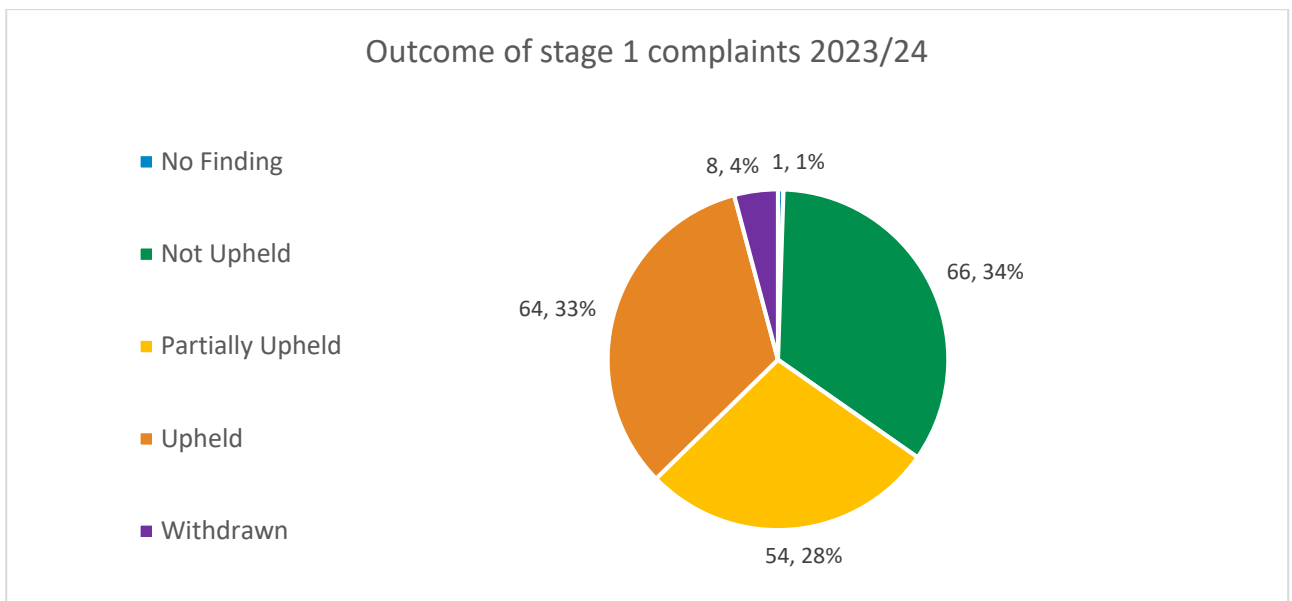
The analysis of complaints by team highlights that complaints are largely spread across teams (as are compliments) but some teams/ services (perhaps those with more complex services and policy) do see more complaints.

In line with a nationally reported trend, Shropshire Council has seen an increase in complaints for Special Education Needs and Disabilities services (SEND) (27% of the Children's Services complaints in 2023/24). The complaint allocated to Legal Services will have been at stage 2 of the corporate complaints process. Children's Case Management Teams, due to the nature of their work handled 42 of the complaints within the year.

It has been an ongoing pattern within internal performance monitoring to see more complaints for the north of the county (for children's case management social work) compared to the south. The chart on the following page highlights how the volumes of complaints are spread across teams and services.



In addition to numbers of cases and time to respond, it is very important to consider the outcome of the complaints made. Of the 193 stage 1 complaint investigations closed within the year 33% were upheld, 28% were partially upheld and 34% were not upheld. Other complaints were withdrawn or resulted in no recorded outcome.



Shropshire Council's data shows that during 2023/24 there were 33 complaints relating to looked after children. During the year 2 complaints were made by children themselves.

In addition to understanding the outcome of stage 1 complaints it is important to consider how many complaints progress beyond stage 1. During 2023/24, 29 complaint cases progressed beyond stage 1 to stage 2 and 4 were considered by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. More cases are progressing beyond stage 1 compared to the previous year. A few cases had to be escalated to stage 2 because the complaint was overdue or not completed at stage 1. This is being closely monitored and actively addressed by the Assistant Director for Children's Social Care.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's report for 2023/24 considers complaints referred to the Ombudsman within the year (so this will include complaints referred to Shropshire Council in the previous year). The Ombudsman received 81 cases and decided on 24. Of the total 81, 19 were for Education and Children's Services. Of those, 6 were upheld and 1 was not upheld. The tables below include a breakdown of overall performance and all outcomes.

Performance

	Education and Children's Services
Number of complaints received	19
Number upheld	6
% of all Shropshire Council complaints for Education and Children's Services	22%
% Education and Children's Services complaints as an average within similar local authorities	26%

Outcome of Decisions Made

Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Detailed Investigations		Grand Total
				Not Upheld	Upheld	
0	5	2	5	1	6	19

4. Annual Comparisons

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<p>Number of compliments – no change</p> <p>In the last financial year (2023/24) Shropshire Council received 25 compliments for Children’s Services, the same number as the year before. This marks a reduction compared to 2021/22.</p>	39	25	25
	Performance dropped in 2022/23 compared to previous years and numbers have been maintained in 2023/24.		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<p>Number of complaint investigations – increased</p> <p>The number of complaint investigations for Children’s Services has increased with 222 in 2023/24 compared to 180 in 2022/23. Case numbers were lower. The complexity of complaints has increased, with more requiring multiple investigations, either at stage 1 or because they progress beyond stage 1. Numbers will continue to be monitored regularly, through the year and through quarterly reporting.</p>	144	180	222
	Children’s Services have seen an increase in the number of complaint investigations, but overall complaint case numbers have not increased significantly.		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<p>Days to close – improved</p> <p>The average number of working days Children’s Services took to respond to stage 1 complaints in 2023/24 was 29 working days (an improvement on the 33.4 working days last year). Complaints investigators report concerns about their ability to meet complaint timescales as a result of workload and service pressures. Average performance has improved with some cases exceeding timescales.</p>	28 working days	33 working days	29 working days
	Days to close performance has improved since last year but monitoring will continue due to an increase in more complex cases.		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<p>Outcome of complaints – upheld rate increased</p> <p>In 2021/22 14% of complaints were upheld this only increased slightly in 2022/23 but the last year has seen a more marked increase in upheld complaints. This is a difficult performance measure because low levels of upheld cases may suggest a reluctance to identify fault and look for learning. Too many cases upheld suggests problems in service delivery. It should be noted that 34% were not upheld.</p>	14%	15%	33%
	There is an increase in upheld complaints. Delays and lack of communication are commonly the cause of fault found within investigations.		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<p>Cases progressing beyond Stage 1 – Increased</p> <p>An increase in the complexity of complaints and an increase in the number of stage 1 complaints being upheld (or including elements of fault) has led to more complaints progressing beyond stage 1 of the statutory children’s and corporate complaints processes. It is essential that stage 2 cases are not generated due to a lack of stage 1 response. In addition, the Ombudsman reported that they considered 19 children’s and education services cases related to Shropshire Council in 2023/24. 6 of the cases were upheld.</p>	8	13	29
	The number of complaints progressing beyond stage 1 has increased.		

5. Example Compliments

Shropshire Council's Children's Services received 25 compliments in 2023/24. Examples of the compliments recorded are shown below.

Compliment for a First Point Of Contact Advisor (after raising a child contact) - *"Many thanks for your support with this matter. You are so amazing with excellent listening and support skills. You definitely made my day."*

Compliment for two fostering social workers and the Fostering Panel - *"I would like to say a big thank you to [name removed] and [name removed] for the support you have given us in fostering. I am just so glad now we have completed the process. I would also like to thank the panel for all their lovely comments, they made me feel quite emotional. Please say a big thank you to all the panel who made us feel welcome and at ease throughout the panel meeting today."*

Compliment for Educational Psychologist – SEN Team. *"We found [name removed] to be extremely professional, understanding and caring with in her manner on a recent telephone call that lasted nearly an hour. She filled us with a lot of confidence after that call. We also feel that she put our fears at rest regarding X's additional needs. We couldn't be any more happy with how the process is progressing"*

Compliment for two Social Workers, Adoption Team - *"Thank you both so much for getting us to this point where the adoption order has been granted for X. Today marks the end of a long 7-year journey to get to this point. I have ended the journey with undoubtedly the two best most wonderful and hardworking social workers that I have worked with by far. It has been a challenging difficult journey to get here but I am very grateful for the help and support you have both given."*

Compliment for a Social Worker, Disabled Children's Team - *"I just wanted to send a note to say how much I appreciate everything you have done for X. I thought of all times with current headlines this would be appreciated. I have a deeper insight than most I'm sure, of the pressures and constraints you all work under and I personally wanted to give my thanks, you replying at 9pm the other night says it all regarding the dedication you have."*

Compliment for SEND Team Manager and Case Officer - *"I just wanted to say thank you for a very positive meeting. Knowing that you are there to support us and work alongside us with the new model has filled us with confidence. Your passion for the children was very clear and this eases our concerns considerably."*

Compliment for Stepping Stones Outreach Worker - *"[Name removed] has been amazing, without her support I would have failed. It just worked and that is why we worked together so long. It wasn't just about support around money and budgeting, it was support for me and someone to talk to. It was important to have someone to talk to. Communication with my son is so much better too, she helped to mediate.... I can talk to my son more now."*

Compliment for Children's Occupational Therapist - *"Thank you so much for all your help. It has really made a difference in our lives."*



6. Example Complaints

Shropshire Council's Children's Services received 192 complaints and carried out 222 complaints investigations during 2023/24. Some example complaints have been included to illustrate the way complaints are received and the nature of the issues raised. All complaints have been anonymised and personal details removed. In some cases, wording may have been changed very slightly to ensure anonymity (with steps taken not to alter the point being made within the complaint). Please note that sometimes complaints arise due to a lack of understanding and not all of the examples below will have been upheld after investigation.

The complaint relates to an adoption decision. The complainant's spouse writes "*[We] wish to make a complaint against the decision not to allow us to proceed to Stage 2 of the Adoption Process. We believe that Mr. [name removed]'s resilience and determination to overcome a series of personal struggles, which were limited to a very short time in his life, should not be used to deny any vulnerable child/ children the chance to thrive in our safe, supportive, and loving home. Neither should the fact that we made a genuine mistake in disclosing a family incident, which we sincerely regret.*"

The customer is caring for their grandchild due to the poor health of the parents. She has been asking for help and support with respite care because her grandchild's behaviour can be very challenging at times. There hasn't been a diagnosis of the cause of the challenging behaviour and this has prevented the allocation of any funding. This is leading to financial concerns. The complaint is related to the lack of financial support available and the length of time it can take for a child to be diagnosed.

A complaint has been made following concerns that a social worker has been repeatedly cancelling contact time appointments at very short notice. The complainant writes "*This is unjust and unfair to both me and my daughter who both look forward to our contact sessions. Not only this but she has not once given me updated information on my daughter's school, performances or life in general. I feel this is having an extremely negative effect on our bond and connection*".

"I would like to make a formal complaint about my child's direct payments being stopped. I have been left without payment ...I was assured by my social worker that my payments wouldn't be stopped due to me struggling to keep on top of the paperwork due to caring for my son with very little respite."

The complaint is regarding an overdue Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The complainant writes "*[the] EHCP is still at the draft stage and communication is still almost impossible. When a case officer who is dealing with [name removed]'s case is away on leave I'm left with no one else who can help with my enquiries; I have now been left in limbo again as the current case officeris on leave.*"

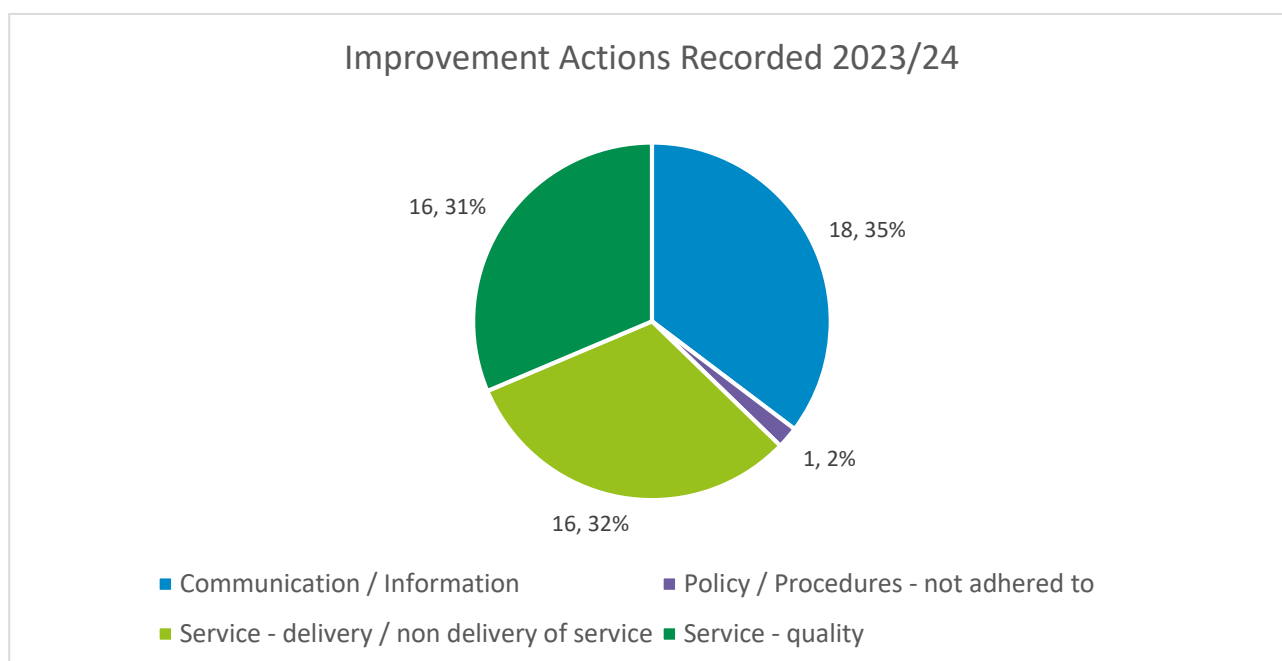
The complainant has expressed concerns that her niece's children have been removed from their mother's care and have not been placed with their grandmother. They have previously lived with their grandmother and the complainant would like this matter to be investigated as a complaint.



7. Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council's Children's Services recorded learning and/or actions against 51 cases (84%) of closed cases that were upheld or partially upheld in 2023/24. Learning and actions should be recorded when a case is upheld or partially upheld and some fault can be found. For many cases not upheld there will not be any learning or actions to implement.

Of the learning points recorded in the year, 35% related to learning concerning communication and/or information provided and 31% were linked to the delivery or non-delivery of a service (e.g. delays). 31% related to service quality and 2% related policy and procedures not being followed correctly.



Very few complaints cases required follow up learning points. Of those where actions were needed an apology was the most commonly recorded action followed by change, review or provide a service and arrange employee training or guidance.

Complaints performance monitoring considers the main problem experienced, but this does not do justice to the complexity of issues that can be raised within a complaint and investigated. Reading complaints in detail highlights that although a complaint may relate to a specific service or concern about lack of a service, there may be other issues such as lack of communication, the way someone felt or perception of someone's attitude towards them.

8. Example Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council's Children's Services maintains a focus on complaints reporting and each quarter customer feedback data is provided to assist with learning and a focus on improvement. There are some anonymised examples of learning below. These examples may appear out of context because they are not provided with the original complaint, but they do highlight how Shropshire Council takes learning and actions from complaints. These examples are mainly from upheld and partly upheld cases. Complaints that were not upheld may occasionally include some learning on occasion.

The complaint investigation found that not all relevant services had attended the meetings that had been arranged. The Social Worker identified that there were some challenges in availability of services. To address concerns raised, they have now ensured that all of the social workers are aware of alternative options moving forwards. In addition, the team has a family support worker and all members of the team have been reminded about access to that support and the work she is able to undertake to assist.

The complaint investigator found that, after reviewing records and speaking to the chairperson, that some social work practise was not of the standard expected. The actions identified to address concerns included improvement in the planning for the children including highlighting all outstanding actions and implementing an action plan to ensure monitoring and follow through. An apology was provided to the complainant.

The complaint investigation determined that the process to access the school place had taken longer than it should have done. An apology was issued for the delay and the factors that had contributed to the delay were explained. Learning from the complaint included the importance of adequate availability of provision and shortages in trained and experienced staff.

Learning from the complaint was that the problem identified had arisen due to communication between the three teams involved in implementing financial arrangements. The complaint was upheld as a result of missed email communication. An apology was made and learning recorded.

The complaint investigator found that the minutes of meetings had not been provided in a timely way, updates had been minimal and contact arrangements were not delivered efficiently. Work with the social worker was identified as necessary to take learning from the complaint and improve service standards.

The complaint investigation found that the initial correspondence following concerns being raised was not adequate. The investigation identified that a complaint should have been recorded sooner so that it could have been managed in a way that resulted in a full and formal response. An action was recorded for the Senior Leadership Team to cover complaints training with managers at a future meeting.

The complaint found that the social work assessment had not been provided in written form soon enough and discussion with the family had not been adequate. However, communication overall had been very effective with regular updates provided, despite process delays. An apology was made for the time taken to complete the process.

9. Progress Update

The table below summarises progress achieved against the recommendations made in the last annual report.

	Action	Progress Made
1	Days to close complaints performance to be a focus within regular performance reporting.	Within Children's Services there was an improvement in days to close performance and an increase in the number of managers regularly reviewing and monitoring complaint reports to ensure compliance with timescales. Although it is positive to see overall improvement it is recognised that the complexity of the complaint cases being received appears to have increased and so ongoing attention will be required to maintain performance and to identify when cases have exceeded timescales. If cases are late there is an increased risk of escalation beyond stage one of the corporate and statutory complaints processes.
2	Quality of complaint investigations.	Work has taken place over the year to communicate the standards expected within complaint investigations and written responses. Overall improvement has been seen in many teams and services. Work is taking place to ensure new managers have access to support and information to maintain consistency of approach and standards.
3	Improve use of complaint learning and the recording of all learning and actions.	Improvements in the recording of learning and actions have been made through the trial of learning forms. These remind complaint investigators of the need to capture learning and actions. There is still some work to do to ensure use across all teams and services, but early adopters have demonstrated a better understanding of common issues and themes. This work will continue as a new IT system is implemented by Shropshire Council for complaint case recording.
4	Focus on top complaint themes (including Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans).	Top complaint themes are reported and considered each quarter through regular performance monitoring. Throughout the last 12 months EHCP related complaints have remained a top theme. The responses have been efficient, with most complaints completed in advance of timescales, and responded to in a comprehensive way. Unfortunately, significant increases in demand for services has meant Shropshire Council is experiencing a trend reported nationally by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This sees increased complaints related to services for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with service pressures caused by demand outstripping available public sector budgets and levels of staffing. This focus will need to continue over the next year.
5	Recognise the growing number of repeat complainants.	Available data has highlighted increases each year in the number of people making multiple complaints. This pattern has not reduced over the last 12 months despite growing awareness of the trend and a focus on customer care. This trend is not expected to change in the short term as more children and families present in need of support from Shropshire Council. In the short term the focus is on responding efficiently to customers concerns and signposting to other stages of the complaints process where more independent consideration is needed to help resolve a complaint.

10. Actions and Recommendations

Complaints performance for Shropshire Council's Children's Services has been negatively impacted by service pressures and rising community and service user needs. More complaints have been made, more complaints have been upheld and more cases have progressed beyond stage 1 of the complaints processes. Efforts to manage complaints well have resulted in a reduction in the average days to respond to stage 1 complaints. Ombudsman data suggests Shropshire Council's performance for Education and Children's Services complaints is slightly above average compared to other similar local authorities. Recommendations for 2023/24 are:

1. The promotion of early resolution of concerns at an informal stage: a proportion of complaints over the last 12 months have highlighted that some people are making formal complaints without first raising concerns with social workers and other members of staff. Having conversations early can often help to resolve concerns, particularly when many issues raised relate to communication rather than any service failure.
2. Work will take place over the next 12 months to continue to focus on promoting good standards in stage 1 complaint handling and responses. This emphasis on quality within stage 1 investigations and responses should reduce the need for complaints to progress to stage 2 or beyond. Given Shropshire Council's financial pressures the cost of external stage 2 statutory complaints should be minimised through robust stage 1 responses. Once concerns are fully understood it is hoped action can be taken to remedy complaints where resources are available.
3. Communication must form an area of focus for 2024/25. A significant proportion of complaints refer to a lack of reply to emails and phone calls rather than any failure to provide a service. It is accepted that in some cases communication failure may have occurred, but in other cases it appears expectations may be for more immediate responses due to advances in technology. Although email, text and other methods allow for faster communication it is possible that there is a lack of recognition of the other tasks and responsibilities members of staff have.
4. Complaints cases are becoming increasingly complex in nature with more complaints touching on concerns related to a range of processes, often led by other organisations. A recommendation is that Children's Services staff work to communicate their roles clearly to those they support to avoid the growing number of complaints suggesting social workers are at fault for court decisions, police decisions and other processes outside of their influence.
5. The impact of local government service pressures and budget constraints is well reported by the national media and noted by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. As a result of pressures more complaints are highlighting delays and more complaints are upheld. Work will continue through the quarterly performance reporting and work to identify the areas of pressure and opportunities to minimise risk or recurrence.
6. A proportion of upheld complaints through the year have identified changes in social worker and lack of robust case handover as the cause of concerns. Shropshire Council has been working to address social worker recruitment and retention. It is hoped this will have a positive impact on the next 12 months, but the data will be reviewed to monitor this theme.
7. The top complaint theme for Children's Services in 2022/23 relates to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans. This may be hard to address but close working is in place between the SEND teams and complaints officers to ensure support is in place to maintain effective complaint handling.

For more information and council wide recommendations please see the Annual Customer Feedback report 2023/24.

Feedback and Insight Team,
Legal and Governance, Resources
Shropshire Council

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Shropshire
Council