

1 April 2019 - 31 March 2020

Childrens Services

142 New Stage One Complaints
22 Representations Resolved
7 Stage Two Investigations Commenced
1 Stage Three Reviews Completed
2 LGSCO (Ombudsman) Investigations Finalised
£ 6240.00 Compensation Paid

Adult Social Care

113 New Stage One Complaints
32 Representations Resolved
14.5 Internal Reviews (*Escalated Complaints*)
4.5 Further Reviews
4 LGSCO (Ombudsman) Investigations Finalised
£ 7200.00 Compensation Paid

Commissioning

22 Stage One Complaints
5 Representations Resolved
2.5 Internal Reviews (*Escalated Complaints*)
0.5 Further Reviews
0 LGSCO (Ombudsman) Investigations Finalised
£ 0.00 Compensation Paid

Education

64 Stage One Complaints
5 Representations Resolved
3 Stage Two Investigations
1 LGSCO (Ombudsman) Investigations Finalised
£ 0.00 Compensation Paid

Management Summary

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Management Summary

The numbers of cases for Adult Social Care and Commissioning has reduced despite the increasing scrutiny and public consciousness around the council's work in those areas. Complaints for Commissioning are 71% down (22 from 77). Adult Social Care complaints have fallen for the second consecutive year.

At the end of this report (p.27) we ask '*Are we learning from our complaints ?*' These numbers suggest it is reasonable to deduce that we are.

Every statistic in the following 10 pages show there is little change with cases for Childrens Services. Based solely on complaint data, it is not possible to state whether the Council has improved in these areas. Support given to Care Leavers remains a significant part of our work.

The numbers of complaints for Commissioning and for Education should not allow for too much statistical interrogation. Instead the detail for each complaint, and the Learning reported each quarter, should direct management more reliably. Details and Learning are easily-extracted from our records and can be summarised for management upon request.

What are we learning about our service, owing to the pandemic ?

Complaints received in the months of April and May have been analysed to understand if recent events have affected our service-users' need or inclination to pursue complaints.

Complaints received for Adult Social Care and Commissioning total only 1 more than the same period in the previous year. It therefore can be said that complaints for these areas have not been impacted. Given the exceptional circumstances, this should be quite satisfying and may be regarded as success. If progress is being made in the way the evidence suggests, then the numbers of complaints received in the corresponding period next year will be fewer.

Complaints for Education have halved from 12 in this two month period to 6 in the corresponding period last year. Complaints across Childrens Services have halved, from 33 to 17. The Corporate Complaints Team (Housing, Parking, Environment etc.) have reported the same phenomenon – an approximate halving. This may be attributed in part due to their being fewer actual interactions with service users / residents.

Every complaint received in April and May has been reviewed to see *who* raised the complaint. The results compared to last year are remarkably similar. The pandemic has not affected who is making complaints.

Numbers of compliments have fallen significantly, although this can reasonably be attributed to professionals being so tuned in to priorities other than forwarding on the compliments they have received.

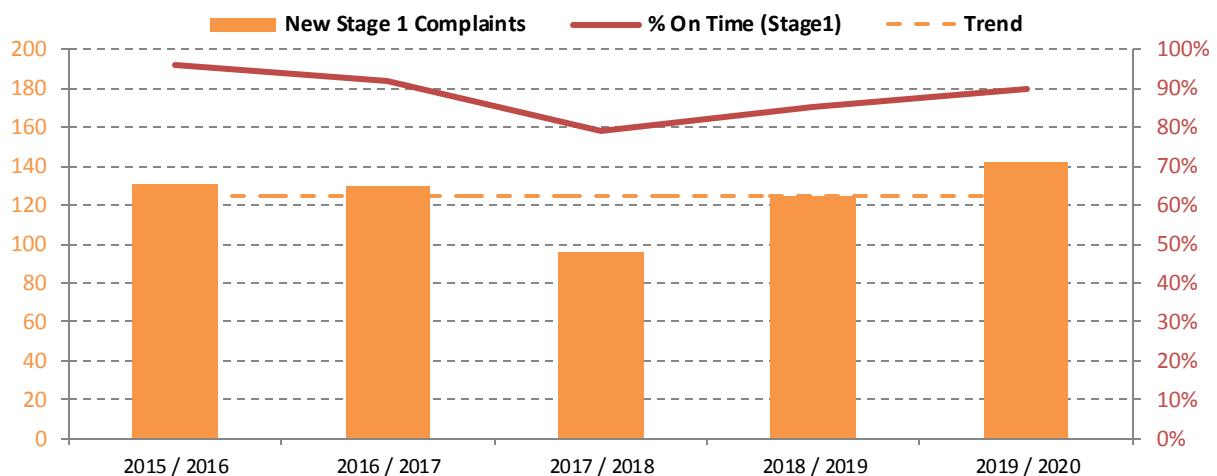
Stage One Complaints Received (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)					
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care	12.5 (2)	15.5 (4)	17.5 (4)	39	41
Care Leavers	28 (8)	21 (7)	15 (3)	-	-
Permanence	11 (1)	6 (0)	3.5 (0)	5	13
Family Early Help	2 (0)	2 (0)	1 (1)	-	3
Youth Offending	-	1 (0)	2 (0)	1	1
Quality Assurance	3 (0)	5.5 (0)	3 (0)	6	2
Assessment & Intervention	33 (2)	22 (1)	20 (4)	35	26
Safeguarding and Family Support	36 (1)	28 (3)	19 (2)	29	29
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	15.5 (4)	23 (5)	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Support Teams	1 (0)	3 (0)	15 (1)	15	16
Total	142 (18)	125 (20)	96 (15)	130	131

'Quality Assurance' here usually denotes complaints relating to actions or decisions in the past which, although we are not necessarily obliged to investigate, we ordinarily will.

The total number of complaints has remained relatively constant over the last five years. There were fewer than 8% more complaints received in 2019/2020 than in 2015/2016.

The completion-on-time, at 90%, is exactly equal to the present target.

Note that the figures above suggest Care Leavers are either the best-informed or the most-willing to seek the support of an Advocate, in pursuance of their complaint.

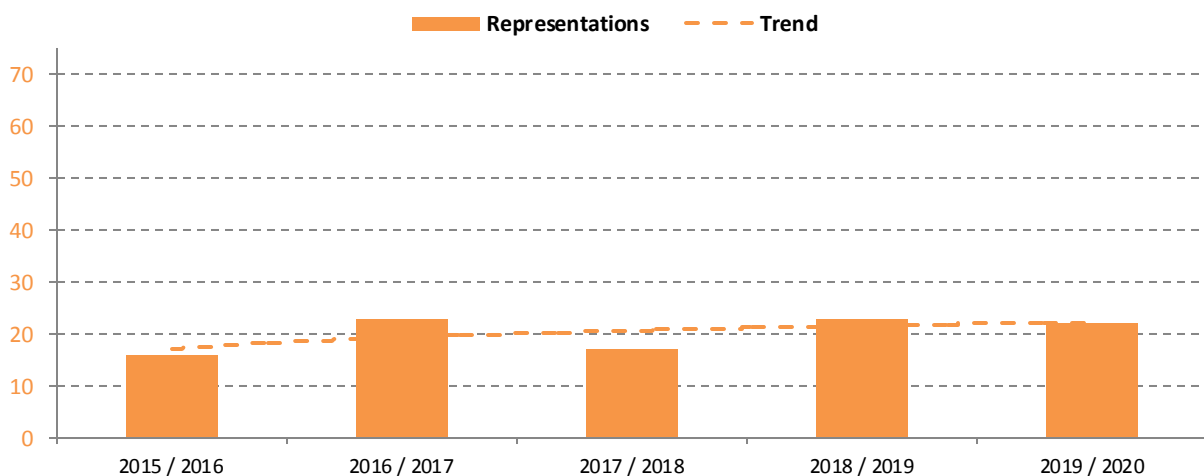


Other Representations (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)			
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Care	7 (0)	3 (0)	-
Care Leavers	1 (1)	4 (0)	6 (1)
Permanence	3 (1)	2 (1)	2 (0)
Family Early Help	-	1 (0)	2 (0)
Youth Offending	-	-	-
Quality Assurance	-	3 (0)	-
Assessment & Intervention	7 (0)	7.5 (0)	2 (0)
Safeguarding and Family Support	3 (0)	0.5 (0)	3 (1)
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	1 (0)	1 (0)	n/a
Other Support Teams	-	1 (0)	2 (0)
Total	22 (2)	23 (1)	17 (2)

We continue to seek agreement for resolutions without the need for a full, formal investigation. This requires the agreement of the complainant, and ordinarily a rapid turnaround time. We record these as 'representations'. Were these actions not initiated, there would have been 22 more formal complaints and formal investigations.

A large number of representations may indicate that all the issues presented to the Council are straightforward and easily-remedied, whilst a low number would suggest that the Complaints team is not giving enough thought to whether a resolution can be found by more creative and immediate means.

We have a very similar number of 'representations' as last year which indicates that Southwark are applying discretion and negotiation judiciously.

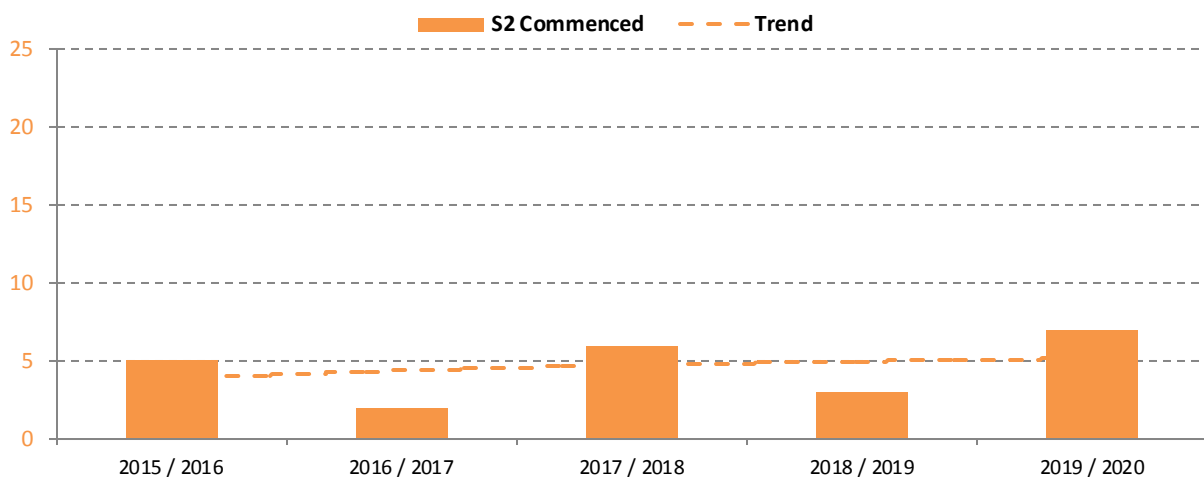


Stage Two Complaints Investigations Commenced					
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care	-	-	3	1	3
Care Leavers	-	-	1	-	-
Permanence	2	-	1	-	-
Family Early Help	-	-	-	-	-
Youth Offending	-	-	-	-	-
Quality Assurance	1	-	-	-	-
Assessment & Intervention	2	1	-	-	-
Safeguarding and Family Support	-	1	1	1	2
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	2	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other Support Teams	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7	3	6	2	5

There is a distinction to explain between stage one / stage three complaints compared to stage two. The council has to automatically undertake a stage two investigation if a complainant wishes-it, with few exceptions. However the statutory guidance supports our seeking early resolution of such complaints, if a solution can be found and agreed.

Hence the 'key performance indicator' applicable here is 'How many stage two investigations did we have to agree?' Agreement for stage two complaints is followed by concerted work to agree actions which close the complaint without the full protracted and expensive independent investigation.

Whilst 7 cases represent a significant cost to the Council, an escalation rate of 4% compares favourably to each of the other Directorates reported herein.

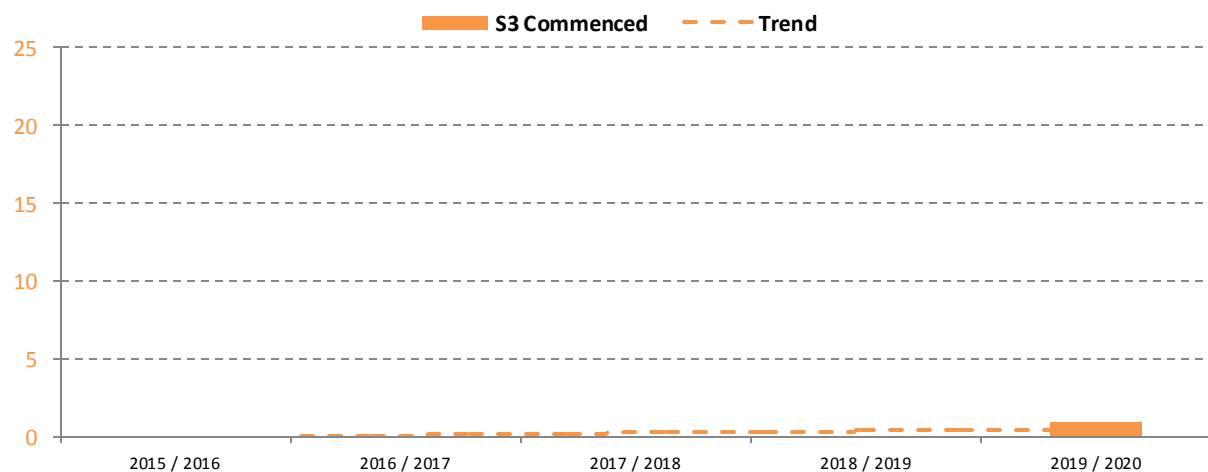


Stage Three Panel Reviews					
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care	-	-	-	-	-
Care Leavers	-	-	-	-	-
Permanence	-	-	-	-	-
Family Early Help	-	-	-	-	-
Youth Offending	-	-	-	-	-
Quality Assurance	-	-	-	-	-
Assessment & Intervention	-	-	-	-	-
Safeguarding and Family Support	-	-	-	-	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	1	-	-	-	-
Other Support Teams	-	-	-	-	-
Total	1	0	0	0	0

Southwark ordered two Stage Three Panels this year – the first Panels which have been necessary since 2014.

Panel consists of an independent Chairperson and two independent Panellists. Present also: the complainant and any representative as well as the Independent Officer and Independent Person from the stage two investigation. Finally the Complaints Team Investigator and the Stage Two Adjudicator (usually the Director or Assistant Director for the service).

Whilst the second Panel in the year (not included in the totals above) has already reported its recommendations, work is ongoing via mediation and needs to conclude before the case is closed, and reported-on.

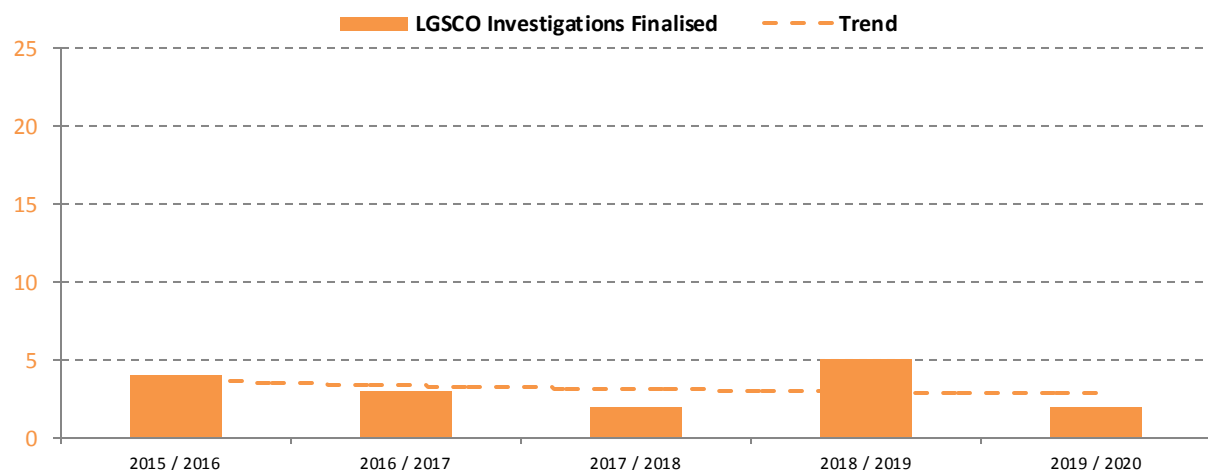


Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigations Finalised					
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care	-	-	1	1	-
Care Leavers	-	1	-	-	-
Permanence	-	-	1	-	1
Family Early Help	-	-	-	-	-
Youth Offending	-	-	-	-	-
Quality Assurance	1	-	-	-	-
Assessment & Intervention	-	1	-	2	1.5
Safeguarding and Family Support	-	3	-	-	0.5
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	-	-	-	-	-
Other Support Teams	1	-	-	-	1
Total	2	5	2	3	4

It is a credit to those who investigate and respond to complaints that we have had so few cases investigated, and findings published, by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Wherever a fault has occurred, it is imperative that we identify and remedy locally, such that external analysis is not required.

It is worthy of note that Ombudsman Final Decisions are published to in-excess-of 8000 recipients and also resolving matters in-house helps to prevent delays in resolution for our service-users.

On 22 July 2020 the Ombudsman issued its Annual Review letter. They record one case where a 'Service Improvement' was recommended. The performance of Southwark and other boroughs can be found here : <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/>

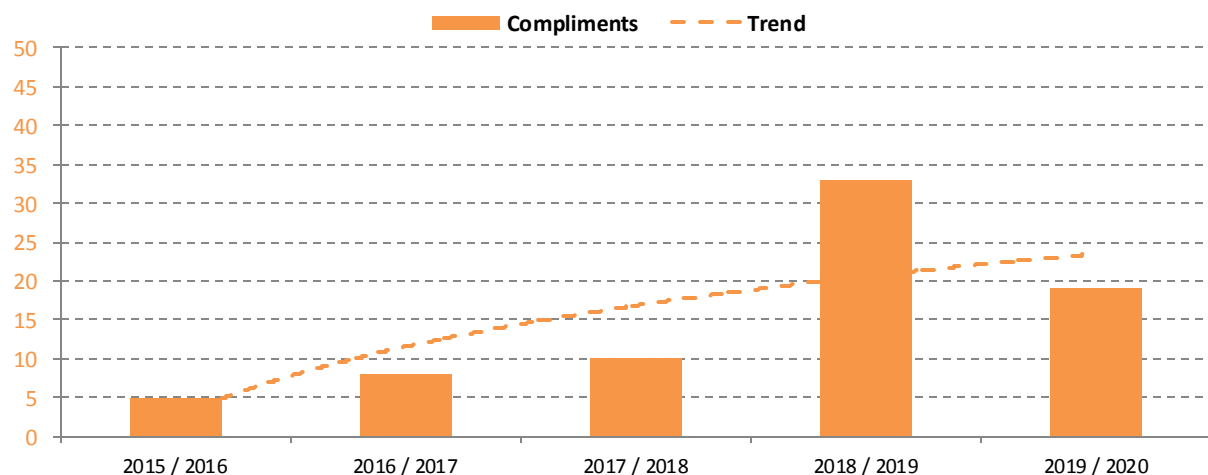


Compliments Received					
Children's Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care	1	9	1	-	-
Care Leavers	4	9	-	1	-
Permanence	0	2	1	3	-
Family Early Help	0	-	1	-	-
Youth Offending	0	-	-	1	1
Quality Assurance	0	-	1	-	-
Assessment & Intervention	3	3	4	1	-
Safeguarding and Family Support	10	9	-	1	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Children)	0	-	-	1	-
Other Support Teams	1	1	2	-	4
Total	19	33	10	8	5

We should be encouraged that the Safeguarding and Family Support Team are attracting a lot of positive feedback. We understand that often the work they begin is not at the invitation of the families involved, and accepting support of this nature can be difficult for some.

The language used in these compliments is often emotive and profound – describing positive changes to complex and established family dynamics.

We continue to report the detail of all compliments every quarter. We continue to encourage everyone to send us positive feedback received, so that we can share and analyse.



Learning & Service Improvement

The distribution of complaints across Childrens Services differs to those received for Adult Social Care, Commissioning and Education. The pie chart on the following page shows a more diverse and even distribution of root causes. ‘Communication’ and ‘Failure to Act’ / ‘Failure to Support’ still combine to make a majority of the complaints received but communication is less prevalent than in other areas. It is suspected that the reason for this is that there are so many distinct areas of support required by the Children Act (and with them many complex multidisciplinary processes) that there are simply more things that can potentially ‘go wrong’.

The Learning from complaints which has been given additional reporting prominence over the year has also been more varied. There have been a number of complaints about young people’s savings, assistance with Housing and support generally. Young people are quite reasonably very sensitive to these issues – which may underpin heightened senses for the need of security.

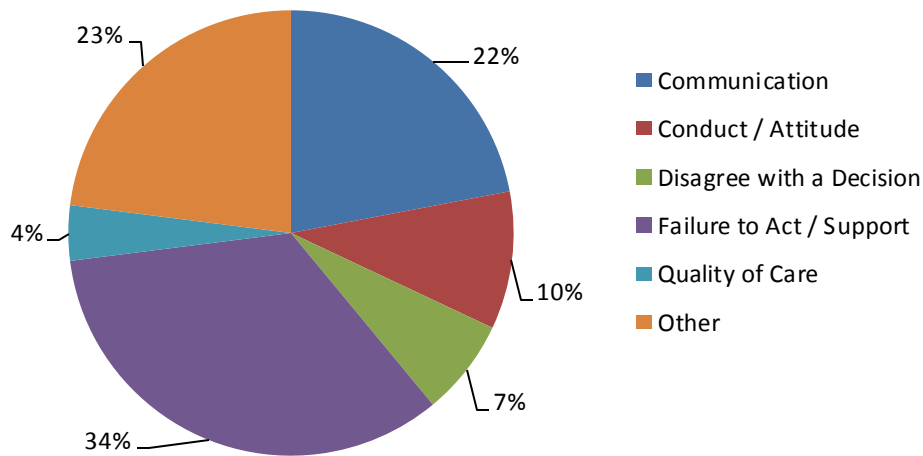
Young people are clearly sufficiently informed as to seek assistance from the council’s contracted Advocacy provider. Communication between the Complaints team and individual Advocates is increasing significantly and it is clear that the needs of young people in, or leaving Care, are particularly well-understood and represented.

Where Advocates are involved, there is a raised prevalence of stage two investigation requests. This should serve to remind all of the need to investigate objectively, identify fault, and propose a remedy at the earliest opportunity. The table below shows that the number of complaints upheld (in whole or in part, at stage one) is lower for Childrens Services than each of the three other Directorates reported-on herein.

Outcomes, all Stage One and Representations					
Children’s Services	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Partly Upheld	31%	21%	22%	24%	28%
Upheld	10%	13%	16%	13%	18%
Not Upheld	29%	31%	37%	30%	31%
No Findings / Resolved	13%	17%	13%	7%	3%
Unresolved and Escalated (representations only)	1%	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Withdrawn / Rejected	16%	16%	12%	26%	20%

There may be an opportunity to raise the number of complaints which are withdrawn – owing to immediate remedies being found which resolve reported matters to each party’s satisfaction.

Root Causes, all Stage One Complaints and Representations



Demographics & Service Access, Cases Received

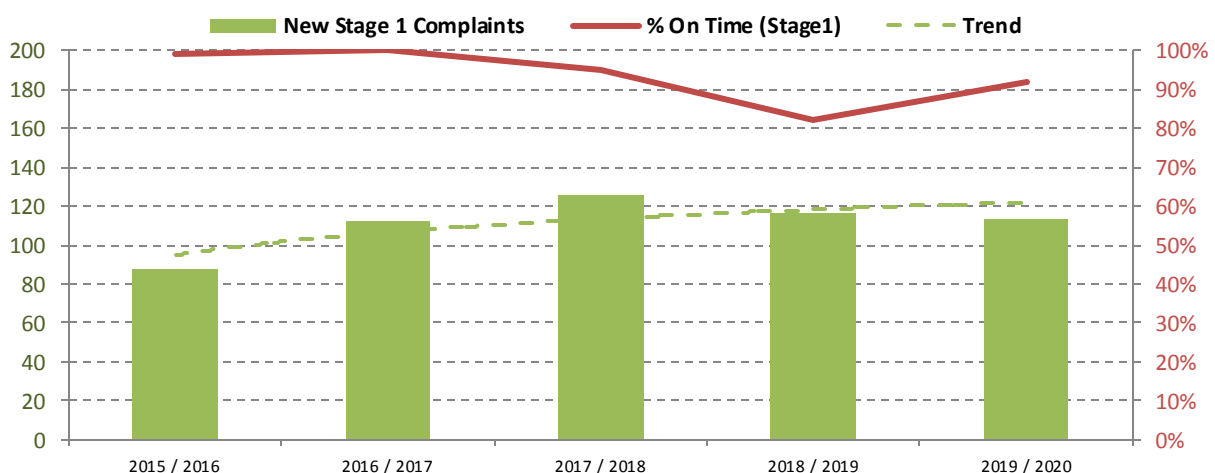
Asian, Bangladeshi	1%	White, Irish	-
Asian, British	-	White, Other	<1%
Asian, Indian	-	White, Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-
Asian, Other	-	Asian, Chinese	-
Asian, Pakistani	1%	Other, Arab	-
Black, African	10%	Other, any other group	21%
Black, British	4%	In Care	2%
Black, Caribbean	5%	Previously In Care	8%
Black, Other	<1%	Never in Care	90%
Mixed, Mixed Other	3%	Child	0%
Mixed, White & Asian	-	Young (19-25)	12%
Mixed, White & Black African	-	Adult	88%
Mixed, White & Black Caribbean	2%	Mean Age.	37 years
Other, Chinese/Vietnamese	-	Male	30%
Other, Cypriot Greek	-	Female	70%
Other, Cypriot Other	-	Otherwise Described / Not known	-
Other, Cypriot Turkish	-	Known Disability	5%
White, British	14%	No Disability Known to Us	95%

The ethnic background of 56% of complainants was not known and was not sought.

Stage One Complaints Received (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)					
Adult's Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	4 (0)	13.5 (0)	9.5 (1)	4	4
Mental Health Short Term Services	4 (0)	4 (0)	2.5 (0)	-	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	36 (3)	18.5 (1)	19 (2)	12	1
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	19 (0)	16 (2)	20.5 (4)	36	30
South Community Team (excl. Review)	8 (0)	19.5 (0)	19.5 (1)	-	-
...Contact Team	11 (0)	6 (0)	10 (2)	18	12
...Review Team	6 (0)	14 (1)	21.5 (4.5)	-	-
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	6 (0)	10.5 (3)	11 (2)	21	14
Southwark Resource Centre	1 (0)	1 (0)	-	-	-
Service Development / Finance	16 (0)	17 (0)	24.5 (7.5)	16	9
Other Support Teams	2 (0)	1 (0)	-	5	15
Total	113 (3)	121 (7)	149 (24)	118	88

The number of complaints, despite the pressures on Local Authorities, has fallen for the second consecutive year. A reduction of 24% from 2017 / 2018.

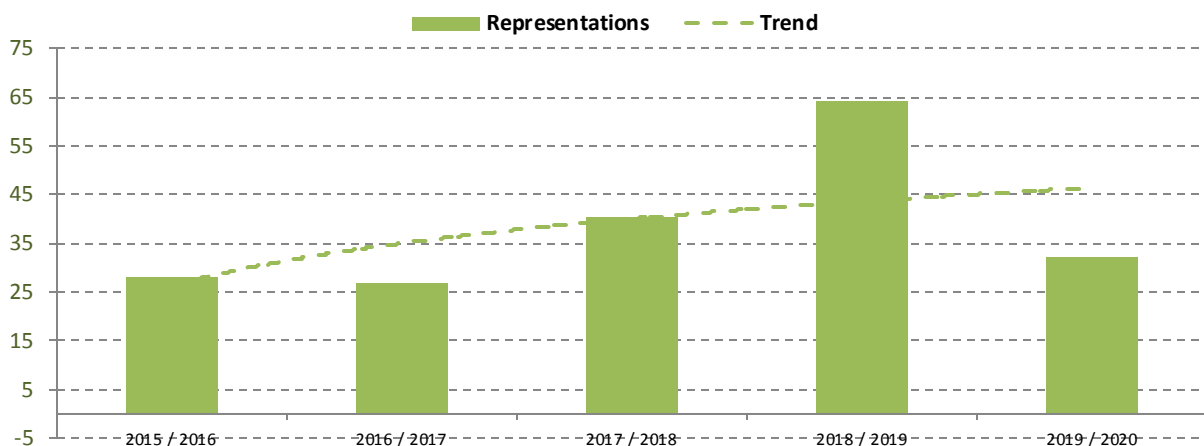
Very few complaints were made with assistance from a formal Advocate, which may indicate that service users find the complaint journey and information sufficiently helpful – or it may indicate that they are not sufficiently aware of the potential for Advocate support. We should be vigilant to observe individual specific cases and future trends on this point of data.



Other Representations (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)			
Adult's Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	-	3 (0)	1 (0)
Mental Health Short Term Services	1 (0)	1 (0)	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	6 (0)	4 (1)	4 (1)
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	4 (0)	13.5 (0)	8 (2)
South Community Team (excl. Review)	6 (0)	10.5 (1)	4 (1)
...Contact Team	9 (0)	7 (0)	9 (3)
...Review Team	4 (0)	6 (0)	6 (1)
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	2 (0)	7.5 (0)	3 (0)
Southwark Resource Centre	-	-	1 (0)
Service Development / Finance	-	15 (1)	3 (0)
Other Support Teams	-	-	-
Total	32 (0)	68.5 (3)	39 (8)

We continue to seek agreement for resolutions without the need for a full, formal investigation. This requires the agreement of the complainant, and ordinarily a rapid turnaround time. We record these as 'representations'. Were these actions not initiated, there would have been 32 more formal complaints and formal investigations.

Management should be reassured that – just as numbers of formal complaints have reduced, the number of 'representations' has also fallen markedly. From this we may deduce that standards are rising and issues which are highlighted are being addressed at the earliest opportunity.

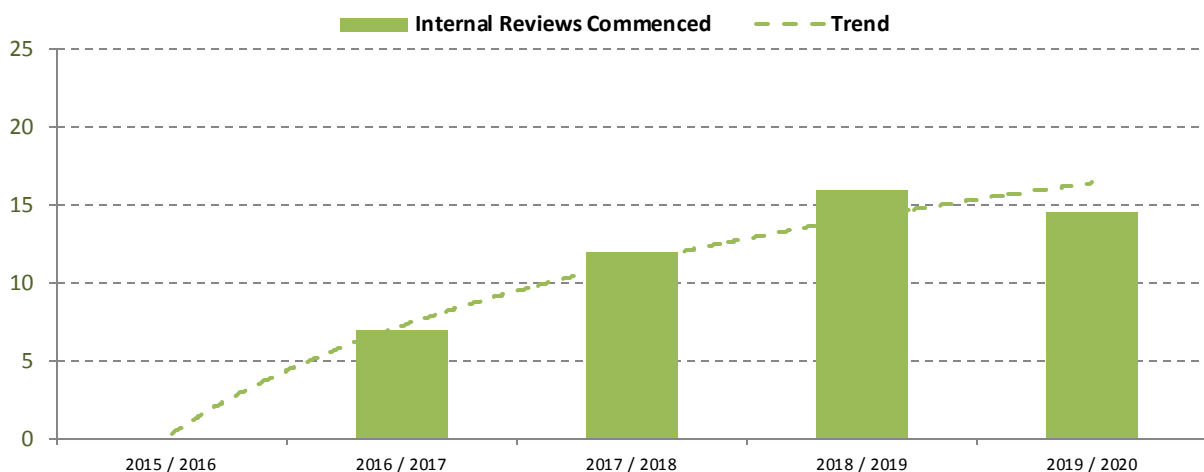


Internal Complaint Review			
Adult's Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	3	1	-
Mental Health Short Term Services	-	1	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	6	1	2
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	1	3	2
South Community Team (excl. Review)	1.5	4.5	4
...Contact Team	-	-	-
...Review Team	-	2	-
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	0.5	1	-
Southwark Resource Centre	-	-	-
Service Development / Finance	2.5	-	1
Other Support Teams	-	2.5	1
Total	14.5	16	10

½ cases denote the complaint being partly directed to one team, and partly relating to another team or Service. The only alternative to this method of reporting would be to falsely inflate the overall numbers of complaints by logging the case twice.

The numbers of Internal Reviews has reduced but only at the same rate as the total number of complaints, and so the prevalence remains unchanged to within 1 percentage point.

The Internal Review process was only implemented mid-way through 2016 / 2017.

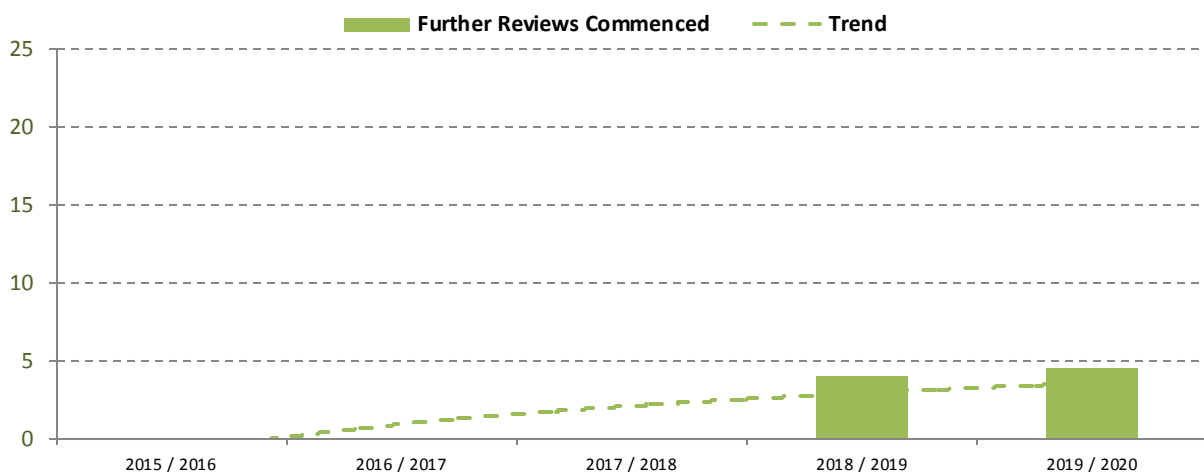


Further Complaint Review			
Adult's Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	-	-	-
Mental Health Short Term Services	-	1	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	1	-	-
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	2	1	-
South Community Team (excl. Review)	-	-	-
...Contact Team	-	-	-
...Review Team	-	-	-
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	0.5	-	-
Southwark Resource Centre	-	-	-
Service Development / Finance	1	1	-
Other Support Teams	-	1	-
Total	4.5	4	0

The ½ case was partly also for Commissioning and related to a Care-at-Home provider.

The Internal Review for all these cases was reiterated at Further Review. Three cases remained upheld; 1 case remained partly upheld; and the last stayed as not upheld. We should hope to see the outcomes remains the same at subsequent reviews but we must remain open to changing previous decisions where the evidence supports it.

The Further Review process was only implemented mid-way through 2016 / 2017.

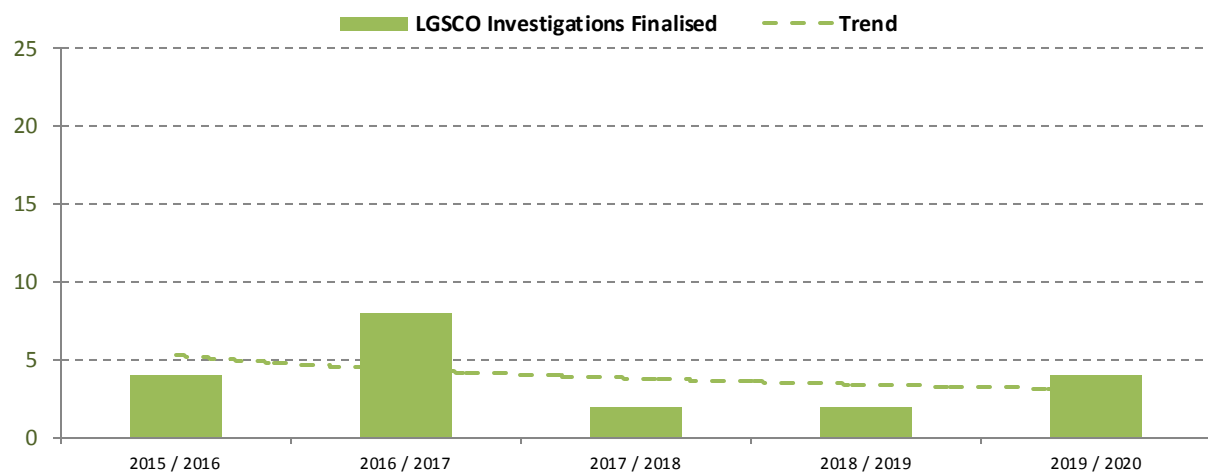


Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigations Finalised					
Adult's Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	-	1	1	1	-
Mental Health Short Term Services	1	-	-	-	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	-	-	-	-	-
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	2	-	-	3	1
South Community Team (excl. Review)	1	1	1	-	-
...Contact Team	-	-	-	1	1
...Review Team	-	-	-	-	-
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	-	-	-	-	-
Southwark Resource Centre	-	-	-	-	-
Service Development / Finance	-	-	1	2	-
Other Support Teams	-	-	-	-	-
Total	4	2	3	7	2

It should be noted that three of the complaints are from the same family and the faults found cover Housing and a Care Home outside the borough. No fault was found in the other case.

Final Decisions are published nationally to over 12000 recipients and it is worth remembering that resolving matters in-house helps to prevent delays in resolution for our service-users.

On 22 July 2020 the Ombudsman issued its Annual Review letter. They record one case where a 'Service Improvement' was recommended. The performance of Southwark and other boroughs can be found here : <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/>

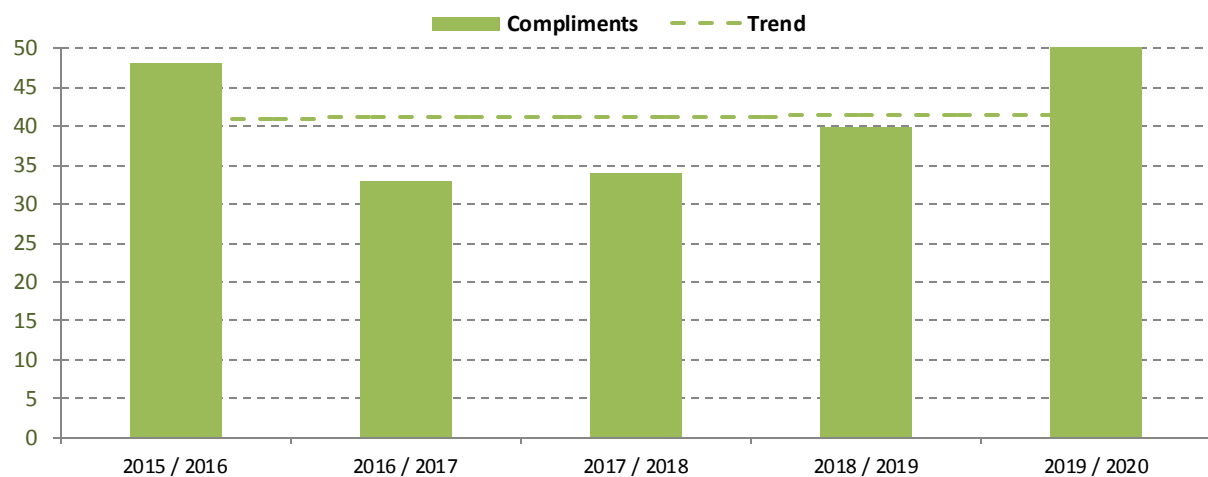


Compliments Received					
Adults Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Mental Health Long Term / Substance Misuse	0	4	-	-	-
Mental Health Short Term Services	0	3	-	-	-
All-Ages Disability Service (relating to Adults)	5	1	3	3	-
North Community Team (excl. Contact)	7	6	7	21	38
South Community Team (excl. Review)	3	2	9	-	-
...Contact Team	1	-	-	3	3
...Review Team	6	1	-	-	-
Reablement, Rehab and Hospital Discharge	26	18	14	4	3
Southwark Resource Centre	0	1	-	-	-
Service Development / Finance	0	1	-	-	-
Other Support Teams	3	2	1	2	4
Total	51	40	34	33	48

The total number of reported compliments from external parties has risen for the fourth consecutive year and is at highest ever level.

The Reablement Team continues to lead the way in receiving and reporting of compliments from external parties, across the four Directorates we serve.

The three compliments for 'Other Support Teams' were all for the Complaints team. One function of our work is to repair relationships with service users and so when a complainant finishes the process with a compliment, then we can share the credit and the benefit for that.



Learning & Service Improvement

In keeping with the other Directorates in this report, the pie chart below shows that a majority of complaints relate to 'Communication'. Also in keeping with other areas, a significant number of complaints are about a 'Failure to Act' / 'Failure to Support'. This finding is consistent with the previous year.

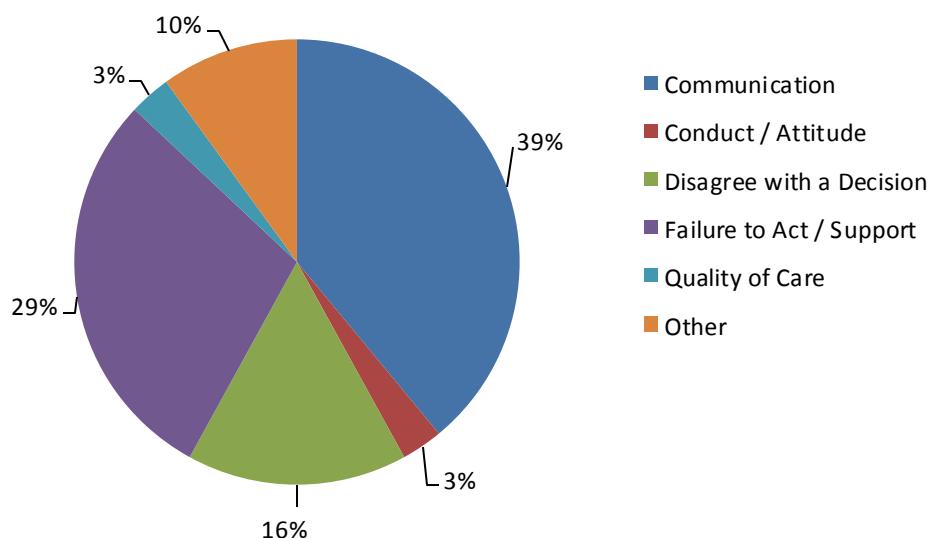
Specific learning from complaints which was given additional prominence during the year was largely around the need for formal and prompt correspondence. The Complaints team has met with a number of managers during the year to discuss communication and best practice around assessments and reassessments for Packages-of-Care.

There were cases earlier in the year relating transfer from being a 'child'-with-disability to being an adult, but Service Managers met to discuss and clarify roles and responsibilities and complaints of this nature are no longer being received.

Outcomes, all Stage One and Representations

Adults Social Care	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Partly Upheld	19%	8%	16%	24%	28%
Upheld	16%	30%	15%	13%	18%
Not Upheld	34%	19%	30%	30%	31%
No Findings / Resolved	25%	32%	26%	7%	3%
Unresolved, Escalated (representations only)	0%	2%	1%	n/a	n/a
Withdrawn / Rejected	6%	9%	12%	26%	20%

Root Causes, all Stage One Complaints and Representations

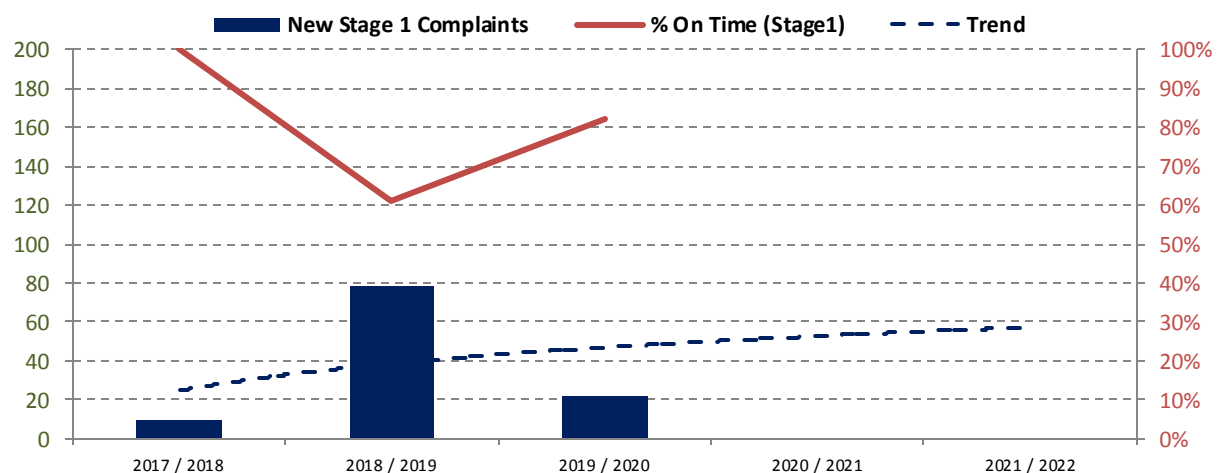


Stage One Complaints Received (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)					
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care at Home	15 (0)	(itemised data not maintained)			
Other	7 (0)				
Total	22 (0)	77 (0)	11 (0)	6	3

A very significant decrease in new complaints received – attributable in part to Care-at-Home providers settling in to a still-relatively-new contract.

Any service user, or authorised / sufficiently appropriate representative may make a formal complaint to the Council, or to the organisation providing them with residential care / care at home service. Complaints made directly to those organisations are not recorded here, although the details of those complaints are made available for Contract Monitoring Officers' inspection.

The Council is accountable for the actions of our commissioned providers. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman will raise enquiries with the Council even if a matter was dealt with formally by our contracted provider.



Other Representations (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)			
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Care at Home	5 (0)	(itemised data not maintained)	
Other	0 (0)		
Total	5 (0)	26.5 (0)	5 (1)

As with formal complaints, this represents a notable reduction from the previous year.

Internal Complaint Review			
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Care at Home	1.5	0	0
Other	1	0	0
Total	2.5	0	0

An escalation rate of 11% - very similar to the comparable rate in Adults Social Care (13%).

Further Complaint Review			
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Care at Home	0.5	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Total	0.5	0	0

This part-complaint was also against Hospital Discharge, in Adults Social Care.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigations Finalised					
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care at Home	0	(itemised data not maintained)			
Other	0				
Total	0	1	0	0.5	2

There were two enquiries which did not proceed to investigation. One was rejected as outside the Ombudsman's jurisdiction (something which was explained to the complainant prior to their contacting the LGSCO) and one case which was both premature and then withdrawn anyway.

Compliments Received					
Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Care at Home	1	1	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	1	0	0	0

It is far more usual for our commissioned providers to receive positive feedback directly.

Learning & Service Improvement

The pie chart below shows how ‘Communication’ is the root of more than half of complaints raised with the Council. We know from investigations that, in real terms, this is often due to changes in rota’s owing to unavoidable absences. We also see complaints where there is a misunderstanding between what might be described as a vulnerable and anxious older service user, and a Care professional who is trying to balance the demands of a busy day, with the needs of each individual.

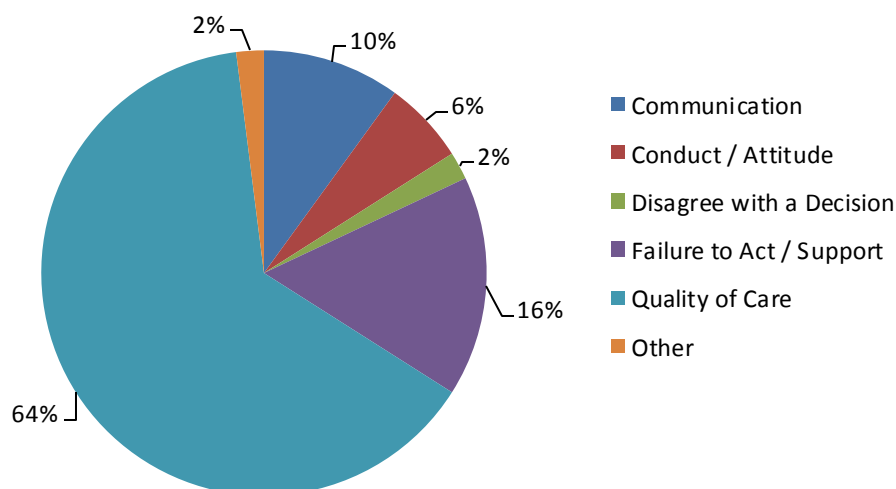
The table below shows 63% of Commissioning complaints are upheld in whole or in part and from this we should deduce that our investigations are objective, and that we are ready to identify fault, and learn from our experiences, and the experiences of our residents.

Specific learning from complaints which was given additional prominence during the year included suggestions for commissioned providers’ own complaint handling practices.

Outcomes, all Stage One and Representations

Commissioning	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Partly Upheld	10%	8%	16%	24%	28%
Upheld	53%	30%	15%	13%	18%
Not Upheld	7%	19%	30%	30%	31%
No Findings / Resolved	18%	32%	26%	7%	3%
Unresolved, Escalated (representations only)	0%	2%	1%	n/a	n/a
Withdrawn / Rejected	12%	9%	12%	26%	20%

Root Causes, all Stage One Complaints and Representations

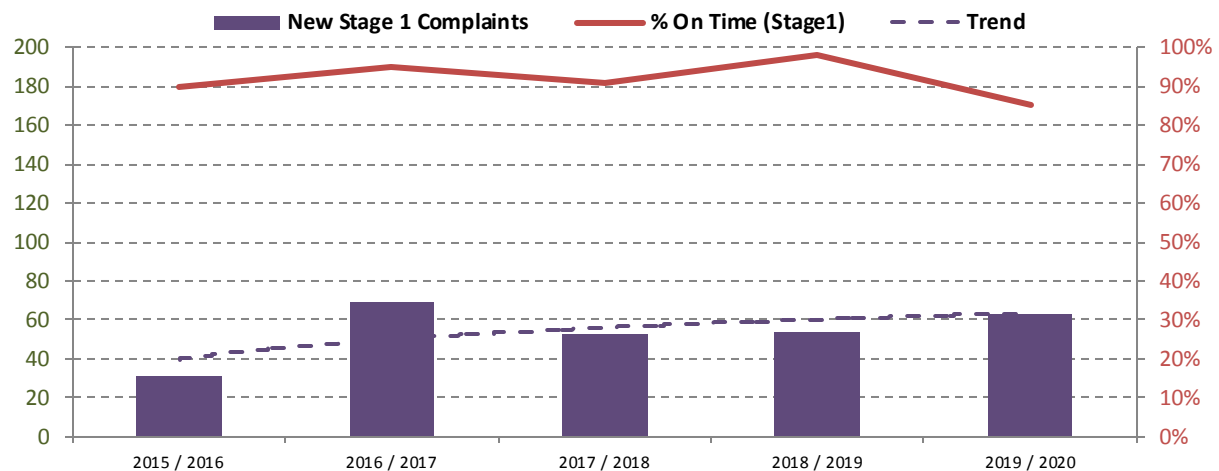


Stage One Complaints Received (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)					
Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Education	40.5 (1)	35	31	29	16
Education Access 0-25	23.5 (1)	19	22	35	21
Other, or Business Support	0 (0)	0	0	0	3
Total	64 (2)	54	53	64	40

Numbers of complaints remain relatively constant across each of the last four years - a period defined and affected the staged introduction of EHC Plans – introduced to help ensure multidisciplinary planning from all agencies involved in supporting young people.

SEND is an area of work which is very emotive and challenging and for which there is always a heavy reliance on external parties including, but not limited to schools. SEND cases account for a large proportion of Ombudsman decisions – a fact which they have acknowledged and reported on in the last two years.

There were only 19 cases in the year after complaints relating to SEND (incl. Transport) are removed from the calculation. There remains 9 cases relating to Admissions – where again there is a reliance on schools and others. All other Education teams / matters generated only 10 formal complaints.



Other Representations (with assistance of an advocate in brackets)			
Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Education	1 (0)	3	0
Education Access 0-25	4 (0)	4	1
Other, or Business Support	0 (0)	0	0
Total	5 (0)	7	1

Stage Two Investigations			
Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Education	3	1	1
Education Access 0-25	0	1	1
Other, or Business Support	0	0	0
Total	3	2	2

3 cases required investigation by the Complaints Team, from 67 potential cases = 4%.
The equivalent escalation rate for Adults Social Care is 13%, and for Commissioning is 11%

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigations Finalised					
Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Education	0	0	2	1	0
Education Access 0-25	1	0	0	2	1
Other, or Business Support	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	0	2	3	1

There were three enquiries, only one of which led to an Ombudsman investigation.

That case led the Ombudsman to finding fault for the Council not having acted quickly enough. However the Council provided significant and relevant evidence of having sought to find an appropriate solution for the young person affected, in a way that was appropriate to his needs for consistency and for planned changes. Were the Council to act more immediately in these circumstances, many young people would be unnecessarily unsettled.

On 22 July 2020 the Ombudsman issued its Annual Review letter. They record one case where a 'Service Improvement' was recommended. The performance of Southwark and other boroughs can be found here : <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/>

Compliments Received					
Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Education	0	0	1	0	0
Education Access 0-25	0	0	1	1	0
Other, or Business Support	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	2	1	0

The Service are invited to forward positive feedback received from outside the organisation, to the Complaints Team, to record. The Complaints internet pages also facilitate the same.

Learning & Service Improvement

In keeping with the other Directorates in this report, the pie chart below shows that a majority of complaints relate to 'Communication'. Also in keeping with other areas, a significant number of complaints are about a 'Failure to act', or 'Failure to Support'. This finding is also consistent with the previous year.

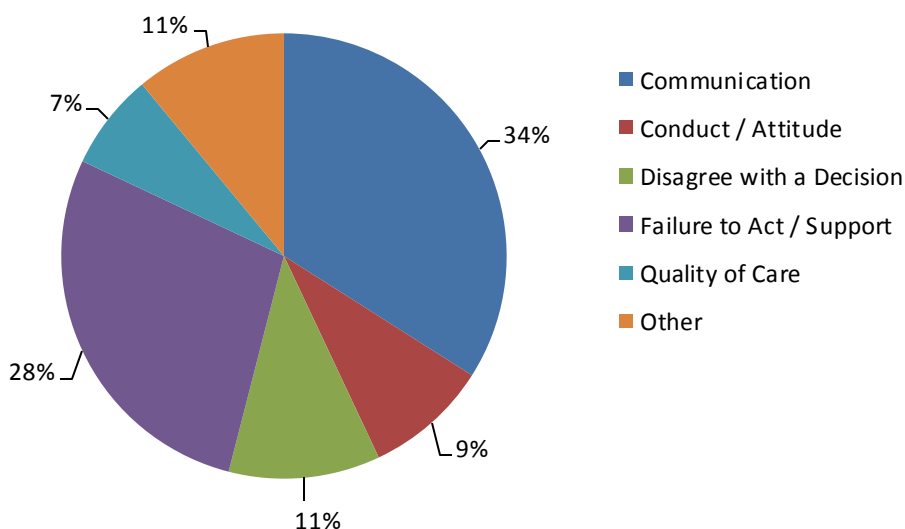
Specific learning from complaints given additional prominence during the year was largely around ensuring systems are in place so that, when information requested from external parties is not received in time, that a parent is kept updated as best we can. If we are able to invest time in those actions, then a formal complaint will often be avoided, and the relationship between (for example) an EHCP coordinator and a parent will not be put under unhelpful pressure.

Outcomes, all Stage One and Representations

Education	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17	2016/17
Partly Upheld	18%	20%	17%	23%	no data
Upheld	20%	22%	19%	10%	no data
Not Upheld	39%	28%	46%	31%	no data
No Findings / Resolved	14%	19%	9%	12%	no data
Unresolved, Escalated (representations only)	0%	0%	0%	0%	no data
Withdrawn / Rejected	9%	11%	9%	24%	no data

A majority of rejected complaints are where it is the school's own jurisdiction to investigate and respond. For example where there is dissatisfaction with a teacher's actions or decisions.

Root Causes, all Stage One Complaints and Representations



Complaints System Review

Demographics & Service Access, Cases Received ALL DIRECTORATES			
Breakdown of Complainants (the person who made contact with us)			
Asian, Bangladeshi	<1%	Child	-
Asian, British	<1%	Young (19-25)	5%
Asian, Indian	-	Adult	95%
Asian, Other	<1%	Mean Age.	44 years
Asian, Pakistani	<1%		
Black, African	6%	Male	30%
Black, British	7%	Female	69%
Black, Caribbean	3%	Otherwise Described / Not known	1%
Black, Other	<1%		
Mixed, Mixed Other	1%	Known Disability	6%
Mixed, White & Asian	-	No Disability Known to Us	94%
Mixed, White & Black African	-		
Mixed, White & Black Caribbean	1%		
Other, Chinese/Vietnamese	-		
Other, Cypriot Greek	-		
Other, Cypriot Other	-		
Other, Cypriot Turkish	-		
White, British	11%		
White, Irish	-		
White, Other	1%		
White, Gypsy or Irish Traveller	-		
Asian, Chinese	-		
Other, Arab	-		
Other, any other group	1%		

**For 66% of complainants,
the ethnic background was not known
and was not sought.**

Are our investigations objective, sufficient and successful ?

- Some of the strongest evidence available is to look at complaints which were not successfully resolved at the first opportunity and to look at whether subsequent investigations return the same findings.
- The escalation rates across each of the Directorates remains comparable to previous years, and remains at an expected level across each Service.
- There were two (Children Act) statutory stage 2 complaints which were requested for escalation to stage 3 but in both instances, the complaints were partly upheld at stage one and at stage two, and remedies were offered and declined in both cases and at both stages.
- The number of complaints submitted for Internal Review (Adult Social Care) has remained relatively constant, as has the number of cases for Further Review.
 - o There was only one complaint all year where the outcome changed at a subsequent stage of our own (internal) investigations in all of 2019/2020.
- The most direct evidence of all is 'how many complaints end up with the Ombudsman?' and the low numbers are reported in each respective section of this report.

Are Complaints activities understood and are our services being accessed equally and fairly ?

- The 2011 Census showed the mean age for a Southwark resident is **34**
The mean age, where known, of all our complainants is : **44**
- The ratio of male to female, in the 2011 census was Male **49% : 51%** Female
The ratio of male to female complainants this year was : Male **30% : 70%** Female

Ethnicity (where known)	Complainants 2019 - 2020	Complainants 2018 - 2019	Last Census (2011)
White	34%	43%	54%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	46%	43%	27%
Asian/Asian British	11%	6%	10%
Mixed/Multiple	6%	5%	6%
Other	3%	3%	3%

- Based on the number of cases all the above data relates to, there has been no change of any significance since the previous year.
- There is no correlation between the uphold rate, or the completion-on-time rate when observed against complainant age, ethnicity, gender or disability. The evidence demonstrates that complaint outcomes are uninfluenced by the background of the complainant. The proportion of upheld complaints mirrors very closely the proportion of complaints received from different groups.

- The incidence of advocacy support is highlighted earlier in this report. An increasing reliance on a formal advocacy service may have indicated a difficulty in accessing the complaints process. However the use of advocacy has reduced. There have been no complaints at all about availability of advocacy, or lack of information / accessibility of the complaints process. It is believed that the complaints journey is sufficiently described online, in person, and in writing such that stakeholders feel sufficiently able to present their own complaints. There are no complaints received during the year which suggest otherwise.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, one Assistant Investigator is presently training in Sign Language (BSL) so as to support any future complaints from those with compromised expressive or receptive communication.

[Are we learning from complaints ?](#)

We only have data which can generally indicate whether we are learning from complaints. There are complaints received which relate to issues which have been raised previously. There are examples when the same Team / Officer have been involved. It is not accurate to say that every complaint was immediately prevented from recurrence, after being investigated – although we should, and do aim for that standard.

What we can say with more certainty is that - within the preceding pages of this report – we have observed the ‘uphold rate’ and observed the proportion of complaints with decisions which change following subsequent investigations.

The pie charts in this report demonstrate how a majority of complaints relate to communication, and to a lack of support. In a sense this can be disappointing because they are to a degree preventable. However what it also suggests is that the Councils’ policies, procedures and abilities in to only a minority of issues, when combined.

More directly we can talk about the levels of compensation paid during the year. Although this cannot be interpreted as a qualitative assessment of the Councils performance, when taken in to account alongside the factors described above, we are able to start to gain an impression for whether all the work we are doing to share and report learning is sufficiently effective.

	2019 – 2020	2018 – 2019	2017 – 2018
Children’s Services	£ 6240.00	£ 15451.00	£ 0.00
Adult Social Care	£ 7200.00	£ 0.00	£ 2877.92
Education	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	£ 0.00
Commissioning	£ 0.00	£ 0.00	£ 0.00

Complaints Team Update

2019 – 2020 has been a year of consolidation following a period prior of significant change.

The hands-on structure and personnel of the complaints team is unchanged and what was a relatively new and inexperienced team is becoming more knowledgeable, more settled, more efficient, more confident and more easily identified by Service colleagues.

In the previous annual report, the following was described :

“At the point that every complaint is closed, the Complaints team now formally agrees the explicit learning acquired, with the Service involved. That learning is reported quarterly among all senior management and the team attends a number of management team meetings to discuss. The team also draws additional prominence to complaints of a repetitious nature, or where the potential severity for repeating errors, requires it.”

This process adjustment is serving the organization well and within the ‘Learning and Service Development’ sections of this report, analysis of the intelligence gained (through those complaints which have been given additional prominence) has been easily derived and interpreted. Those process adjustments have ensured that a responsible officer looks for trends and specific concerns throughout the year and reports them in a format which service management can recognise and digest very easily.

Southwark Social Care Complaints team are active members of the London Complaints Managers Group, which meets periodically to evaluate best practice, address regulatory / legislative and other developments in and around social care complaint handling. This is an invaluable and productive group and membership has provided insight and information which directly benefits Southwark residents, service users and officers.

We are looking forward to a new database which will improve availability of reporting data, and will reduce the amount of time required to administer a complaint – by reduction in keystrokes and with additional configurable functionality. The benefit being Complaints Investigators can focus their time on the issues and investigations, and less on satisfying the needs of the software that records our work.

We continue to look for other opportunities for improvement. There was a desire to raise the on-time KPI from 90%, to 92%, although with the additional challenges of the pandemic, realistically this was not the appropriate time.

In the previous year’s annual report we described our contribution to the Ombudsman’s Remedies Pilot. This year Elena Busnarda (Assistant Investigator) is working with the Ombudsman, Mr King; with one other Local Authority; and with a group of complainants, to formally review the Ombudsman’s own service. Were our reputation not strong, we would not have the opportunity to participate in these projects.

Contact Information

David Nelson **Education and Escalations**
0207-525-4477
david.nelson@southwark.gov.uk

Elena Busnarda **Children's Services**
0207-525-0035
elena.busnarda@southwark.gov.uk

Agne Konseviciute **ASC and Commissioning**
0207-525-5662
agne.konseviciute@southwark.gov.uk

We report to :

Daniel Toms **Complaints Manager**
0207-525-4734
daniel.toms@southwark.gov.uk

Web, Children's Social Care and Education www.southwark.gov.uk/socialcarecomplaints

Web, Adults Social Care - - www.southwark.gov.uk/childrencomplaints

Address Southwark Council Social Care Complaints Team. FREEPOST RTJL-XAZG-ZRTU.
2nd Floor Hub B, Tooley Street. PO BOX 64529. London. SE1P 5LX

Duty Telephone 0207-525-3977

Duty eMail sscomplaints@southwark.gov.uk