

Report title	Complaints and Compliments Quarter 2 2024/25
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Department	Law and Governance
Exempt?	No

Purpose of Report:

For information.

Synopsis of report:

To provide Members with a summary of the complaints and compliments received from 1 July – 30 September 2024 (Quarter 2 of the KPI reporting structure), to include figures for the new performance indicators under the complaint handling code and report any matters that have arisen since the last meeting of the Committee in September 2024.

1. Context of Report

1.1 The Council maintains a database in Jadu recording formal complaints (and a separate register for those in which the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman) has been involved), what they relate to and how they have been resolved. We maintain a spreadsheet for compliments.

2. Report

2.1 The Council's Complaints Policy contains the following with regard to monitoring and performance:

“The Council’s Standards and Audit Committee has the role of overseeing the Council’s Complaints Policy and associated procedures and monitoring relevant key performance indicators, including our annual self-assessment of compliance with the Ombudsman’s complaint handling code and annual complaints performance and service improvement report.

The Council’s Monitoring Officer through Democratic Services monitors formal complaints received and regular reports are made to our Standards and Audit Committee so that we might learn from what you tell us and share best practice.

The Council’s Corporate Heads are our appointed complaint handlers, assisted by trained colleagues. They are responsible for ensuring that this policy and procedure is followed and that all complaints are dealt with in a timely, transparent, fair and consistent manner.”

Specific information referred to in the complaints policy is included in this report, with the exception of the average number of working days to respond at stages 1 and 2, which is still a work in progress.

- 2.2 There were 70 entries in Jadu for complaints in Quarter 2, this compares with 54 this time last year, and 46 in Quarter 1 of this year.

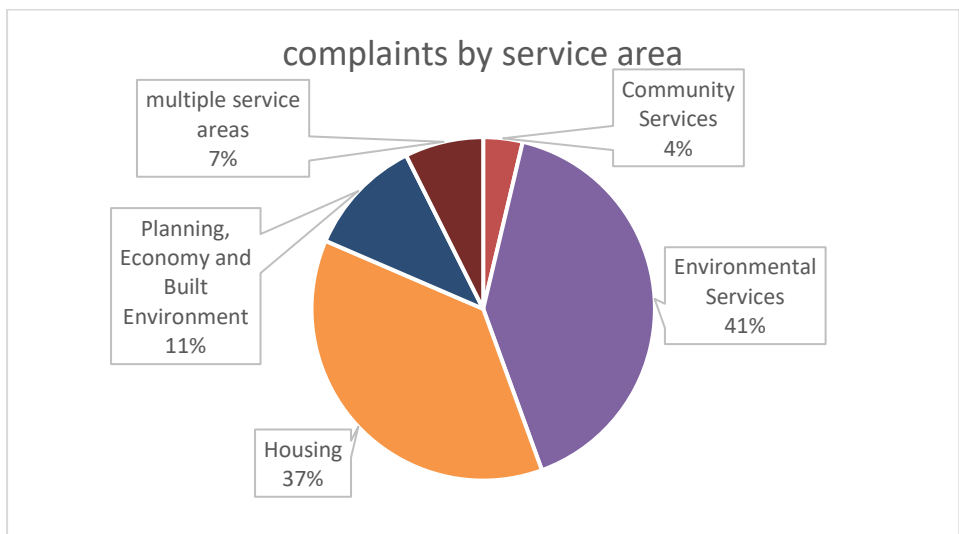
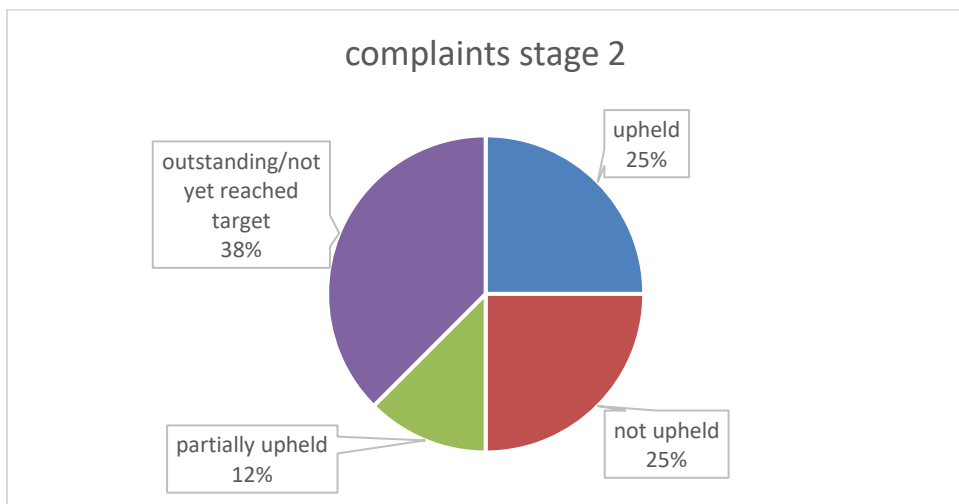
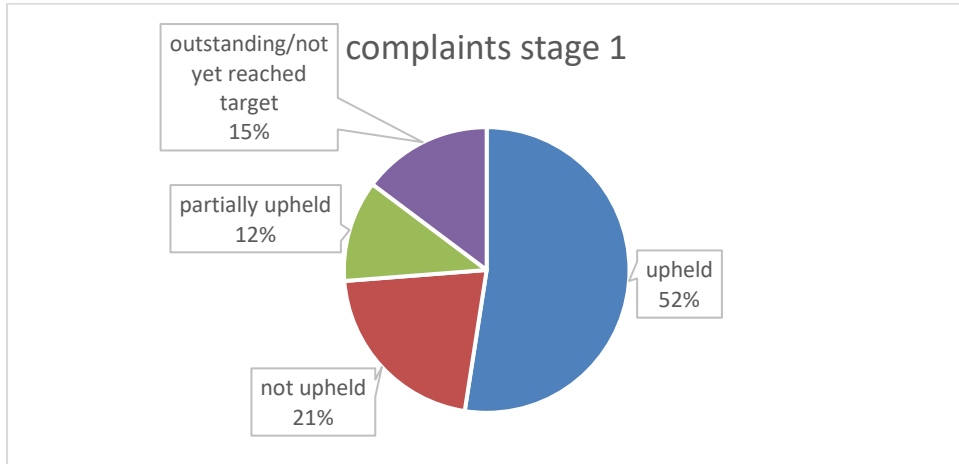
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- 2.3 Set out below is a presentation of the information requested for performance monitoring under the complaint handling code and some additional data.

LGO reporting criteria	July	August	September	Totals
Number of complaints - stage 1	22	29	10	61
upheld	12	17	3	32
not upheld	8	3	2	13
partially upheld	2	3	2	7
outstanding/not yet reached target		6	3	9
average number of working days to respond to complaints following acknowledgement				
number of complaints escalated to stage 2	5	2	2	9
upheld	2			2
not upheld	1	1		2
partially upheld	1			1
outstanding/not yet reached target	1	1	1	3
average number of working days to respond to complaints following acknowledgement				
service improvements by service area	7	7	2	16
Assets and Regeneration		1		1
Community Services	1		1	2
Customer, Digital and Collection Services		4		4
Environmental Services	2			2
Financial Services			1	1
Housing	4	2		6
reasonable adjustments made (all types)	2	4	4	10
complaints by service area	July	August	September	
Assets and Regeneration		1		1
Community Services	1	1	2	4
Customer, Digital and Collection Services		4	1	5
Environmental Services	11	11	1	23
Financial Services			1	1
Housing	10	11	5	26
Planning, Economy and Built Environment	3	3		6
multiple service areas	2		1	3
to be allocated			1	1
Total Number of Complaints	27	31	12	70

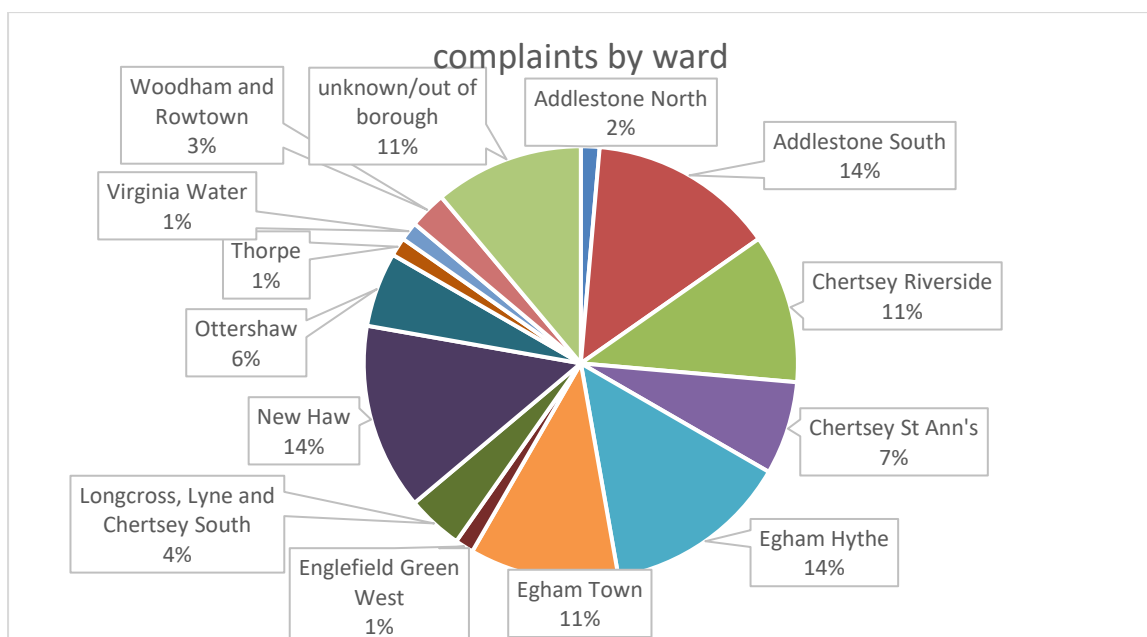
Additional data

service requests	15	12	10	37
external complaints (SCC etc)	5	2	5	12
general responses	8	8	2	18



Complaints by Ward

	Stage 1			Stage 2			Total
	July	Aug	Sept	July	Aug	Sept	
<i>Addlestone North</i>		1					1
<i>Addlestone South</i>	2	6	1			1	10
<i>Chertsey Riverside</i>	4	2		2			8
<i>Chertsey St Ann's</i>	2	2	1				5
<i>Egham Hythe</i>	4	3	2	1			10
<i>Egham Town</i>	2	4	1			1	8
<i>Englefield Green East</i>							
<i>Englefield Green West</i>	3	2	1				6
<i>Longcross, Lyne and Chertsey South</i>	1	2					3
<i>New Haw</i>	3	2	3	1	1		10
<i>Ottershaw</i>	2		2				4
<i>Thorpe</i>	1						1
<i>Virginia Water</i>		1					1
<i>Woodham and Rowtown</i>		2					2
<i>unknown/out of borough</i>	3	4	1	1	1		10



2.4 The outcomes so far have resulted in a number of recorded service improvements; requesting Corporate Heads to indicate what service improvements have been made is very useful. Some examples include:

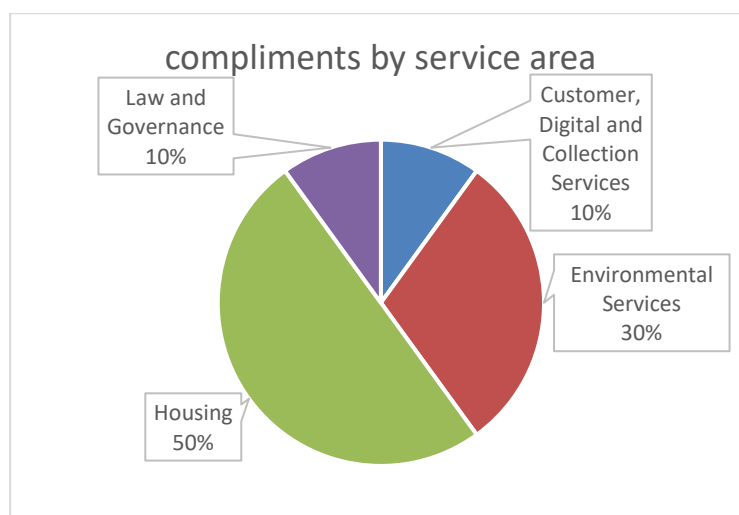
- refresher training for staff on dealing with vulnerable people
- reminders about safe driving
- amendments to wording on forms and procedures
- review of a departmental communication policy with customers
- review of interviewing clients and general housekeeping rules,
- to actively seek ways of reducing waiting times for visitors to the civic centre,
- reminders to always keep customers updated with actions taken to resolve a problem

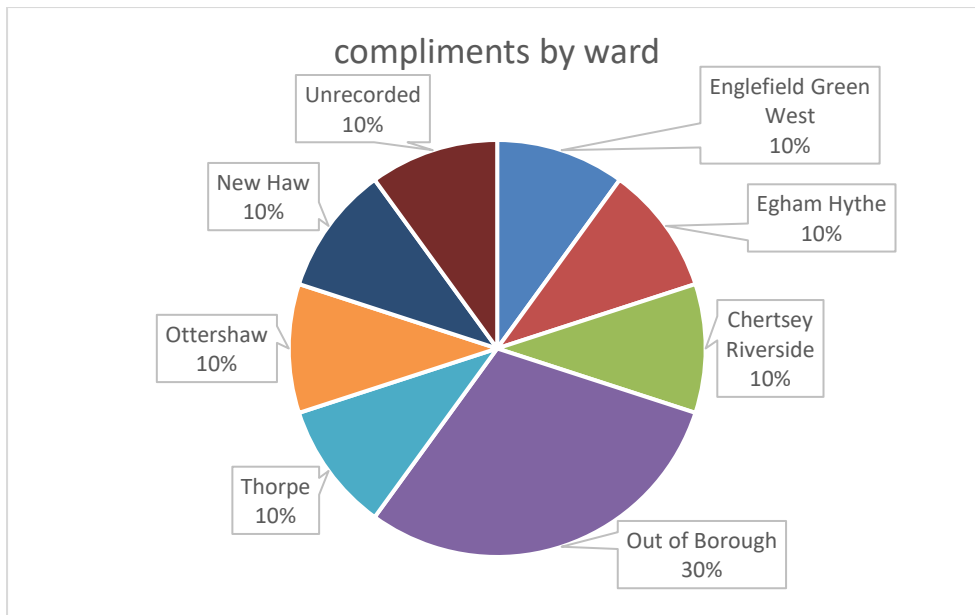
2.5 Members will see that the new ability to go down the service request route for something that comes in on the complaints form has been beneficial, and no cases at the time of writing this report have subsequently been re-activated as complaints. Service requests would only come back to this Committee's report if they were upgraded back to complaint status. It would be very time consuming to interrogate all the cases but an initial check shows that they do meet the definition of service requests.

2.6 If Members have any queries regarding particular service areas these can be referred to the relevant Corporate Head.

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2.7 There were 10 compliments in Quarter 2. This compares with 15 in Quarter 1 and 29 in Quarter 2 of last year.





2.8 The details, where staff were named or identifiable from the information provided, are set out in Exempt Appendix A.

2.9 Compliments for staff across the Council demonstrated helpfulness to residents, some of whom were in very challenging circumstances. Others praised the quality of work and highlighted examples of joint working between Business Centres, and contractors.

2.10 Recording complaints and compliments is a valuable tool for the Council to review performance and improve the delivery of services. Corporate Heads are encouraged to record compliments to provide a balance between positive and negative feedback.

3. Policy framework implications

3.1 The revised complaints policy was approved by this Committee in July and a review of the unreasonable actions by people who make complaints was approved by this Committee in September.

3.2 The Corporate Business Plan 2022 – 2026 is relevant to this process as handling complaints is at the centre of how we interact with the public. Our values include being customer focused, striving for excellence, improving services, promoting equality and diversity, and delivering excellent value for money. Our goals include having satisfied customers. It is important that our processes are aligned with these strands of the plan.

3.3 The new Jadu software is an excellent tool for monitoring performance. Complaint handlers are encouraged to include notes to assist this process. Colleagues in Digital Services continue to assist with data collection to hopefully make the analysis less time consuming.

4. Resource implications

4.1 The Council does not have a complaints team. Feedback from Corporate Heads is that workload has increased for them and other trained staff that assist them. It is also important to acknowledge the significant contribution of colleagues in Digital

Services to improving our processes who are currently working on Housing complaints to bring our contractors into the system.

5. **Equality implications**

5.1 The Council has a duty under the Equality Act 2010. Section 149 of the Act provides that we must have due regard to the need to;

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- b) advance equality of opportunity
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share protected characteristics.

We should at all times act in a way that is non-discriminatory through our policies, procedures and interactions with people.

5.2 In the last reporting period there was evidence of the following protected characteristics being engaged: disability, race, age and gender but not necessarily an accusation of discrimination, just evidence that these were relevant in some way. For example, health and safety of children in a car park. However, where someone has been negatively affected the notes record updating guidance to staff for example and apologising to the customer.

5.3 At the last meeting we reported that a new 'required' field was added to Jadu to prompt both staff and customers to record where reasonable adjustments had been made to help resolve complaints etc. These are any adjustments that have been made so do not necessarily relate to one of the protected characteristics. In quarter 2, 10 such adjustments were made, as recorded in Appendix A to this report. Of these, 3 related to complaints, the others were service requests etc.

6. **Legal, Environmental and Risk Implications**

6.1 None identified.

7. **Background papers**

The Complaints and Compliments Registers and relevant (part exempt) emails on the Council's outlook system and anonymised information retrieved from Jadu.

8. **Appendices**

Exempt Appendix A – Compliments received for individuals and teams