



Somerset County Council

Annual Customer Feedback Report

1st April 2017 – 31 March 2018



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Introduction

This is the Somerset County Council annual customer feedback report for the year 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018. Data used in this report is taken from the corporate iCasework system, investigation reports and action plans.

The first section of this report is an executive summary, reflecting feedback across all Somerset County Council services and providing examples of remedy, learning and improvement. Detailed data analysis for Adults and Children's Services and for Economic and Community Infrastructure follow later in the document.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman produces an annual review for each council and the Somerset County Council 2018 review can be found at

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/councils-performance/council/Somerset%20County%20Council>

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Overview

There is an overall increase of roughly 6% in feedback received (all types) when compared with the previous year. Resolution at stage 1 of the complaints process remains high with fewer cases escalating to stage 2 than in the previous year. Average resolution times remain higher than target but there has been significant improvement in this regard in some areas (Adult Social Care and 'other Children's Services'). Process for remedy and learning from complaints has improved.

1.2 Volumes and Comparisons

Total feedback received across all council services for last 3 years:

Feedback Type	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
Children's Social Care Complaints	303	267	272
Other Children's Services Complaints	86	131	187
Adult Services Complaints	240	305	269
ECI Complaints	231	196	275
Corporate Complaints	53	34	98
Total Complaints	913	933	1101
Children's Social Care Compliments	135	124	67
Other Children's Services Compliments	46	144	110
Adult Services Compliments	133	128	83
ECI Compliments	333	261	273
Corporate Compliments	9	6	9
Total Compliments	656	663	542
Children's Social Care Comments	9	16	6
Other Children's Services Comments	1	9	4
Adult Services Comments	29	15	3
ECI Comments	80	51	60
Corporate Comments	15	7	5
Total Comments	134	98	78
Children's Social Care Member Enquiries	Not Known	19	11
Other Children's Services Member Enquiries	Not Known	35	34
Adult Services Member Enquiries	Not Known	35	26
ECI Member Enquiries	Not Known	2	113
Corporate Member Enquiries	Not Known	36	28
Total Member Enquiries	Not Known	127	212
Total Feedback	1703	1821	1933

Figures for 2017/18 show a 6% increase in total feedback received when compared with figures recorded in the 12 months prior. Complaints for 2017/18 have increased by 18% compared with 2016/17 and compliments have decreased by 18%. The table below shows percentage increase/decrease per service area for all feedback types.

Service Area	Feedback Type	↑↓
Children's Social Care	Complaint	1.87% ↑
	Compliment	45.96% ↓

Other Children's Services	Complaint	42.74% ↑
	Compliment	23.61% ↓
Adult's Social Care	Complaint	11.80% ↓
	Compliment	35.15% ↓
Economic & Community Infrastructure	Complaint	40.30% ↑
	Compliment	17.64% ↑
Corporate Feedback	Complaint	188.23% ↑
	Compliment	50.00% ↑

1.3 Performance

The table below shows the resolution status for the 1101 complaints received in 2017/18. The vast majority of complaints received in the year (98%) have been managed at stage 1 of the complaints process. This is consistent with previous years. Fewer cases have escalated to stage 2 this year than last - a reduction from 11 to 6 cases. There has been a slight increase in cases received in year that have escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) – 17 up from 15 in 2016/17.

Resolution	Number
Stage 1 – resolved in year	944
Stage 1 – still open at end of year	134
Stage 2 – resolved in year	5
Stage 2 – still open at end of year	1
LGO – resolved in year	11
LGO – still open at end of year	6
	1101

Somerset County Council's complaint procedure sets a target resolution timescale of 10 days. The table below show the average resolution times at stage one by service area for the 944 stage1 cases resolved in year:

Service Area	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018
Children's Social Care	26 working days	31 working days
Other Children's Services	26 working days	18 working days
Adult's Social Care	30 working days	23 working days
Economic & Community Infrastructure	15 working days	16 working days
Corporate Feedback	34 working days	13 working days

For the 134 stage 1 complaints that were received in 2017/18 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 40. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	25
10 – 20	31
21 – 30	22
31 – 40	14
41 – 50	8

51 – 60	3
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	7
81 – 90	5
91 – 100	5
> 100	13
	134

1.4 Complaint Outcomes

The table below shows the percentage of complaints across all services that were resolved with the listed outcomes and a comparison with the previous year. The percentage of complaints that have been upheld or partly upheld in 2017/18 has fallen by 11% on the previous year (32% from 43%).

Outcomes	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018
Upheld	17%	14%
Not Upheld	33%	38%
Partly Upheld	26%	18%
Resolved Upon Receipt	19%	11%
Case Withdrawn/Rejected	5%	19%
	100%	100%

1.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the primary causes recorded for resolved complaints as a percentage of the total and the percentage change compared with the previous year. Service provision and communication remain in the top 3 causes for complaint and are joined this year by 'policy and procedures' which has seen an 11% increase. Complaints due to staff conduct have reduced by 7%.

Cause Theme	% of total	+/- from previous year
Policy & Procedures	24%	+11%
Service Provision	22%	+2%
Communication	18%	Neutral
Service Quality	17%	+3%
Staff Conduct	9%	-7%
Information	5%	Neutral
Financial	3%	Neutral
Unfair Treatment	1%	Neutral
Confidentiality	1%	Neutral
	100%	

1.6 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO) publish annual review letters to all local authorities. The letters include information about the number of customers that have made contact with them to complain about the Council, how many were refused, signposted, investigated etc. and for the investigated cases, what the LGO judgment was. The letter supplies both high level statistical data and the case references to allow further analysis. All annual review letters are publically available online. When considering the annual review data, it should be noted that the data supplied will not necessarily align with the data held locally. For example, the numbers quoted will include enquiries from people that the LGO signposts back to the Council, some of whom may never contact us. Additionally, some of the cases the LGO have closed within the year 2017/18 may fall in to a different reporting period for the Council (e.g. the case may have been received significantly earlier or later by SCC).

On analysis of the 2017/18 Ombudsman Review Letter, there was an increase in the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGO in 2017/18 compared with the previous 12 months (68 in 2016/17, 81 in 2017/18). This should not be viewed negatively as the Council actively encourages feedback to support service improvement.

Pleasingly, there has been a significant reduction in the 'uphold rate' compared with recent years. For 2017/18, where the LGO undertook a detailed investigation of an SCC complaint, they upheld in favour of the complainant in 63% of cases. For the previous two years the uphold rate had been 79% (16/17) and 78% (15/16). Whilst difficult to be precise about the reason for reduction without more extensive analysis, it is felt that greater independent scrutiny of escalating complaints by the Customer Experience Team has helped identify and rectify fault locally in a number of cases. This approach can prevent escalation to the LGO which often results in resource savings for the Council and a better experience for customer.

As a general picture, the LGO have reported that they have upheld 57% of detailed investigations nationally for the year. Clearly this puts Somerset's uphold rate above the average and we must strive towards further reduction of this figure. When comparing the Council's 'uphold rate' to our statistical neighbours the picture is as follows:

LGO Uphold Rates				
Authority	15/16	16/17	17/18	+/- SCC comparison
Somerset	78%	79%	63%	N/A
Cornwall	57%	54%	61%	-2
Devon	39%	66%	53%	-10
Dorset	45%	55%	47%	-16
East Sussex	56%	66%	46%	-17
Gloucestershire	24%	50%	50%	-13
Herefordshire	48%	45%	43%	-20
Norfolk	47%	56%	75%	+12
Suffolk	38%	62%	81%	+18
Wiltshire	53%	50%	40%	-23
Shropshire	50%	48%	32%	-31

As shown above, the uphold rate for our statistical neighbours ranges between 32% and 81% with the average at approximately 54%. This puts us at 9% above the average for

our statistical neighbours for 2017/18. Whilst there is clearly still room for improvement, it should be viewed positively that we have reduced the gap – in 2016/17 we were 22% above the average uphold rate compared with our statistical neighbours. Further conversations to understand the processes and influencing factors in better performing authorities are proposed.

The uphold rate is based on cases where the Ombudsman undertook detailed investigation in year. Further breakdown is provided below:

Finding	Service Category	No. of cases	% of total investigations	
Upheld	Adult Care Services	5	26.31%	63%
	Education & Children's Services	5	26.31%	
	Planning & Development	1	5.26%	
	Highways & Transport	1	5.26%	
Not Upheld	Adult Care Services	6	31.58%	37%
	Highways & Transport	1	5.26%	

Below is a brief summary of the cases upheld by the LGO. In investigating complaints the LGO judges whether the Council's actions amount to fault, whether that fault caused the complainant injustice and what remedy should be made (if applicable). Remedy can be a range of measures including an apology, a review of policy, procedure and practice and financial redress.

Service & LGO Ref	Comments	Recommended Remedy
Children's Social Care 16008303	The majority of the complaint was not upheld but the LGO did judge that the council had not sufficiently consulted with the customer regarding the decision to change her children's schools.	Written apology
Children's Social Care 16002946	The LGO judged that the Council was at fault for failing to appropriately protect the complainant when she was a looked after child.	£3,200 financial redress for failures in safeguarding and social care practice, delays in providing personal files, delays in investigating the complaint, distress, time and trouble. Payment for counselling to help complainant address the distress caused by the fault.
Education 16014348	The LGO found that the Council took too long to transfer a child to an EHCP resulting in loss of support for 11 months.	Commission independent assessment of impact of loss of support and then provide additional support necessary to make up shortfall.

		£500 delay, time and trouble
Education 16017034	The LGO judged that the Council had failed to provide the services specified in the complainant's daughter's SEN statement.	Make up the support missed. £150 for time and trouble
Education 16004847	The LGO found fault that the Council did not have a published policy or named officer in relation to children with additional health needs at the time but judged that there was not fault in the advice given and actions taken. A policy is now in place.	None.
Adult Social Care 15015177	The Council had already recognised fault during the internal investigation and had apologised and put services in place. The LGO acknowledged this but did recommend financial remedy for loss of service, time and trouble.	Financial redress: £750 for loss of service £100 time and trouble
Adult Social Care 16005738	The LGO found fault by the Council for failing to provide care following assessment of need, for the way in which the care provider terminated its support and for sending the complaint response to the wrong address (data breach).	Financial redress: £500 distress arising from data breach. £200 for fault in termination of care. £444 loss of care for period of 1 month
Adult Social Care 16017001	The LGO did not find fault in the way the customer's needs had originally been assessed but did find fault with the failure to conduct a reassessment when the customer reported a change in need.	Apology Undertake reassessment
Adult Social Care 17001148	The LGO found fault in the way the Council considered the fluctuation of the customer's needs when making their assessment and in not providing a written explanation of why Direct Payments had been withdrawn.	Apology Review assessment with monitoring of the condition over time.
Adult Social Care 17001830	The LGO judged that the Council was at fault for not properly assessing the customer's needs when he left hospital and for not undertaking a carer's assessment on his mother.	£250 to carer for increased strain Review of case to establish wider lessons.
Planning 17004076	The LGO judged that the Council was at fault for the delays in a planning enforcement investigation and in managing the complaint about that.	Apology £600 time and trouble Conclude outstanding matters. Procedural improvement.
Rights of Way	The LGO judged that the Council's failure to complete its investigation in a	None

17007818	timely manner was fault but that the fault had not caused the complainant significant injustice.	
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This data shows that the Council incurred £5,500 of avoidable expenditure* as a result of fault, plus the unspecified costs of counselling for one customer.

** avoidable expenditure is the costs for time, trouble, distress etc. which would not have been payable if the Council had not made mistakes. The costs of providing improperly withdrawn, withheld or delayed services have not been included as these costs would have been incurred had the fault not have happened.*

1.6 Remedy, Learning and Improvement

Where a complaint is upheld, it is important that the Council puts things right for affected individuals and takes time to understand what went wrong in order that service can be improved for the future.

The Customer Experience Team are now working with services to produce a 'remedy and learning action plan' in cases where fault is found.

Below are some examples of remedy and learning that has arisen from complaints this year:

Ref:	2694465
Issue:	Son unhappy with the way in which the care needs and financial assessment had been conducted for his mother.
Findings:	The social worker had acted correctly in making a FAB assessment referral as care needs had been agreed. However, son was incorrectly informed that a package of care would be withdrawn following confusion regarding a property owned by his mother that the Council assessed as taking her above the threshold. It was later established that the property should be disregarded.
Remedy:	The financial assessment was corrected and an apology issued to the son.
Learning Recommendations:	Take measures to establish frequency of occurrence and to mitigate future repetition of fault.
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The case has been reviewed by a senior manager which established a high level of confidence that the case was an isolated incident. An action plan has been drafted which includes intention to publish an article in a future edition of The Loop (publish date to be confirmed) to remind all social work staff of their responsibility to arrange care even if the customer is self-funding and to ensure needs are assessed before a financial assessment is discussed.
Ref:	1201165
Issue:	Parents complained that the Council failed to commission or provide therapy to meet their child's speech and language

	and occupational therapy needs.
Findings:	The Council failed to provide the therapy identified in the child's plan. As a result, the child's special educational needs provision was disrupted.
Remedy:	An apology has been given to the family and appropriate financial remedy paid to compensate for time and trouble spent by the parents in pursuing this matter. Missed therapy sessions have been caught up and financial assistance provided to address the detrimental effects of the disruption on the child's education.
Learning Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service reviews the processes used to monitor the number of therapy sessions allocated and used by individual children. • The Service produces an action plan of how it will monitor whether it has received Annual Review reports from schools within timescale and how it can enforce it. • The authority puts in place a clear action plan to establish good practice, achievable outcomes and a robust short, medium and long term commissioning strategy (in terms of therapies).
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCC has changed the way Annual Reviews are recorded and is improving the reporting and tracking. • Commissioning capacity has increased with the appointment of a Commissioner for SEN & Disabilities.

Ref:	2177166
Issue:	Complaint regarding delays, failure to engage, reply and provide information in connection with a planning enforcement investigation.
Findings:	There were delays in the investigation and in handling the complaint about that, which caused unnecessary uncertainty for the complainants and hindered their efforts to resolve a planning dispute.
Remedy:	An apology was given to the complainants and contribution made towards increased costs incurred as a result of the delay.
Learning Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural improvements regarding keeping customers informed during investigations.
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy at the time promised updates at 'relevant stages'. The Council has agreed to instead adopt a commitment to review open investigations regularly and will incorporate this as part of the improvement plan resulting from a wider review of its planning service.

Ref:	3123465
Issue:	Foster carers raised a complaint regarding the way an allegation against them had been investigated. They disagreed with some of the information included in the investigation and were unhappy with timescales of the investigation and complaint.
Findings:	There was a delay in addressing the complaint. There was

	<p>some confusion between the Contact Centre and the service as to who should log the issue to the complaints system.</p> <p>On review of the investigation, it was felt that the majority of the information used was relevant but that the context was now always fully explored.</p>
Remedy:	The investigation process and the way in which the complaint was managed have been independently reviewed. A letter of clarification has been sent to the customers and apologies made where fault or ambiguity was found.
Learning Recommendations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide some refresher training to the Contact Centre regarding complaint process and logging. • Provide some feedback to staff involved in investigations regarding the level of detail required in reports to ensure that context of information is clear.
Actions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of training for new and existing Contact Centre staff has been delivered by the Customer Experience Team. This will be regularly revisited. • Investigation process and report contents addressed with relevant staff by manager through team meeting process (13/04/2018).

The Customer Experience Team, with services, will continue to review complaints where fault is found in order to help ensure appropriate remedy for affected individuals and practical learning and improvement for the wider delivery of services. This process will be part of 'business as usual' to ensure that the remedies are timely and that maximum opportunity is taken to mitigate future fault. Action plans will be monitored and evidenced.

2. Detailed Data - Children's Services

2.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Children's Services feedback received across the last 3 years broken down by social care and other children's services.

Feedback Type	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
CSC Complaints	303	267	272
CSC Compliments	135	124	67
CSC Comments	9	16	6
CSC Member Enquiries	Unknown	19	11
Total CSC Feedback	447	426	356
Other Children's Complaints	86	131	187
Other Children's Compliments	46	144	110
Other Children's Comments	1	9	4
Other Children's Member Enquiries	Unknown	35	34
Total Other Children's Feedback	133	319	335
Total Children's Feedback	580	745	691

2.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 459 complaints about children's services were received in 2017/18. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number		%	
Stage 1 – resolved in year	371	219 CSC	80.82%	47.71%
		152 Other		33.11%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	82	49 CSC	17.86%	10.67%
		33 Other		7.19%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	0		0%	
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	1	1 CSC	0.22%	
		0 Other		
Stage 3 – resolved in year	0		0%	
Stage 3 – Still open at end of year	0		0%	
LGO – resolved in year	2	1 CSC	0.44%	0.22%
		1 Other		0.22%
LGO – Still open at end of year	3	2 CSC	0.66%	0.44%
		1 Other		0.22%
	459			

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for children's services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	
29 working days	26 working days	26 working days	CSC – 31 wd
			Other – 18 wd

For the 82 stage 1 children's services complaints that were received in 2017/18 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 45. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	16
10 – 20	18
21 – 30	12
31 – 40	6
41 – 50	6
51 – 60	0
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	6
81 – 90	2
91 – 100	4
> 100	11
	82

The table below shows the outcomes for the 371 stage 1 children's services complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	10%	9%	35	10%	+1%
Not Upheld	48%	35%	178	48%	+13%
Partly Upheld	22%	33%	85	23%	-10%
Resolved Upon Receipt	8%	8%	27	7%	-1%
Withdrawn/Rejected	12%	15%	46	12%	-3%
	100%	100%	371	100%	

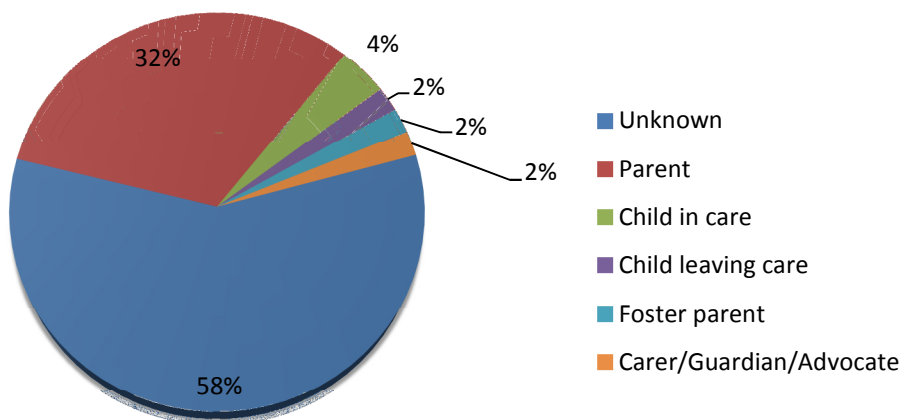
Of the 120 children's services complaints that were upheld or partly upheld in 2017/18, 88 related to children's social care and 32 to other children's services.

2.3 Customer Profiles

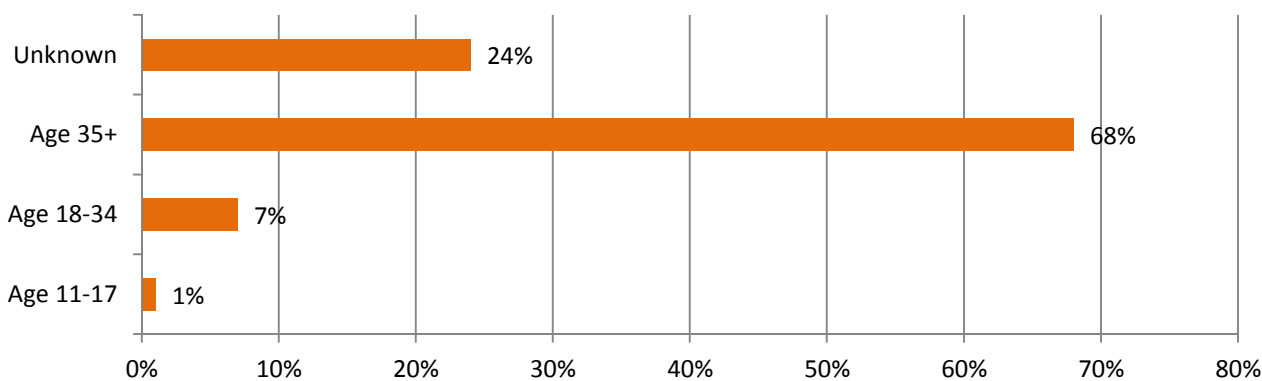
Collecting 'customer profile' information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:

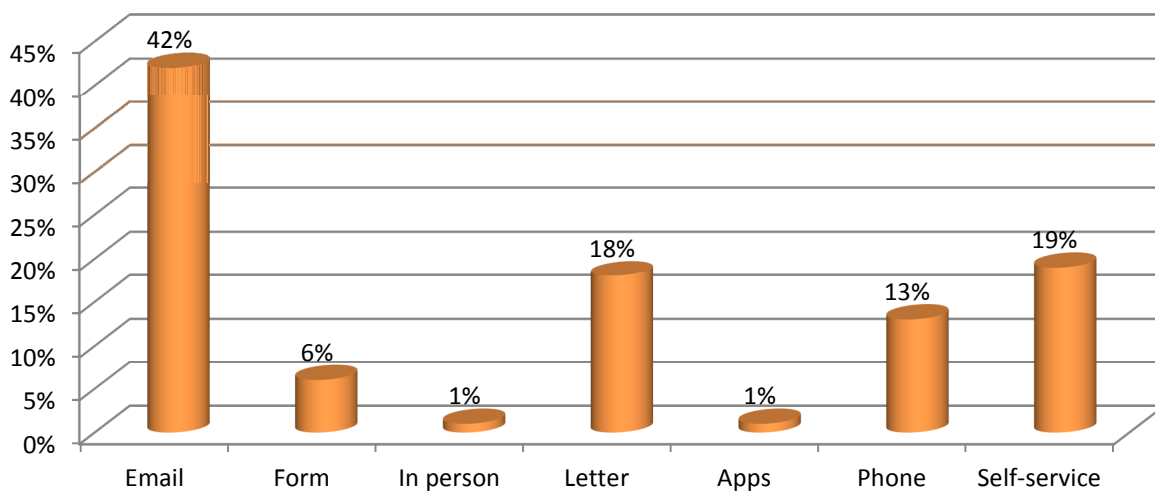
Complaints Source



Complaints by age



Complaints by channel



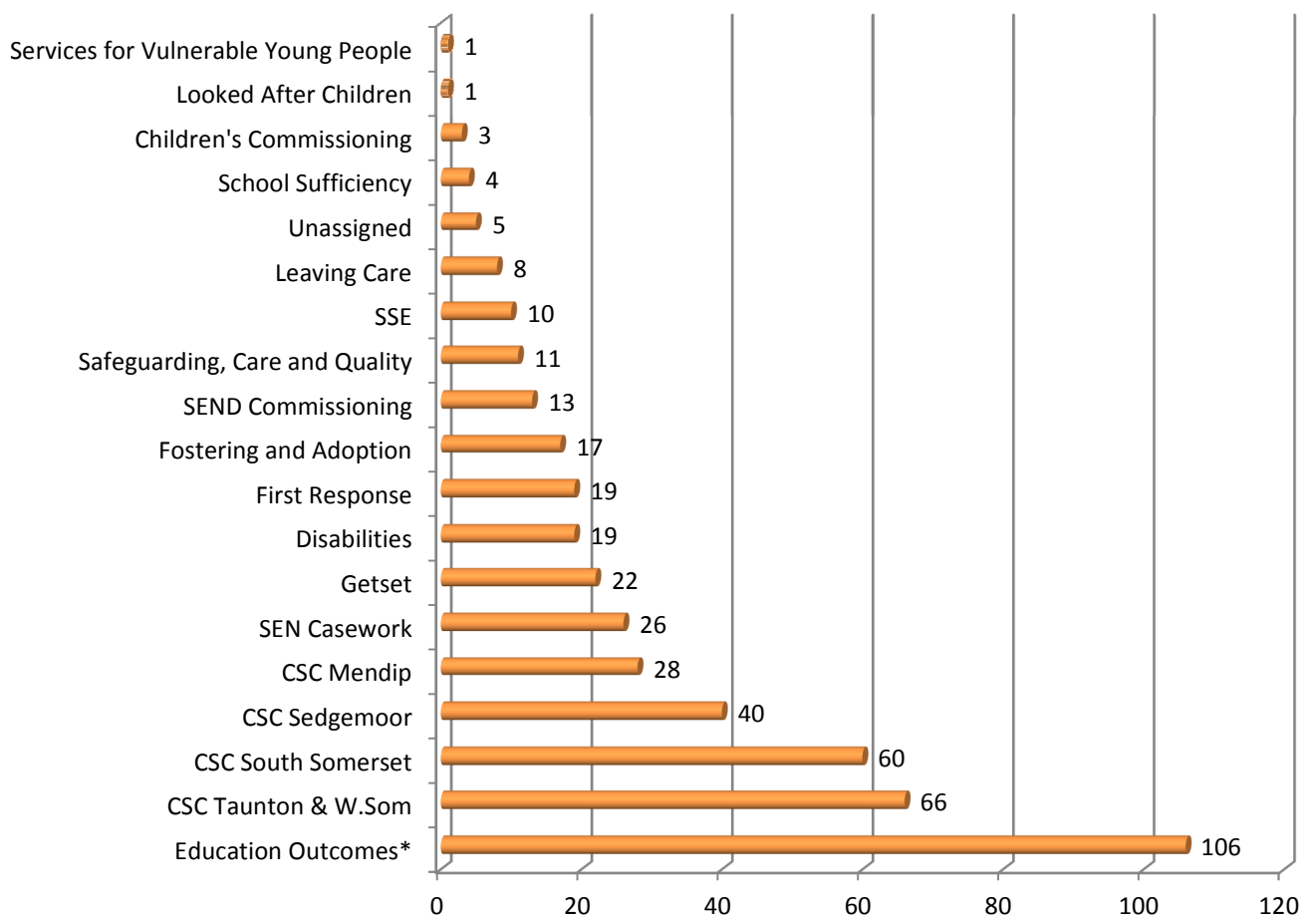
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2016 – 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	+/-
Phone	12%	13%	+1%
Email	30%	42%	+12%
Letter	20%	18%	-2%
Self-Service	13%	19%	+6%
Form	18%	6%	-12%
In Person	6%	1%	-5%
Text	1%	0%	-1%
Apps	0%	1%	+1%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

2.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all children’s services of the 459 complaints received during 2017/18.

Number of complaints



***Note** – the ‘Education Outcomes’ complaints are predominantly investigation referrals from OFSTED or the Secretary of State arising from parental complaints about schools. Therefore these are not direct complaints about Somerset County Council services. We will be re-categorising these in future so that the distinction is more clearly made.

The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 371 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Leaving Care	10 working days
Education Outcomes	15 working days
SSE	15 working days
SEND Commissioning	16 working days
Getset	19 working days
SEN Casework	21 working days
CSC South Somerset	22 working days
CSC Sedgemoor	22 working days
First Response	23 working days
Safeguarding, Care and Quality	32 working days
CSC Mendip	33 working days
Fostering and Adoption	40 working days
Services for Vulnerable Young People	43 working days
Disabilities	46 working days
CSC Taunton & W.Som	48 working days
Looked After Children	52 working days
Children's Commissioning	76 working days
School Sufficiency	77 working days

2.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for complaints about children's services and the broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (inc. open/rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	49	18%
Accuracy of information	Information	23	
Amount of information given		4	
Quality of information/advice		3	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	108	36%
Implementation of policy and procedures		12	
Decision		3	
Result of assessment		30	
Plan	Service Quality	14	8%
Quality of service		8	
Quality of 3 rd party services		3	
Arrangements for daily living		20	
Contact Arrangements	Unfair Treatment	7	1%
Bullying & Harassment		1	
Discrimination	Confidentiality	4	3%
Confidentiality		13	
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	22	9%
Timeliness of doing something		5	
Timeliness of service provision		10	
Service availability		1	

Other service failure cause		1	
Communication by service	Communication	7	17%
Quality of communication		40	
Timeliness of communication		31	
Other communication cause		2	
Staff conduct		2	
Professionalism	Staff Conduct	31	8%
Assistance/help from staff		1	
Staff rudeness		1	
Staff behaviour		3	

2.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 459 complaints received about children's services in 2017/18, 6 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 1 case to stage 2 of the complaints process and 5 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents just 1.30% of cases received.

The stage 2 case is still open to investigation at the close of year. The case relates to the Taunton and West Somerset social care team.

Of the 5 cases referred to the LGO, 2 have been resolved in year and 3 remain open at the close. The 3 open cases relate to the Taunton and West Somerset social care team, the Fostering and Adoption team and the SEN Casework team. Details of the 2 resolved in-year LGO complaints are shown below:

LGO Case 1

The customer complained that the council was delaying letter box contact with his children. The LGO made initial enquiries but decided not to make a full investigation. The LGO stated that it was unlikely they would find fault by the council. Whilst letterbox contact was agreed by the court, it was with the agreement of the adoptive parents and the Council's role was only to act as go-between between the various parties. The Council has no powers to enforce the agreement or to return the matter to court.

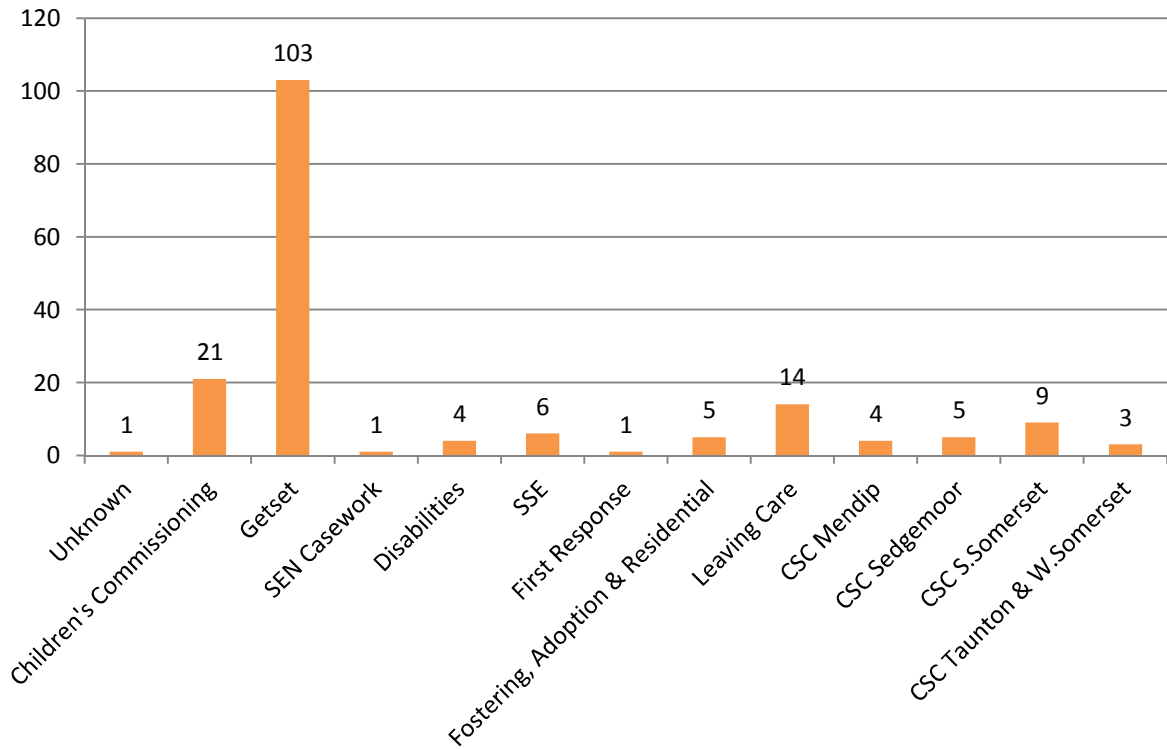
LGO Case 2

The customer complained that Getset had failed to provide information he had requested about his son. The customer also approached the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO) about the matter. The ICO upheld the Council's decision not to release the information to the customer. The Council had asked the child's permission and it had been refused. The Council felt that the child had sufficient understanding to make an informed decision on the matter. The LGO decided not to investigate the complaint on the grounds that the ICO is the appropriate body to consider the matter and an investigation by the Ombudsman would not lead to a different outcome.

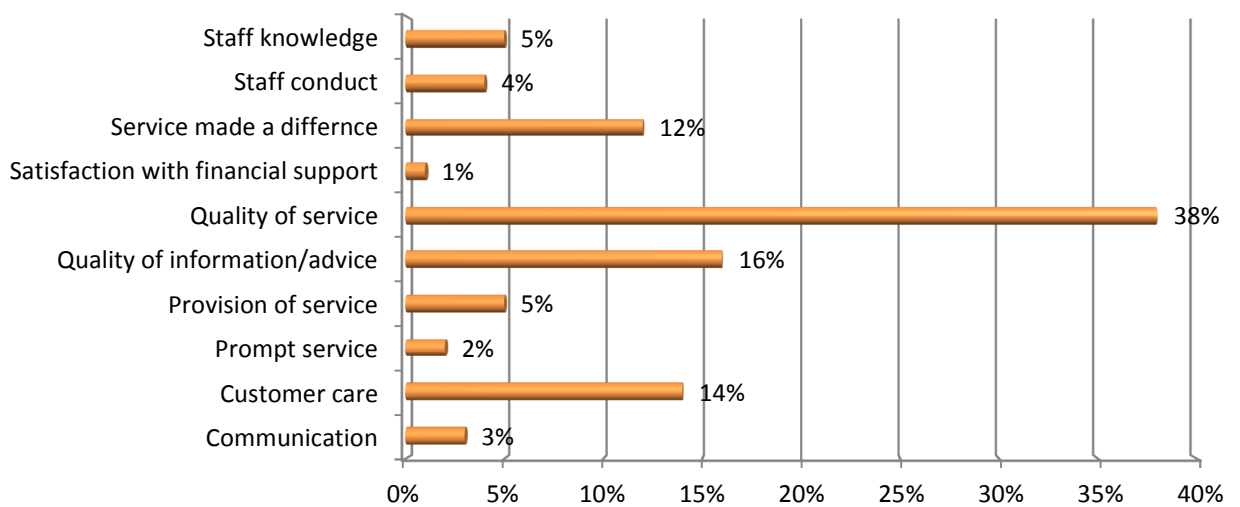
2.7 Compliments

There were 34% less compliments recorded for children's services in 2017/18 than for the previous year (46% drop for social care and 23% drop for other children's services). The charts below provide further information.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



2.8 Other Feedback

10 general comments about children's services were received during the year. Comments can range from suggestions for improvement to services to the thoughts and opinions of local residents regarding council services in general and the funding of them. Comments are monitored and practical suggestions are passed to appropriate managers.

45 enquiries relating to children's services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding children's services in 2017/18 was 10 working days.

3. Detailed Data - Adult Services

3.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Adult Services feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
Adults Complaints	240	305	269
Adults Compliments	133	128	83
Adults Comments	29	15	3
Adults Member Enquiries	19	35	26
Total Adults Feedback	421	483	381

3.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 269 complaints about adults services were received in 2017/18. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	226	84%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	34	13%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	3	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	0	0%
LGO – resolved in year	4	1%
LGO – Still open at end of year	2	1%
	269	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for adult services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018
29 working days	30 working days	23 working days

For the 34 stage 1 adult services complaints that were received in 2017/18 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 36. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	3
10 – 20	9

21 – 30	6
31 – 40	6
41 – 50	2
51 – 60	3
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	1
81 – 90	2
91 – 100	1
> 100	1
	34

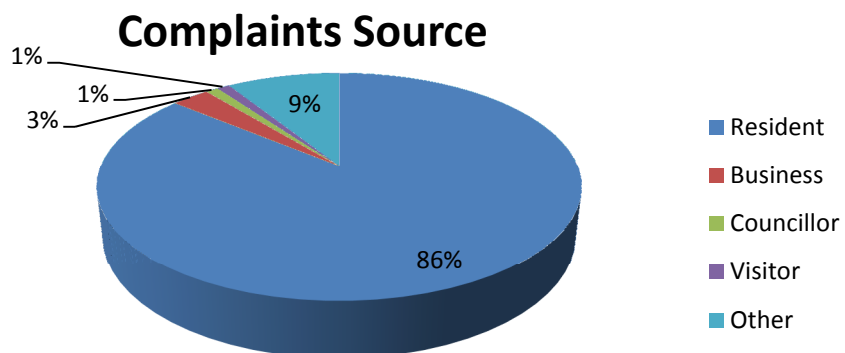
The table below shows the outcomes for the 226 stage 1 adult services complaints resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	20%	19%	49	22%	+3%
Not Upheld	21%	33%	73	32%	-1%
Partly Upheld	25%	28%	58	25%	-3%
Resolved Upon Receipt	20%	20%	22	10%	-10%
Withdrawn/Rejected	14%	0%	24	11%	+11%
	100%	100%	226	100%	

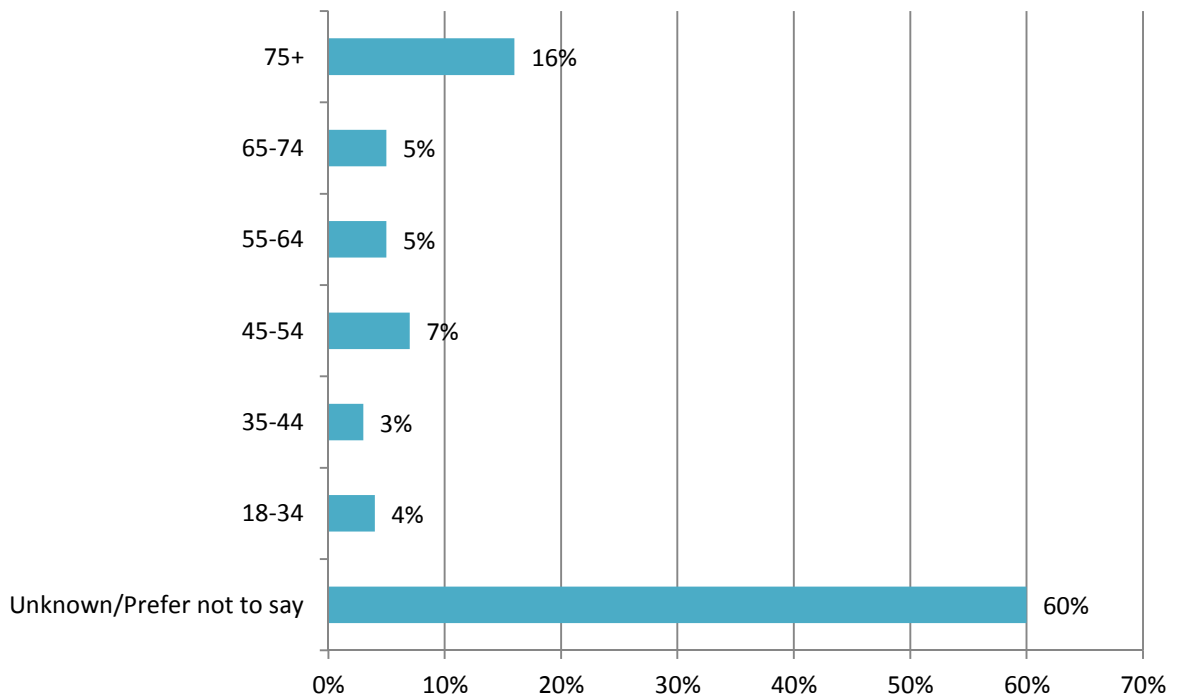
3.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

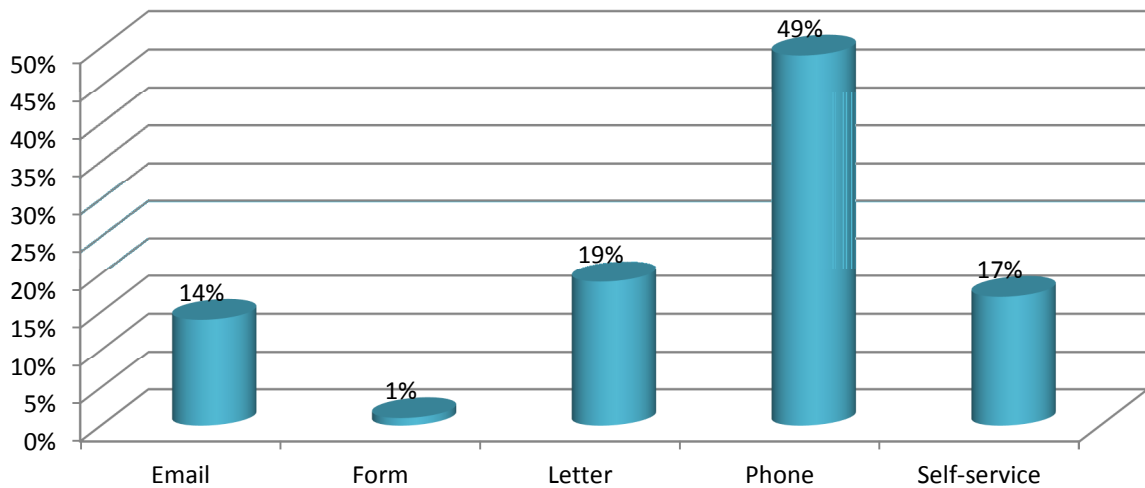
The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



Age of complainant



Complaints by channel

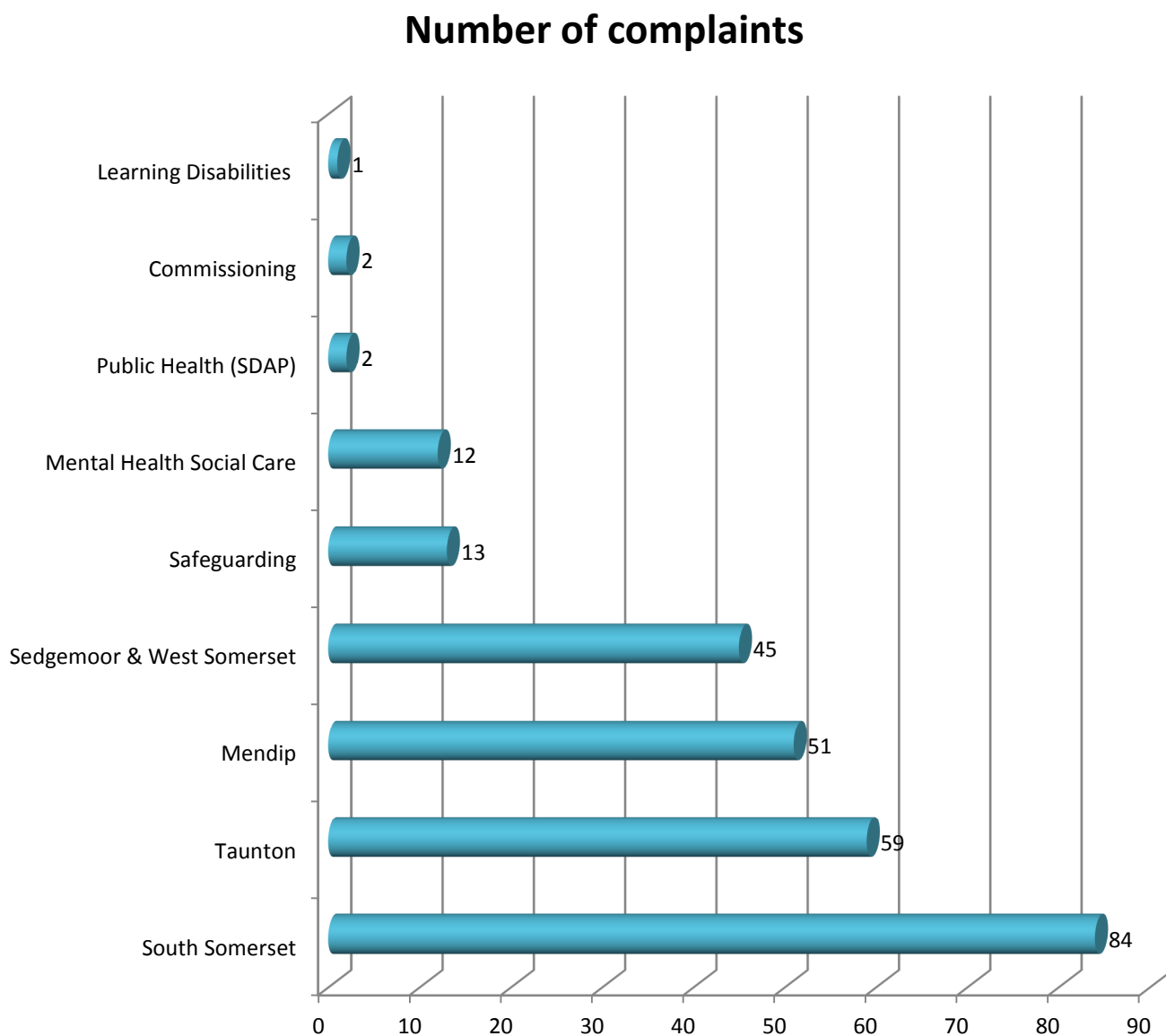


Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2016 – 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	+/-
Phone	35%	49%	+14%
Email	21%	14%	-7%
Letter	20%	19%	-1%
Self-Service	12%	17%	+5%
Form	10%	1%	-9%
In Person	2%	0%	-2%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

3.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across adult services of the 269 complaints received during 2017/18.



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 226 stage 1 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
South Somerset	35 working days
Taunton	25 working days
Mendip	23 working days
Sedgemoor & West Somerset	31 working days
Safeguarding	15 working days
Mental Health Social Care	19 working days

Public Health (SDAP)	37 working days
Commissioning	25 working days
Learning Disabilities	189 working days

3.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for resolved adult services complaints and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (inc. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	10	7%
Amount of information given	Information	3	
Quality of information/advice		3	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	5	7%
Implementation of policy and procedures		2	
Decision		8	
Quality of service	Service Quality	25	14%
Quality of 3 rd party services		7	
Discrimination	Unfair Treatment	1	<1%
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	49	38%
Timeliness of doing something		24	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		11	
Other service failure cause		2	
Communication by service	Communication	15	16%
Timeliness of communication		11	
Other communication cause		10	
Staff conduct	Staff Conduct	2	10%
Assistance/help from staff		1	
Missed appointment		1	
Staff rudeness		3	
Staff behaviour		15	
Amount of financial support given	Financial	4	8%
Payments or disputed charges		10	
Payment not received		4	
		226	100%

3.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 269 complaints received about adult services in 2017/18, 9 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 3 cases to stage 2 of the complaints process and 6 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 3% of cases received.

The 3 stage 2 cases were resolved in year. 2 cases related to the South Somerset area and 1 to Sedgemoor and West Somerset. One case was not upheld and 2 were partly upheld.

Partly upheld stage 2 – case 1

The complaint related to the care of an elderly couple with complex needs. The couple share a house with their daughter and son-in-law who were struggling to cope with providing care as their father's condition deteriorated. The element of the complaint that was upheld was regarding the timeliness of support following a period of respite. It was agreed that the daughter's requests to enable her parents return from respite were reasonable but that SCC had failed to put appropriate support in place in a timely manner. A plan for a new assessment of needs was agreed and the options of care packages and direct payments discussed.

Partly upheld stage 2 – case 2

The upheld aspect of this complaint concerned a son's dissatisfaction that he had wrongly been told that his mother's package of care would be withdrawn. On investigation, it was clear that there was some confusion in this case. The mother had a property in which she did not reside that took her above the funding threshold. It was later confirmed that the complainant's aunt (sister of the customer) was living in that property and it would therefore be disregarded. The complainant received an apology and, whilst confident that this was an isolated example, the appropriate policies and procedures were revisited with staff by managers.

Of the 6 cases referred to the LGO, 4 have been resolved in year and 2 remain open at the close. The 2 open cases relate to South Somerset and Safeguarding. Details of the 4 resolved in-year LGO complaints are shown below:

LGO Case 1

This case related to commissioned care received by the complainant's mother in a care home setting. The LGO undertook an investigation in to the matters raised by the customer's son but found that there was no fault in the assessment of the care needed or the care provided by the home.

LGO Case 2

The complainant was unhappy that his late father's care home was asking for money from his father's estate which he did not feel was due and that the council had not been clear/timely in this regard. The LGO investigator did not find fault with the Council.

LGO Case 3

The complaint related to a customer that had received care from two local authorities, including Somerset. The LGO made some initial enquiries with Somerset but the substance of the complaint rested with the other Council.

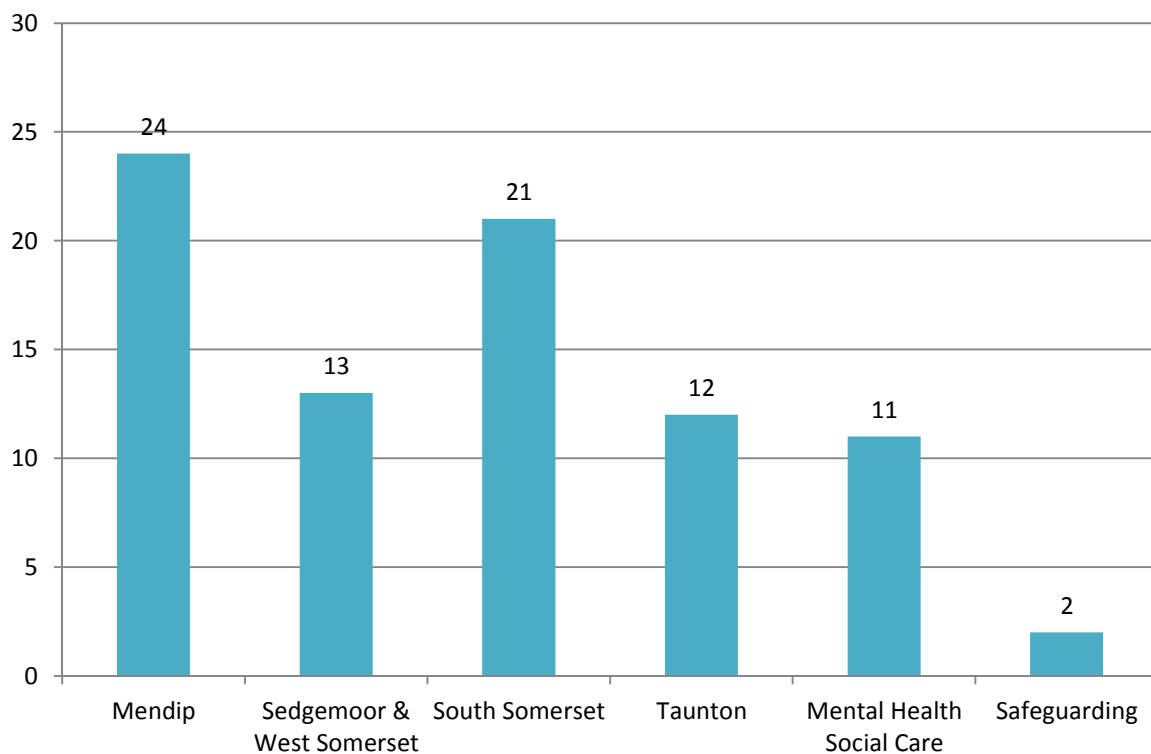
LGO Case 4

The complaint was sent by the LGO to the Council as it had been prematurely referred to them by the customer. The council have investigated and responded to the complaint. The LGO have closed their involvement.

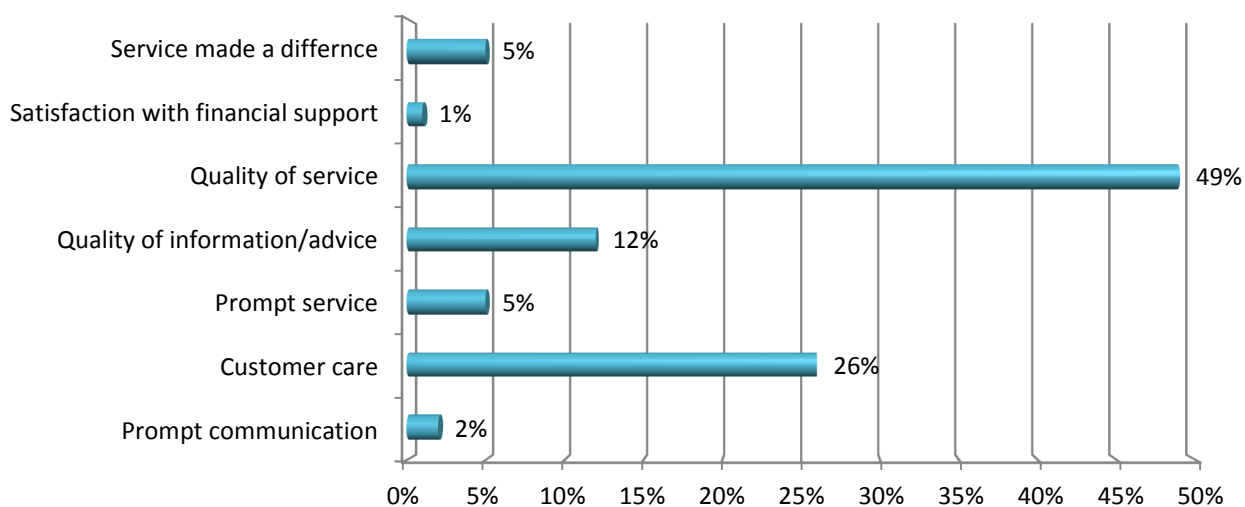
3.7 Compliments

There were 35% less compliments recorded for adult services in 2017/18 than for the previous year (83, down from 128). The charts below shows the service split for 2017/18 compliments.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



3.8 Other Feedback

3 general comments about adult services were received during the year. One was a suggestion about improvements to an online form and the other two general views/opinions regarding care and health services in the county. The comments were routed to appropriate managers for consideration.

26 enquiries relating to adult services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding adult services in 2017/18 was 22 working days.

4. Detailed Data - Economic & Community Infrastructure

4.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of ECI feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018
ECI Complaints	231	196	275
ECI Compliments	333	261	273
ECI Comments	80	51	60
ECI Member Enquiries	Not known	2	113
Total Adults Feedback	644	510	721

4.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 275 complaints about ECI services were received in 2017/18. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	254	92%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	13	5%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	2	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	0	0%
LGO – resolved in year	5	2%
LGO – Still open at end of year	1	<1%
	275	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for ECI services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018
20 working days	15 working days	16 working days

For the 13 stage 1 ECI complaints that were received in 2017/18 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 30. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	5

10 – 20	1
21 – 30	3
31 – 40	2
41 – 50	0
51 – 60	0
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	1
91 – 100	0
> 100	1
	13

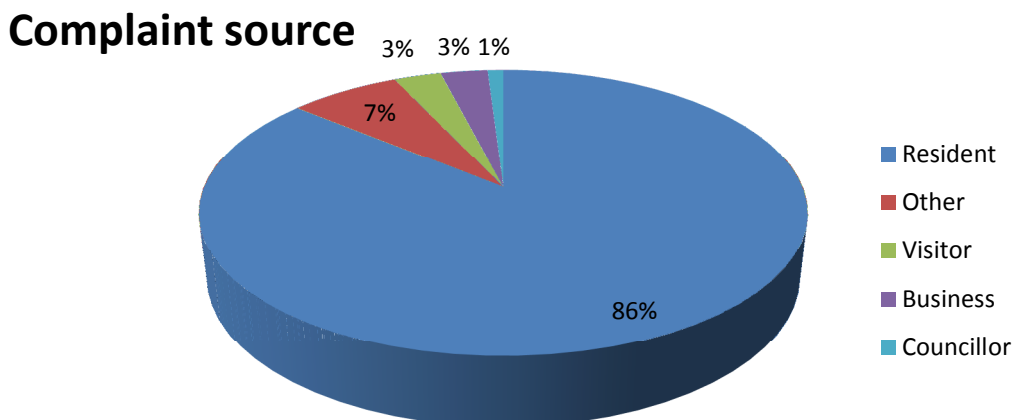
The table below shows the outcomes for the 254 stage 1 ECI complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2015 – 31 st March 2016	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	17%	17%	41	16%	-1%
Not Upheld	39%	33%	82	32%	-1%
Partly Upheld	22%	26%	21	8%	-18%
Resolved Upon Receipt	22%	19%	48	19%	Neu
Withdrawn/Rejected	0%	5%	62	25%	+20%
	100%	100%	254	100%	

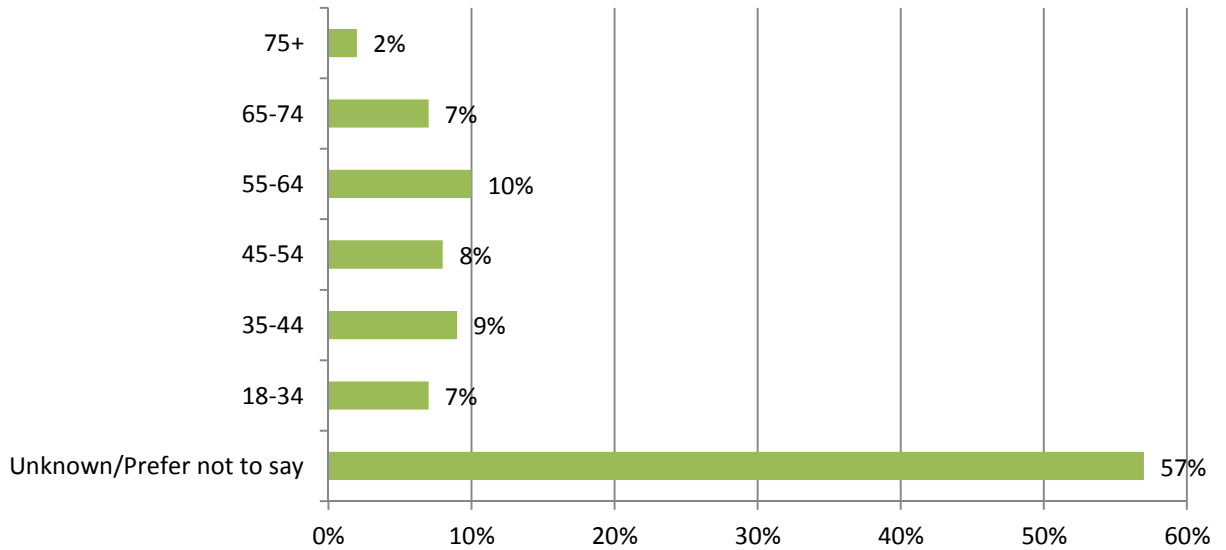
4.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the nature of the issues or interaction did not lend itself to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

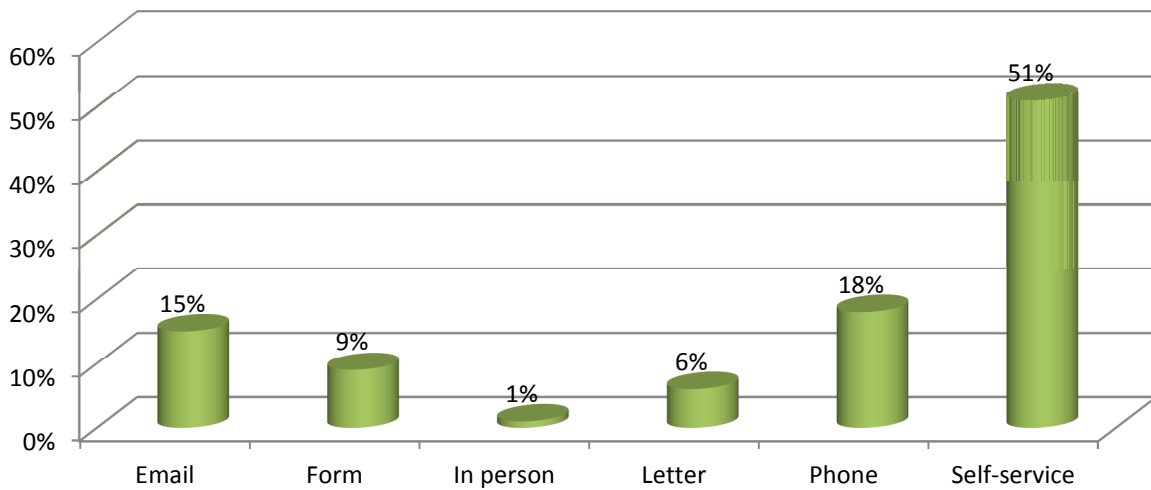
The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



Age of complainant



Complaints by channel



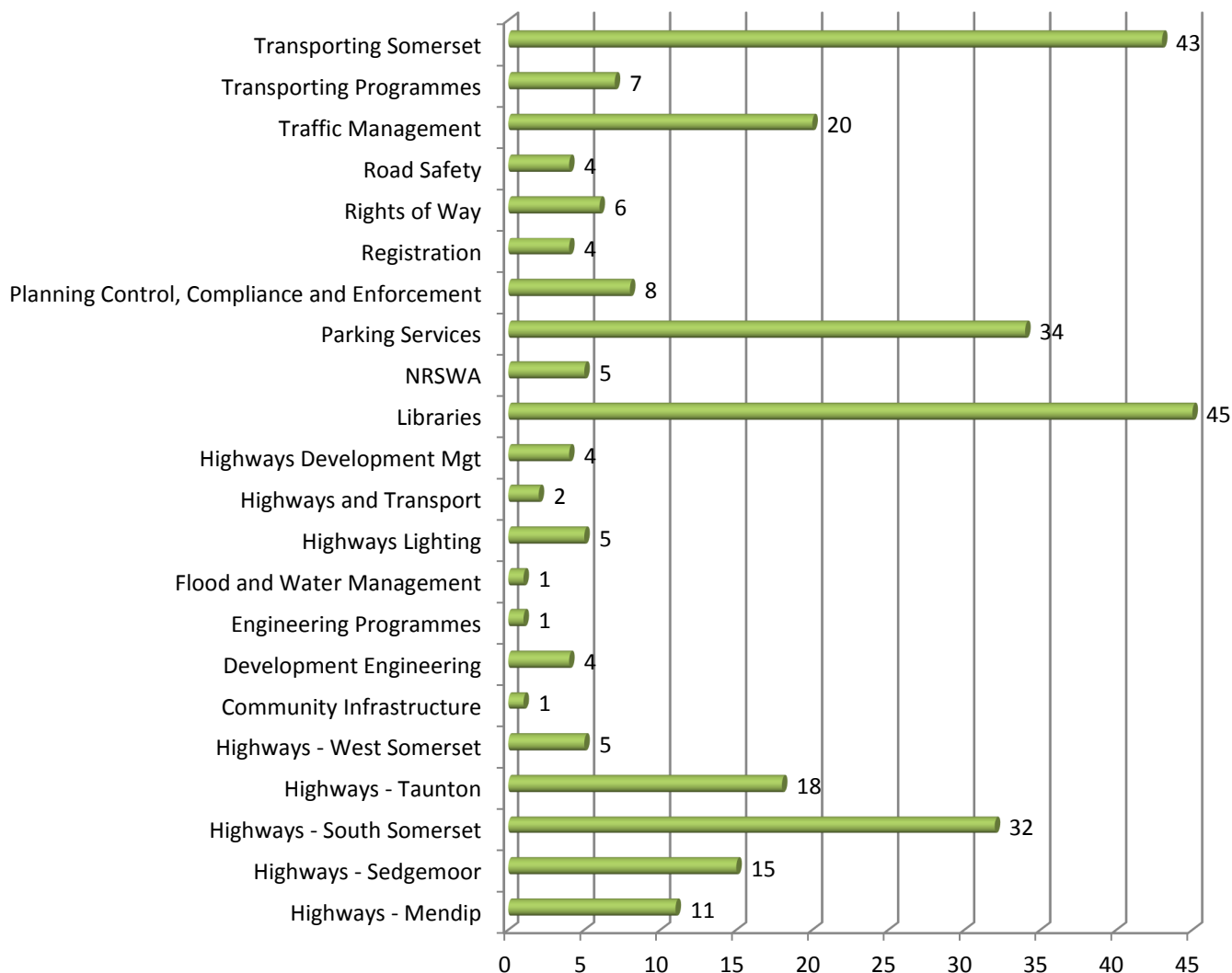
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2016 – 31 Mar 2017	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	+/-
Phone	13%	18%	+5%
Email	12%	15%	+3%
Letter	10%	6%	-4%
Self-Service	54%	51%	-3%
Form	10%	9%	-1%
In Person	1%	1%	Neu

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

4.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all ECI services of the 275 complaints received during 2017/18.

Number of complaints



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 254 ECI complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Highways - Mendip	13 working days
Highways – Sedgemoor	16 working days
Highways – South Somerset	21 working days
Highways – Taunton	18 working days
Highways – West Somerset	10 working days
Community Infrastructure	3 working days
Development Engineering	42 working days
Engineering Programmes	1 working day
Highways Lighting	9 working days

Highways and Transport	5 working days
Highways Development Management	15 working days
Libraries	11 working days
NRSA	33 working days
Parking Services	13 working days
Planning Control, Compliance & Enforcement	20 working days
Registration	109 working days
Rights of Way	20 working days
Road Safety	14 working days
Traffic Management	17 working days
Transporting Programmes	25 working days
Transporting Somerset	12 working days

4.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for all 254 resolved stage 1 complaints about ECI services and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (inc. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	68	27%
Amount of information given	Information	5	4%
Quality of information/advice		4	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	15	12%
Implementation of policy and procedures		10	
Decision		6	
Quality of service	Service Quality	39	24%
Quality of 3 rd party services		22	
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	26	16%
Timeliness of doing something		7	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		5	
Other service failure cause		4	
Communication by service	Communication	8	14%
Timeliness of communication		3	
Other communication cause		12	
Assistance/help from staff		1	
Staff rudeness		2	
Staff behaviour		10	
Amount of charge	Financial	2	3%
Timeliness of payment		1	
Other payment or disputed charge cause		4	
		254	100%

4.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 275 complaints received about ECI services in 2017/18, 8 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 2 cases to stage 2 and 6 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 2.9% of cases received.

1 of the stage 2 cases related to Traffic and Transport Development and the other covered issues relating to both the Library Service and the Somerset Rivers Authority – it was the SRA aspect that we considered at stage 2. Both cases were resolved in year. No fault was found in relation to the SRA complaint. In relation to the Traffic and Transport Development complaint, the substantive issues were not upheld at stage 2 though it was accepted that the service response at stage 1 was slightly later than the target of 10 working days. An apology was issued to the customer for this in the stage 2 response.

Of the 6 cases referred to the LGO, 5 have been resolved in year and 1 remains open at the close. From the 5 cases that have been resolved by the LGO, fault was found in just 1. Details are provided below.

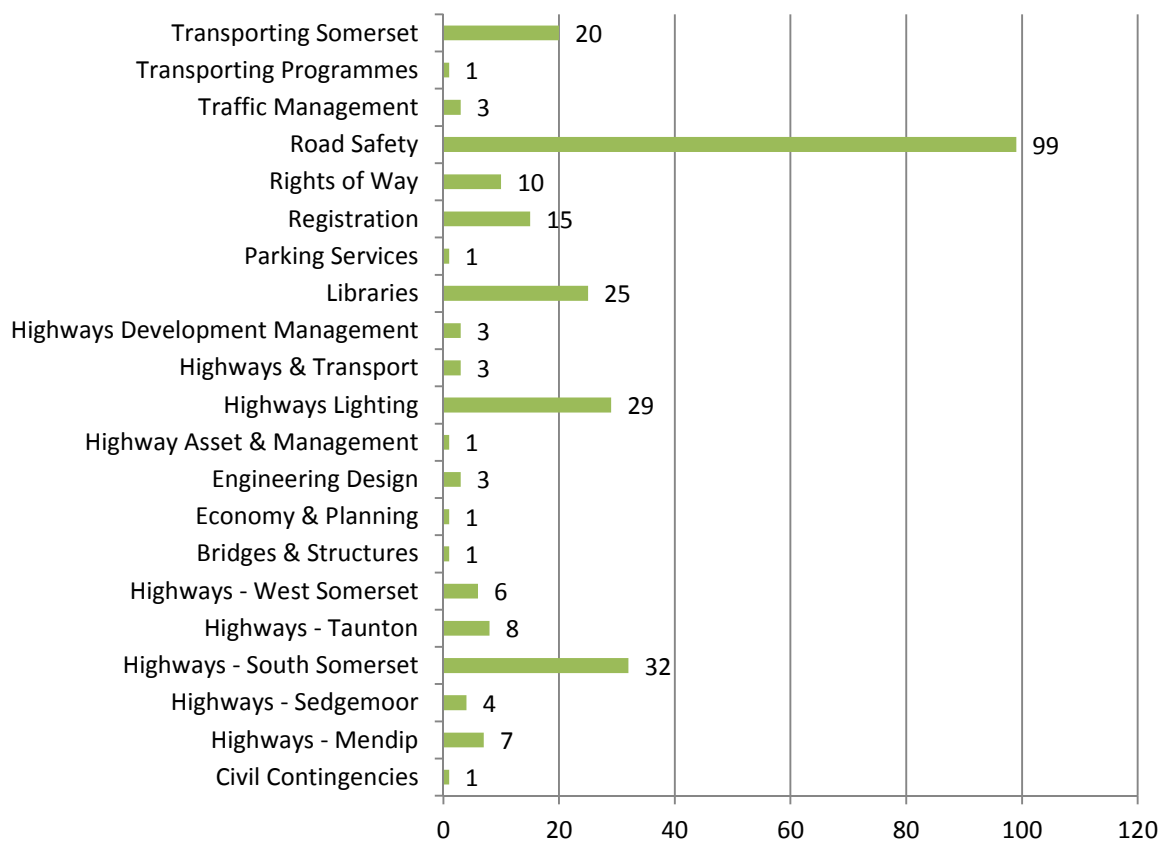
LGO Case 1

The customer complained to the LGO that the Council had delayed in completing a modification investigation of a bridleway. The Ombudsman agreed with the customer that the Council’s failure to complete the investigation in a timely manner was fault but ruled that the fault had not caused the customer significant injustice.

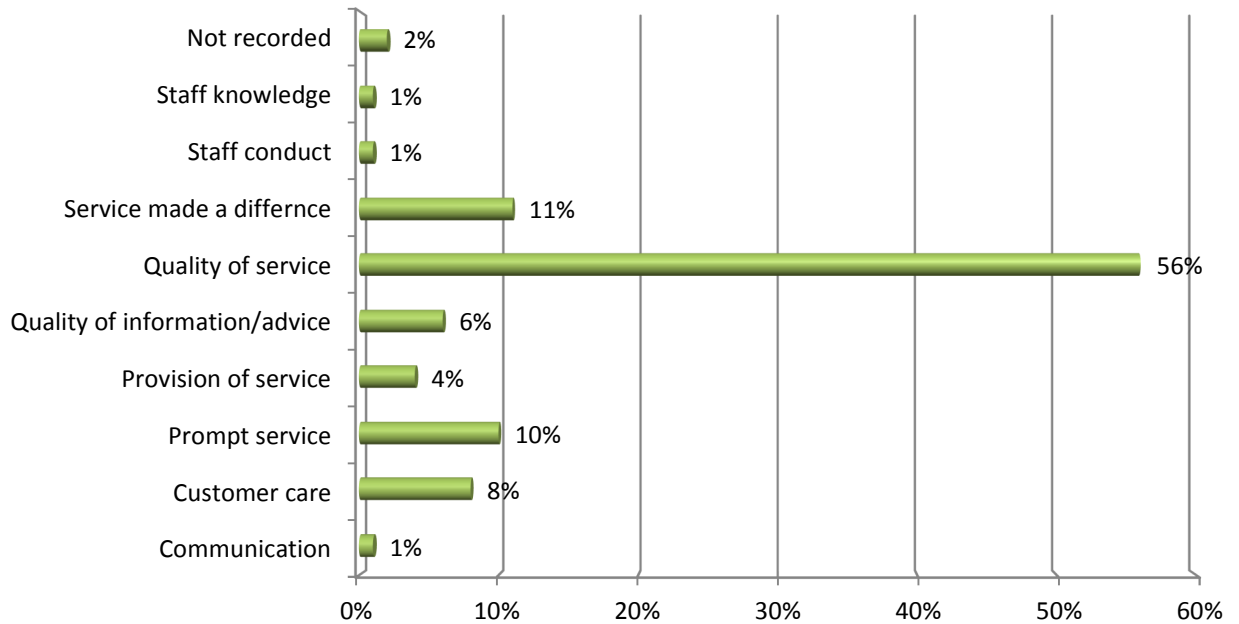
4.7 Compliments

There was a 4.5% rise in compliments recorded for ECI services in 2017/18 compared with the previous year. The chart below shows the service split.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:

I arrived late, stressed and emotional...but the Registrar made me feel better; she was calm and kind and made the whole thing seem easy.

...there was minimum fuss and disruption, and all the workmen were very cheerful and obliging...

...the new system has noticeably sped up my commute...such a smart change!

The repaired stile is lovely – all solid and easy to climb...again a smashing job.

...Wi-Fi and internet are profoundly useful...I have been delighted to receive help to do specific tasks which help me communicate...

I have only just discovered the RoW interactive website...it is excellent...I am sure it will give people confidence to explore...

I have been doing family history for 35 years; it has to be the best Registration Service I have ever dealt with.

4.8 Other Feedback

60 general comments about ECI services were received during the year. The comments are quite wide ranging and include, opinions on decisions made by the council (e.g. stopping the Gateway park and ride on a Saturday), problems with parking close to home due to the number of cars parked on the resident's street, suggestions about how to relieve traffic congestion in Taunton, reaction to local news items about the library consultation, reports of illegal parking and suggestions for enforcement and the quality of the signing pen provided at a local registration office. All comments are assigned to the appropriate service manager for consideration.

113 enquiries relating to ECI services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for received and resolved member enquiries regarding ECI services in 2017/18 was 24 working days.