

Adult Social Care compliments and complaints

Annual Report (2020-21)

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about the council’s action, lack of action or standard of service.
- 1.2. When we receive a complaint in Adult Social Care, our aim is to resolve and learn from the issues raised to ensure they do not happen again. Our ambition is to ensure we get things right first time, and that customers do not need to make a complaint.
- 1.3. We actively encourage service users and their carers to make complaints as they help us to identify where we are not getting things right and what we need to do to improve services.
- 1.4. Adult Social Care Complaints are managed through a statutory one-stage process. On receipt of a complaint, the service is given the opportunity to reply (stage one response) and if the complainant is not satisfied with the response this can be reviewed by another officer; usually a more senior manager (stage one review). The stage one response should normally be sent within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint and the review 20 working days after a request for review is received. Where necessary, these deadlines may be extended, but all complaints should be investigated and responded to within six months.
- 1.5. All complaints can be escalated by the complainant to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) who will independently review the complaint and determine whether there has been any fault and their recommendations for remedying that fault. The LGSCO will normally only review a complaint after it has been through our full internal process (stage one response and stage one review).



- 1.6. Information about how to make a complaint is available on our website: [adult social services complaints process](#).

2. Summary

- 2.1. In the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, Adult Social Care had contact with 8,706 residents. This includes individual requests for support, short-term or one-off services and long-term support provided at any time in the reporting period.
- 2.2. In the same period, we received **57 individual** complaints, which represents 0.6% of the total number of contacts.
- 2.3. This compares to 101 complaints received in the previous year. This is a reduction of 44%.
- 2.4. Part of this reduction is due to a change in how complaints about finance are managed. From July 2020, complaints related to finance and charging were managed and responded to by Resources rather than Adult Social Care and are subject to Islington's corporate complaints policy, not the Adult Social Care complaints process. In 2019-20, there were 13 complaints about finance which represented 12% of the total complaints received. Assuming there was a similar number of complaints about finance in this reporting period, we would still report a 30% reduction in complaints between the two reporting periods.
- 2.5. **21%** of complaints were responded to within agreed timeframes (20 working days). The average time to respond to a complaint was **43 days**. This is disproportionately affected by two responses that were considerably late (150+ days). If these outliers are removed, the average time to respond was 35 days, which still shows there is room for improvement in response times.
- 2.6. Most complaints recorded their primary failure as '**poor quality of service provided**' (49%) or '**failed to provide a service**' (31%). There was only one complaint about a decision made - I.e., the outcome of a Care Act Assessment – which represents less than 0.02% of total assessments completed in the financial year (3,805).
- 2.7. **49%** of complaints were either upheld or partially upheld. **44%** were not upheld or withdrawn.

3. Common themes

- 3.1. The Covid pandemic has had an impact across all services, including our ability to investigate and respond to complaints. Throughout the pandemic, we have informed complainants that their stage one response was likely to be late, and most were, as evidenced by the low percentage of responses being on time (one-fifth). Overall, complainants have been accepting of this delay and we have not received any formal complaints about the delay in responses.

- 3.2. During Covid, residents have been more reliant on accessing information online through the council website or directory. This has highlighted the gaps and shortfalls in content online, which can often be out of date.
- 3.3. Accessibility continues to be an issue for some services, with notices and updates sent to residents in a format that they cannot access. Since September 2020, new accessibility laws came into force for how accessible content is online. These same principles should be applied to all other communication, alongside reasonable adjustments that residents already expect.
- 3.4. Several complaints were about staff conduct, and specifically the tone and language of staff when speaking with residents on the phone. Some of these were upheld and others were not. The volume of complaints may be due to several factors: it could be due to an increased workload on individual staff, but it may also be due to the lack of face-to-face contact and the loss of non-visual clues which help both parties interpret and understand what is being said.

4. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 4.1. After a complaint has completed our internal process, residents are advised of their right to escalate their complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
- 4.2. In 2020-21, three complaints were escalated to the LGSCO. All three were historical complaints completed in previous reporting cycles. Of the **three** complaints investigated by the LGSCO:
 - 4.2.1. **two** complaints were **upheld** with no further action required
 - 4.2.2. **one** was **not upheld**

5. Compliments

- 5.1. Adult Social Care received a total of **61 compliments** in the reporting period.
- 5.2. The most compliments received (18) were about the **Commissioning Team**, and in particular the Trusted Assessor role, who received eight individual compliments. One piece of feedback was:

'I have found the trusted assessor role extremely helpful and beneficial. Having a permanent contact between the nursing homes, has not only expedited discharges quicker, it has reduced the impact of miscommunication thus reducing unnecessary delays in discharges.'

- 5.3. The **Community Placement Review Team** (CPRT), which is responsible for completing and monitoring care plans, received 12 compliments. Staff in this service were regularly praised for their politeness, punctuality, empathy and understanding during what can be a very distressing and challenging time for families.

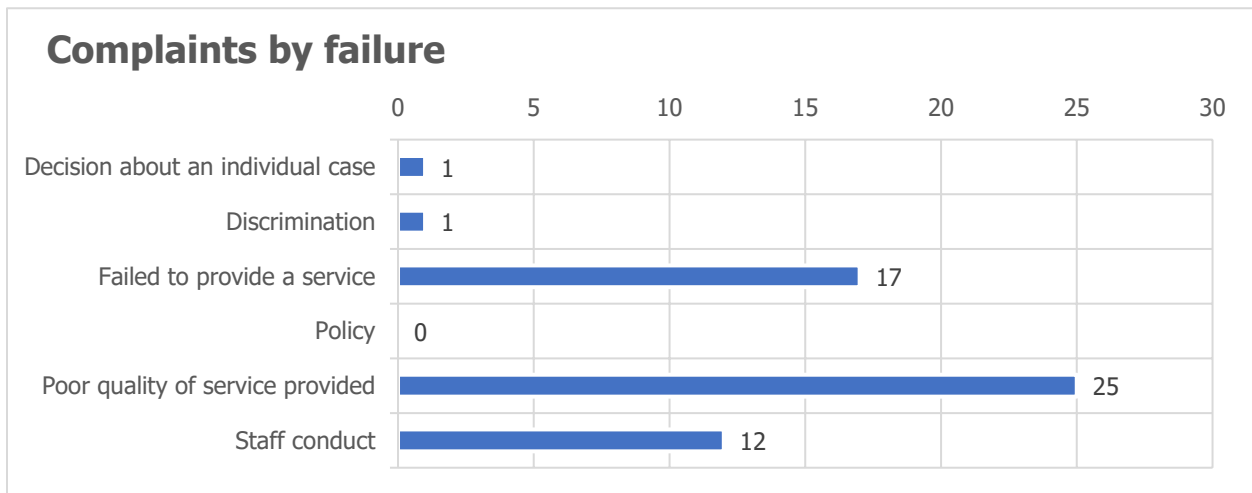
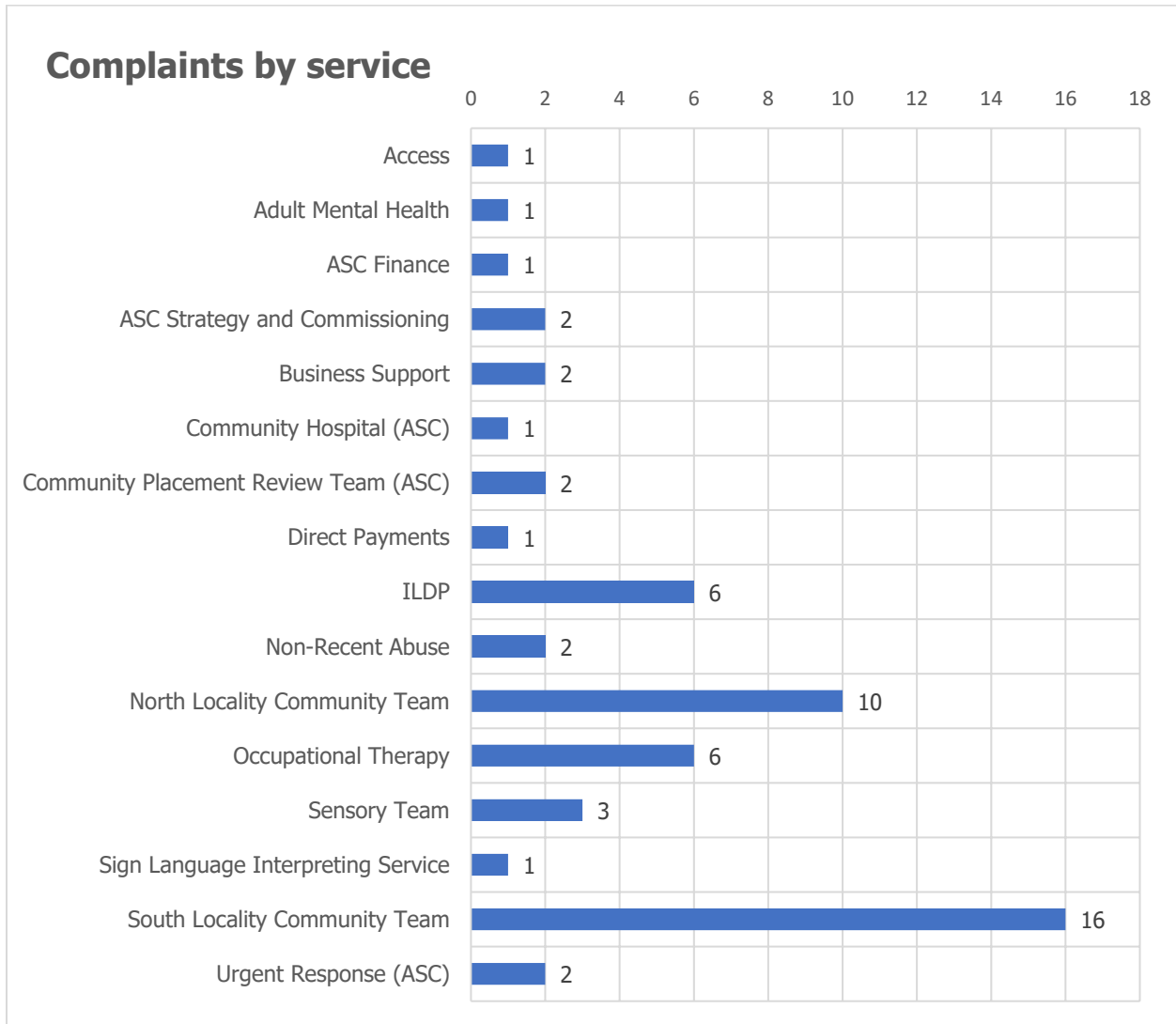
- 5.4. Here is an example of a compliment about a member of the Community Placement Review Team, received in the reporting period:

"X introduced herself in a very professional, warm way and very clearly explained why she was calling. She gave her full attention to what we say. She allowed us to explain ourselves, listened very carefully. It was a very trustful conversation. Sometimes Y was struggling with speech as it wasn't always very clear, X was very polite and respectful and listened very patiently. She explained the process and what steps she has to take and everything was exactly as she said. We have received the reports very fast. It was an absolute pleasure to deal with X. She is a true professional who showed an interested in her job and clients."

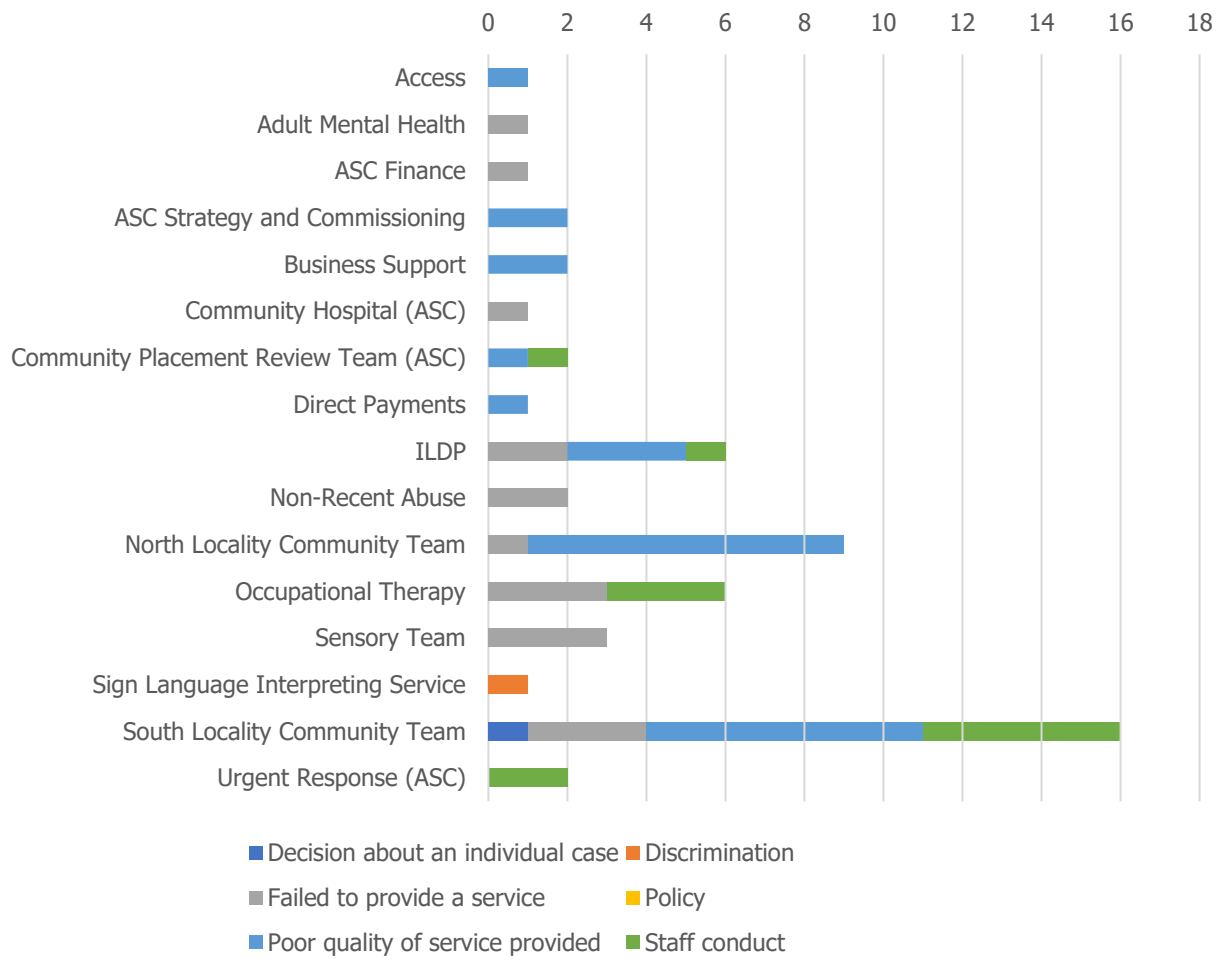
6. Actions

- 6.1. As part of Adult Social Care's ongoing improvement plan, services should continue to review their information online and ensure it is kept up to date or removed if there is no capacity to maintain it. Information about Adult Social Care is available on [Islington Council's website](#), and the [Adults Directory](#).
- 6.2. Services should continue to review their materials, particularly standard resources, and templates, to ensure they are in Plain English and available in alternative formats, such as Easy Read or in British Sign Language.

Appendix one: Number of complaints

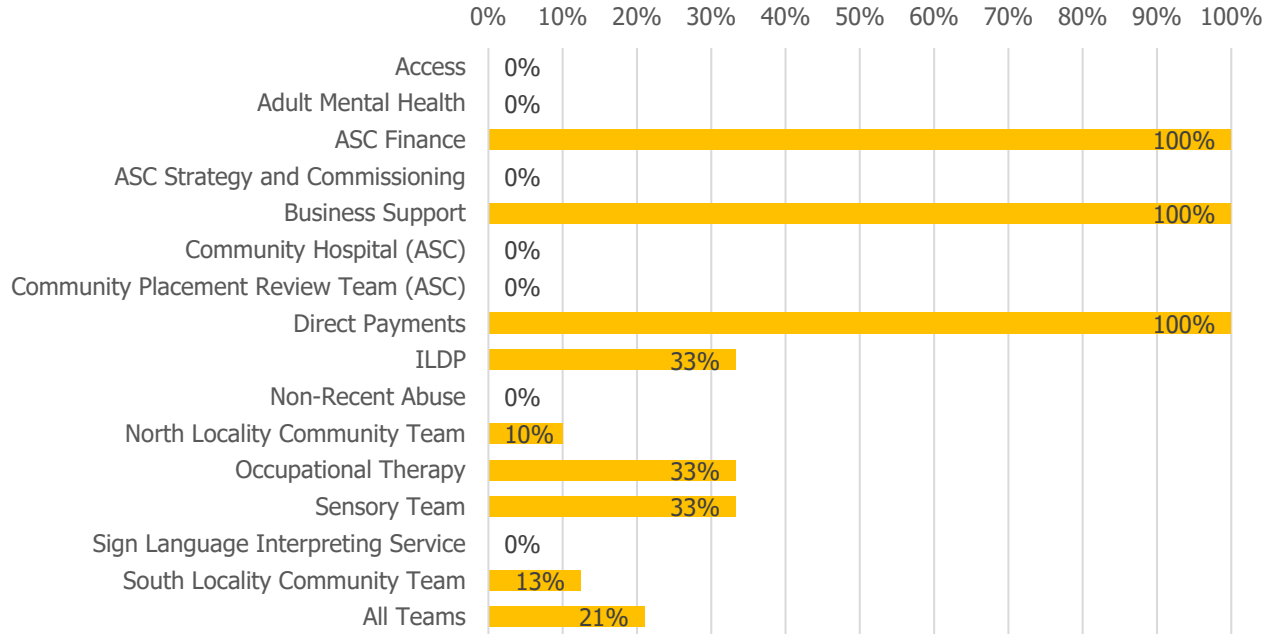


Complaints by failure type, by service

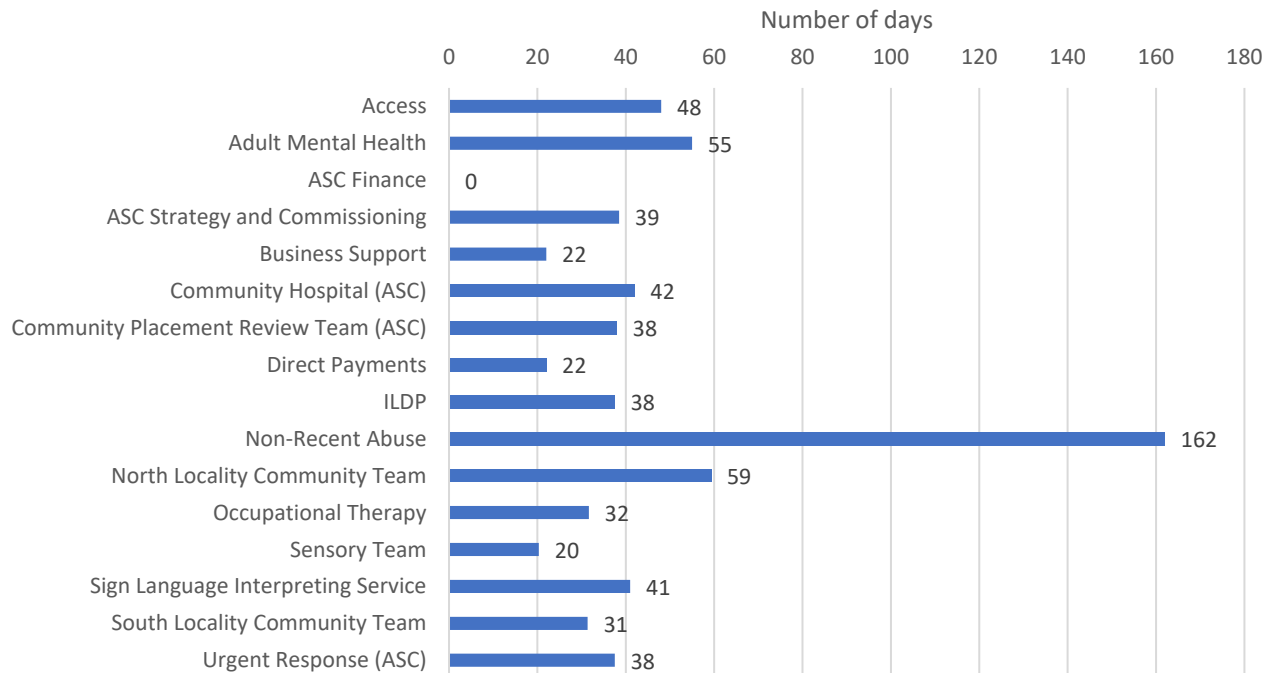


Appendix two: Timeliness of complaints

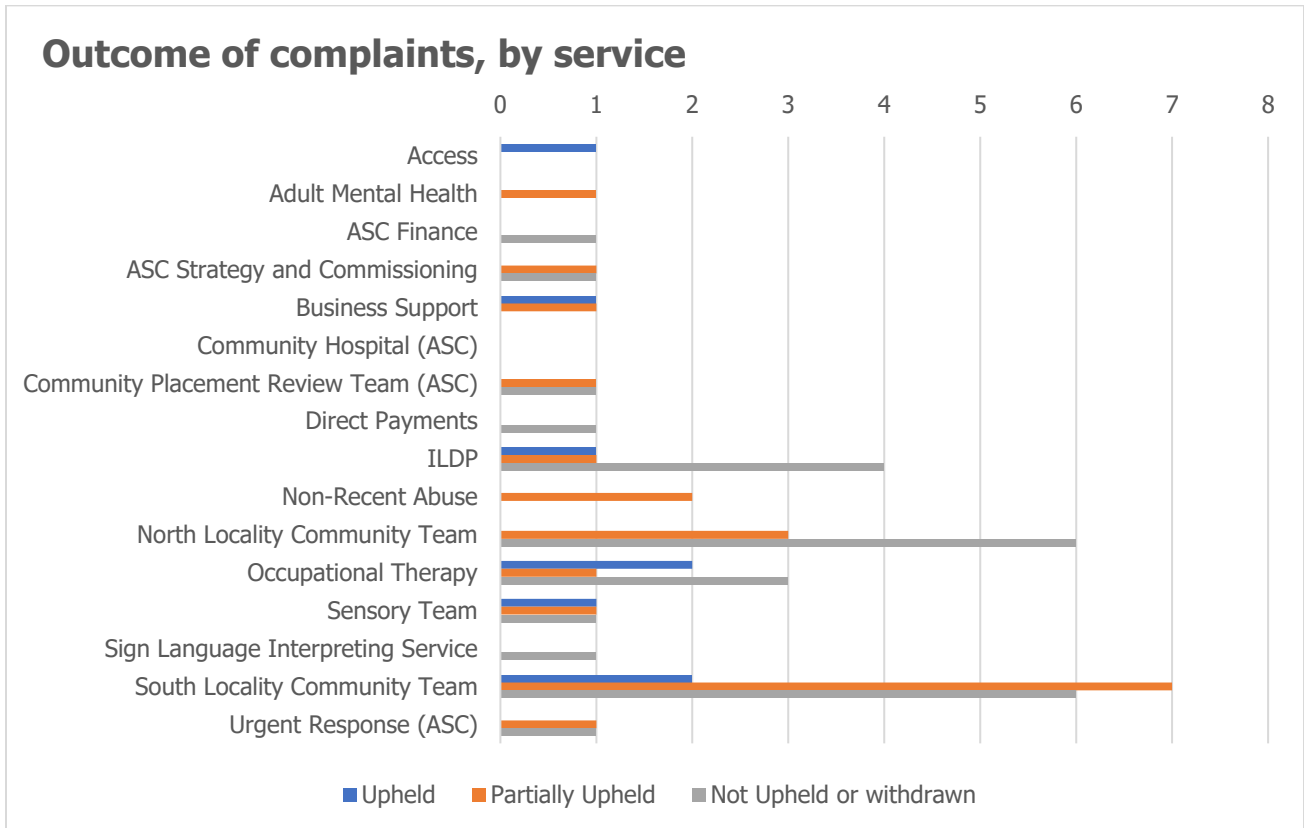
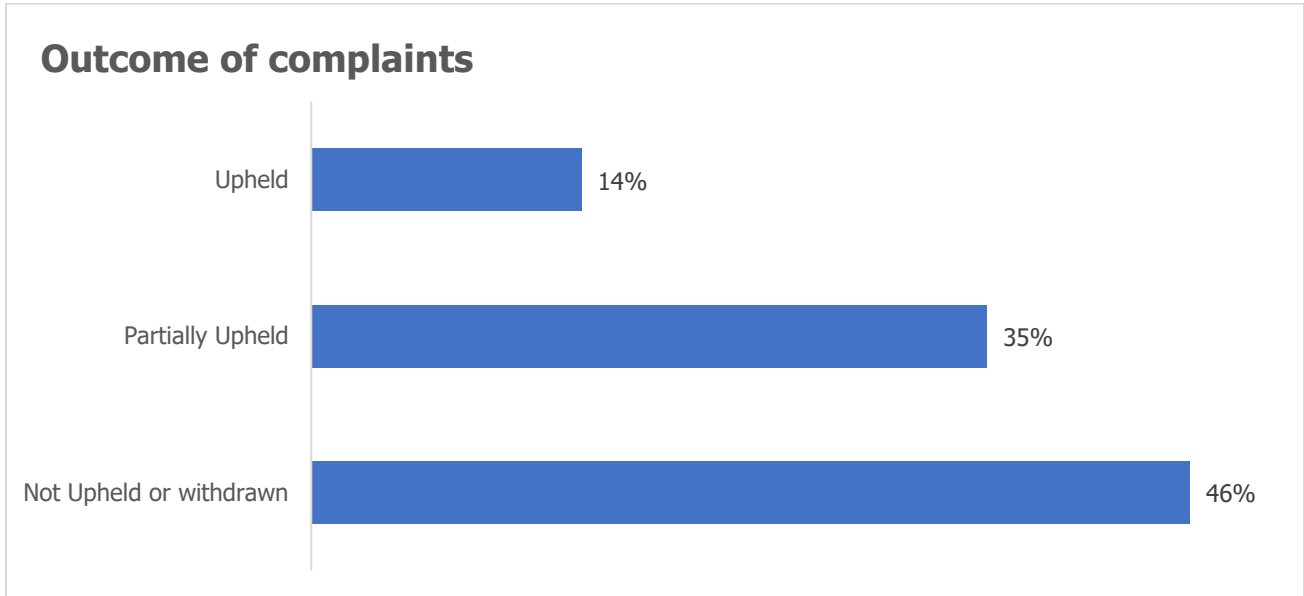
Percentage on time



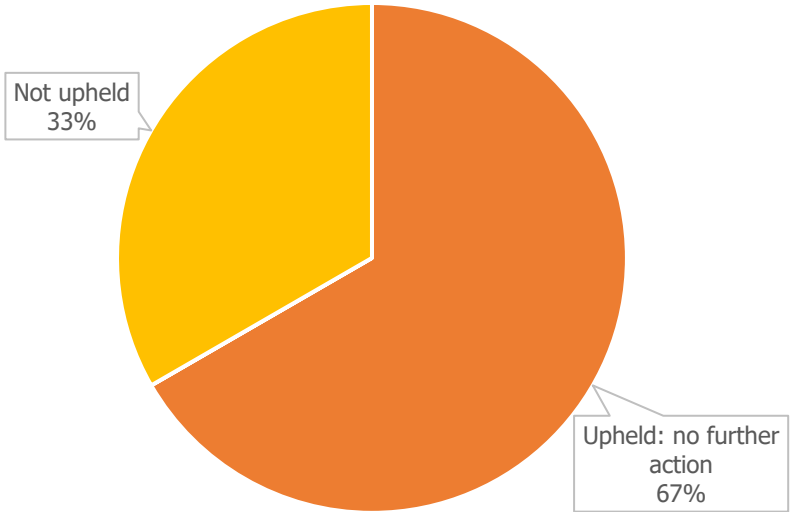
Average time to respond (days)



Appendix three: Outcome of complaints



LGSCO Complaint Outcomes



Appendix four: Compliments

