

Annual Complaints Report 2023-24

1. The key stages for handling a complaint made to the council are described below.
 - 1.1. Stage 1 informal: these are dealt with by the relevant service areas. When a complaint spans several different service areas, the complaints officer coordinates the handling of the complaints and provides a single, substantive response. All Stage 1 complaints should be responded to within 10 working days. If additional time is required, the council will contact the complainant to explain why and inform them when they can expect a response. Details of the number of Stage 1 complaints received in 2023-24 and response times are shown in table 1 and chart 2.
 - 1.2. Stage 2 formal: If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 complaint, they can escalate the complaint to Stage 2. The matter will be generally investigated by Head of Service responsible but could also be passed to another Head of Service for response when appropriate. This stage requires a more detailed investigation which can take up to 20 working days. If additional time is needed, the council will contact the complainant to let them know and to explain when they can expect a response. The investigation involves a review of all relevant correspondence and often incorporates separate discussions with both the complainant and relevant officers from the service department(s) concerned. Complainants who remain unhappy with the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation can refer their complaint to the PSOW. Details of the number of Stage 2 complaints received in 2023-24 and response times are shown in table 2 and chart 2.
2. The PSOW publishes the annual letters to all Councils on its website (see Appendix 2). The letter highlights activities undertaken by the Ombudsman's office during the year and the Council's performance. The Council submits quarterly returns of complaints data to the Ombudsman's office.
3. The council takes complaints seriously and attempts to learn from any mistakes. Senior Management considers a summary of complaints quarterly and the

Performance Scrutiny Committee also considers the council’s response to complaints.

4. Within the C360 database, specifically for complaints, there is a section where Lessons Learned are recorded. Especially in the case of complaints upheld it follows the request of the Ombudsman to record service improvements. This is part of the complaints process that can be improved across the authority.

Your Voice information

Your Voice reporting periods

The following periods are used for reporting data:

- Quarter 1: 1-Apr to 30-Jun
- Quarter 2: 1-Jul to 30-Sep
- Quarter 3: 1-Oct to 31-Dec
- Quarter 4: 1-Jan to 31-Mar

Complaint response timescales

The ‘Your Voice’ feedback policy states that the following timescales should be adhered to when responding to complaints:

- Stage 1: **10** working days
- Stage 2: **20** working days

Please note: Community Support Services and Children and Family Services complaints usually follow statutory timescales.

Your Voice performance measures

A traffic light system is used to highlight performance in relation to response timescales to complaints. Performance is rated according to:

Red	less than 90% of complaints responded to within timescale
Amber	when more than 90% but less than 95% of complaints are responded to within timescale
Green	95% or more of complaints responded to within timescale

Table 1: Overall complaint response times for stage 1 complaints –2023/24

Service	Quarter 1 - Stage 1			Quarter 2 - Stage 1			Quarter 3 - Stage 1			Quarter 4 - Stage 1			Total Stage 1		
	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%
Corporate support Service - People	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	1	1	100%	1	1	100%
Corporate support Service - Performance Digital and Assets	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-
Finance and Audit Service	8	8	100%	5	5	100%	8	8	100%	8	8	100%	29	29	100%
Highways & Environmental Services	36	36	100%	44	44	100%	31	31	100%	26	26	100%	137	137	100%
Housing and Communities Services	8	7	88%	3	3	100%	3	3	100%	3	3	100%	17	16	94%
Planning and Public Protection	0	0	-	4	4	100%	1	1	100%	8	7	88%	13	12	92%
Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service	5	5	100%	3	3	100%	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	12	12	100%
Education and Childrens Services	1	1	100%	1	1	100%	4	4	100%	2	2	100%	8	8	100%
Corporate Total	58	57	98%	60	60	100%	49	49	100%	50	49	98%	217	215	99%

Chart 1: Stage 1 complaint response times

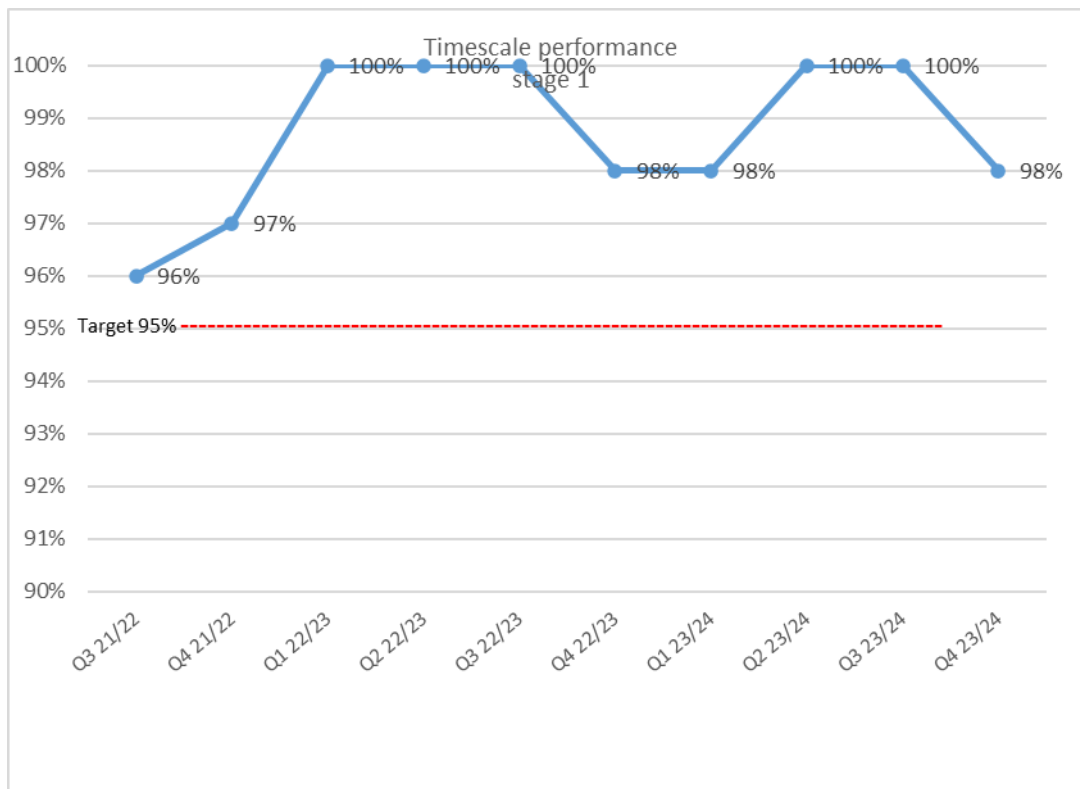


Table 2: Overall complaint response times for stage 2 complaints –23/24

Service	Quarter 1 - Stage 2			Quarter 2 - Stage 2			Quarter 3 - Stage 2			Quarter 4 - Stage 2			Total Stage 2		
	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%	Rec'd	Within	%
Corporate support Service - People	0	0	-	0	0	-	1	1	100%	0	0	-	1	1	100%
Corporate support Service Performance Digital and Assets	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-	0	0	-
Finance and Audit Service	2	2	100%	3	3	100%	2	2	100%	1	1	100%	8	8	100%
Highways & Environmental Services	2	2	100%	3	3	100%	2	2	100%	5	5	100%	12	12	100%
Housing and Communities Services	0	0	-	0	0	-	5	5	100%	1	1	100%	6	6	100%
Planning and Public Protection	4	4	100%	3	3	100%	5	4	80%	6	5	83%	18	16	89%
Adult Social Care and Homelessness Service	3	3	100%	5	5	100%	4	3	75%	5	4	80%	17	15	88%
Education and Childrens Services	2	2	100%	2	2	100%	1	1	100%	2	2	100%	7	7	100%
Corporate Total	13	13	100%	16	16	100%	20	18	90%	20	18	90%	69	65	94%

Chart 2: Stage 2 complaint response times

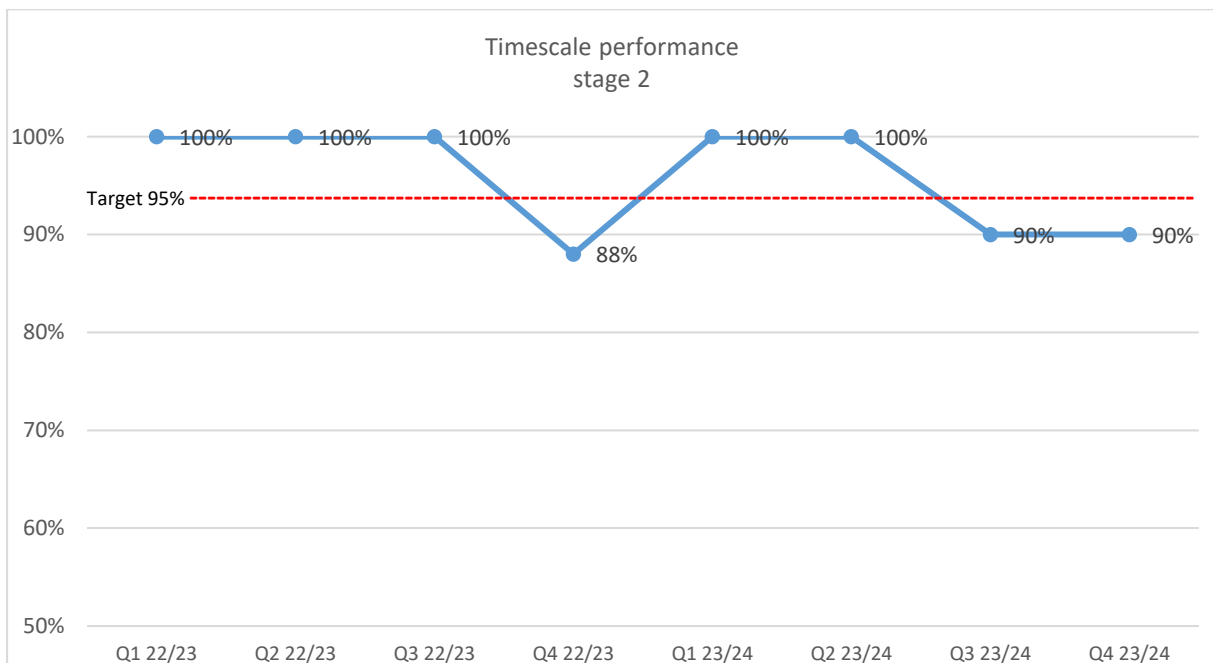


Table 3: Category of complaint by Percentage

Communications	Confidentiality	Courtesy and Respect	Equality	Information	Service	Staff
33%	4%	7%	2%	14%	31%	9%

