

Carmarthenshire County Council

Complaints and Compliments Annual Report

April - March
2017/18



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Guidance note for Scrutiny Committee members

Committee	Please refer to these sections of the report specifically for your service area(s):
Community	9.4 Leisure Housing 9.5 Planning
Environment & Public Protection	9.4 Public Protection 9.6 Street Scene Property Services Transport & Engineering
Social Care & Health	As of 2017/18, adult social care complaints have been managed by the Communities Department and are therefore documented in full in a separate report. Figures are nonetheless included for ease of reference in this report, with analysis in section 9.5.
Education & Children’s Services	9.2
Policy & Resources	9.1 9.3

****Please Note****

As of 2017/18, all complaints relating to adult social care matters have been managed separately by the Performance, Analyst & Systems Team within the Communities Department, as part of a re-structure of the service. A full end of year report was presented to the Social Care and Health Scrutiny Committee on 21st May 2018.

1. Principles

Carmarthenshire County Council's Complaints Procedure was first adopted in May 2011 and a revised version was approved by the Executive Board in October 2017. The procedure aims to emphasise the following principles:

- To ensure that as many complaints as possible are **resolved at stage 1** local resolution.
- To ensure that investigations follow the **'Investigate Once, Investigate Well'** principle.

2. Definition

The **definition of a complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern,

- about a public service provider's action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- which requires a response
- whether about the public service provider itself, a person acting on its behalf, or a public service provider partnership.

Complaints which are currently open and under investigation are **not included** in this report.

The complaints referred to within this report are those where the investigation has been completed during the review period.

3. Complaints investigated and responded to between April 2017 – March 2018

SERVICE	Stage 1				Stage 2			
	No. of Complaints responded to ¹	No. receiving a full response within allocated time period ²	No. receiving a full response after allocated time period ³	No. of Complaints responded to	No. receiving a response within allocated time period ⁴	No. receiving a response after allocated time period		
Chief Executives	27	23 85%	4 15%	0	0 0%	0 0%		
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	23	21 91%	2 9%	4	1 25%	3 75%		
Statutory Complaints for Education & Children's Services	14	6 43%	8 57%	0	0 0%	0 0%		
Corporate Services	27	25 93%	2 7%	2	2 100%	0 0%		
Communities (excluding Adult Social Care Complaints)	109	75 69%	34 31%	7	0 0%	7 100%		
Adult social care (managed through Communities Department team)	90	61 68%	29 32%	5	5 100%	0 0%		
Environment	514	320 62%	194 38%	17	4 24%	13 76%		
Cross Departmental Issues	8	7 88%	1 12%	0	0 0%	0 0%		
TOTAL	812	538 66%	274 34%	35	12 34%	23 66%		

¹ This is the cumulative figure of complaints investigated and responded to within the period of the report this financial year

² Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 10 working days, with an additional 10 working day extension with the complainant's consent

³ Any complaints which have been investigated and responded to outside the allocated time period

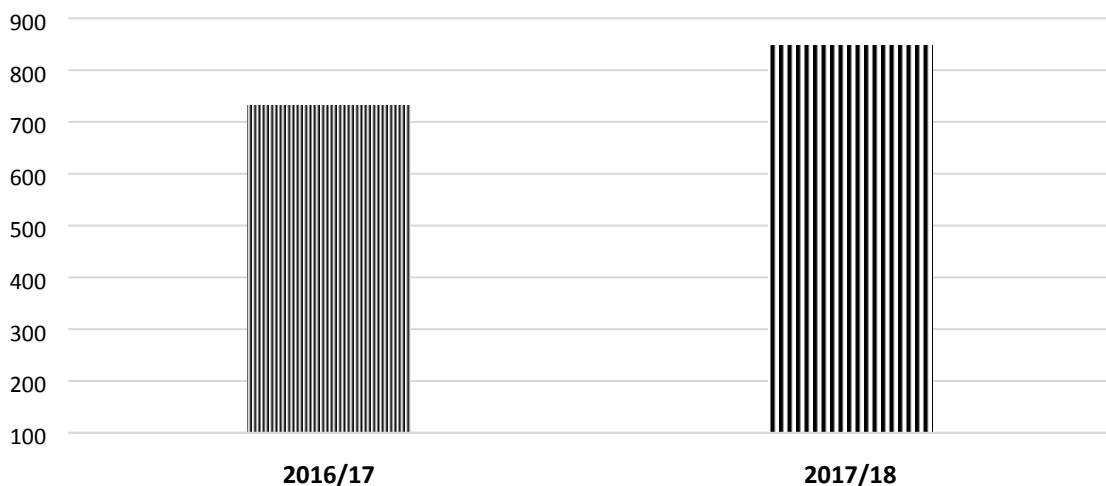
⁴ Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 25 working days, or up to 3 months with the complainant's consent

4. Summary of complaints

- The Council recorded and responded to a total of 847 complaints during 2017/18, compared to 731 during the same period in 2016/17. This equates to a 16% increase.
- Overall, 65% of cases received a response within the allocated time period, compared to 60% for the same period last year and representing an improved performance.

Department	Total No. of complaints 2017/18	Total No. of complaints 2016/17
Chief Executive's Department	27	14
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	27	53
Statutory complaints for Children Services	14	11
Corporate Services	29	24
Communities (excluding Adult social care complaints)	116	119
Communities – adult social care (managed through Communities Department team from 2017/18)	95	41
Environment	531	458
Cross Departmental & External Providers	8	11
Total	847	731

**Number of complaints responded to in 2017/18 by comparison to
2016/17**



5. Redirected Communication

The Complaints Team also addressed a further **669** “Redirects” – enquiries and requests for assistance which offered the team the opportunity to try and rectify difficulties before complaints arise. This figure would also include any dissatisfaction received regarding properly made Policy decisions which would not be addressed by the formal Complaints Policy.

Within Adult social care, **45** were recorded as ‘Redirected’ which meant the complainant did not wish to go through the formal complaints procedure and the matter was dealt with informally or the communication did not fall under the Welsh Government guidelines for complaints.

Department	Total No of Redirected communication received
Chief Executive’s Department	35
Education & Children’s Services	33
Corporate Services	22
Communities	252
Communities – adult social care (managed through Communities Department team)	45
Environment	293
Cross Departmental	29
External Providers	5
Total	714

6. Complaints with any equalities or Welsh language issues

During 2017/18 we received 10 complaints which involved specific Welsh language issues (Communities 1, Environment 3, Chief Executive's 5 and Corporate Service 1).

Two complainants felt the service provided to them did not meet their needs because of their disability (one related to a rubbish collection and the other to the servicing of a boiler).

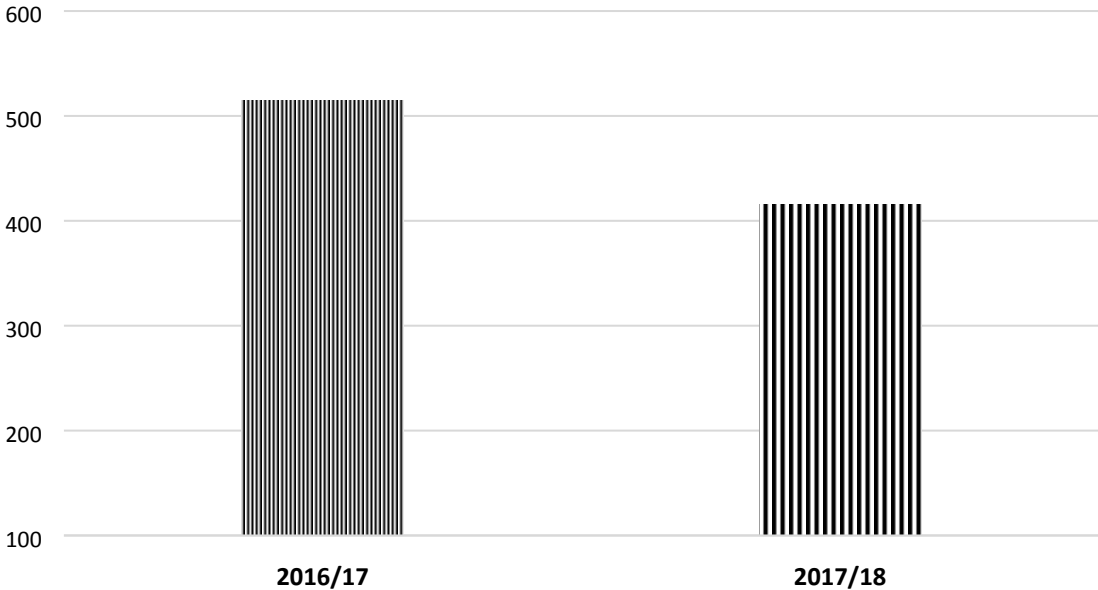
7. Complaints determined by the Ombudsman

	Concluded by Ombudsman 2017-18	Settled	Ombudsman conclusion				
			Not upheld	Discontinued	Out of jurisdiction	Referred back to Authority	Upheld
Chief Executives	3	0	0	1	1	1	0
Education & Children's Services	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Resources	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Communities	7	0	0	0	3	4	0
Adult social care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Environment	10	0	1	6	1	2	0
Cross Departmental Issues	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	23	1	1	8	6	7	0

8. All Departments Compliments

Service	No. of compliments received in 2017/18	No. of compliments received in 2016/17
Chief Executive's	33	52
Education & Children's Services	19	36
Corporate Services	2	2
Communities (excluding adult social care)	83	235 (including Adult social care)
Adult social care	106	Included in Communities
Environment	166	183
Cross Departmental Issues	7	7
Total	416	515

Number of compliments received in 2017/18 by comparison with 2016/17



9. Departmental Complaint & Compliment Analysis

9.1 Chief Executive's

Complaints	Regeneration and Policy		People Management and Performance		Administration and Law		IT	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	21		3		3		0	
Upheld	3	14%	0	0%	2	67%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	7	33%	0	0%	1	33%	0	0%
Not Upheld	11	53%	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	0		0		0		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Three complaints regarding the Contact Centre were upheld. They related to concerns with the manner of members of staff. Explanations and apologies were provided where necessary and the issues raised were discussed with members of staff. Three complaints were partially upheld. Issues raised related to the manner of the member of staff and difficulties with the telephone line.

One complaint relating to Llanelli Market was partially upheld. Concerns were raised around the disabled toilet being used by all when cleaning takes place in the other facilities. It was agreed to place a notice to advise people to give priority to users who were disabled.

The Policy team acknowledged that communication from a member of the public around a consultation exercise could have been more effective. It was confirmed that their comments had been taken into account and they were thanked for their input.

One complaint was recorded as partially upheld for the Complaints team. It related to a residents ongoing concerns with the condition of a piece of land and involved a number of council departments.

The Marketing & Media team received a complaint that was found to be partially upheld. It related to the lack of bilingualism at an event which had received funding from the Authority. It was agreed to re consider the way the Authority can work with the festival organisers in the future to make it a bilingual event.

Administration & Law recorded two complaints as upheld. One concerned the way in which a case was managed and the second concerned a training session that was not held bilingually, because of a last minute change of staffing. Apologies were provided and comments taken on board for the future. The partially upheld complaint related to difficulties experienced accessing the Land Charges computer.

Compliments	Regeneration and Policy
Compliments received	33
Analysis of the trends:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“He answered all my questions clearly, showed patience with some of the ‘not so intelligent’ questions, processed the application quickly and confirmed when everything was in place... he was efficient, courteous and I think he is a credit to your organisation” –Electoral Services Team</i> • <i>“Thank you for your help with completing the forms for my mother in law, very helpful” “...also their caring approach at a time when I was struggling to deal with my mother's ill health” “Man on desk, very helpful and friendly” – Customer Services</i> • A resident was appreciative of an agent’s calm demeanour during a call to the Contact Centre. <i>“Please pass thank you on to call handler last week for polite and efficient service” “Very patient, polite and professional dealing with the query” – Contact Centre</i> • <i>“Thank you very much for dealing with our request, so promptly and efficiently” – Freedom of Information</i> <i>“Thank you for the time and effort you put in to the response to my Freedom of Information request”</i> • <i>“Thank you for all you have done for us and making our dream of opening become a reality” – thanks received from the recipient of a grant from Economic Development</i> 	

9.2 Education and Children’s Services

	Children’s Services		Education Services		Strategic Development	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	15		2		20	
Upheld	6	40%			12	60%
Partially Upheld	2	13%	1	50%	2	10%
Not Upheld	7	47%	1	50%	6	30%
Stage 2 Complaints Investigated	0		1		3	
Upheld						
Partially Upheld			1	100%	3	100%
Not Upheld						

Service	Stage 1 Complaints Investigated			Stage 2 Complaints Investigated			Total
	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld	
Children’s Services							
Adoption			1				1
Child Protection	1		1				2
CIN & LAC	3	1	4				8
Children with Disabilities	1	1					2
Complex Needs							0
Support Services (Family, Childcare, Play)	1		1				2
Other							0
Education Services							
ALN				1			1
The Statutory SEN Process		1					1
Behaviour Management			1				1
Local Management of Schools							0
School Modernisation							0
Strategic Development							
Catering			2				2
Business Support (all related to FSM)			1		3		4
Pupil Admissions	12	2	3				17

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Children’s Services

Of the 15 Stage 1 complaints received by Children’s Services, 6 were upheld. Three raised individual concerns regarding the allocated social workers. One was as a result of the written content of an assessment, and the other two concerned communication issues separately, within the Children’s Disability Team (CDT) and the (TAF) Team around the Family.

2 complaints were partially upheld. One concerned the behaviour of a social worker, and the remainder raised a complainants’ concerns regarding the lack of support from the CDT team. From this, the case was reviewed and discussions took place between the complainant and team.

The remaining 7 complaints were found to be not upheld. No complaints were recorded at Stage 2.

Education Services

One Stage 2 complaint was recorded regarding the delivery of a statement by the Additional Learning Needs team. The investigation resulted in the complaint being upheld.

Strategic Development

The 3 Stage 2 complaints concerned invoices sent to parents whose children had received free school meals. All three were recorded as partially upheld. Improvement in the process of issuing the invoices were recommended.

All 12 upheld Stage 1 complaints concerned the difficulty parents were having in contacting the School Admissions team. It is noted that there was a communication delay in the team responding to enquiries recorded either online, or via the Contact Centre.

2 Stage 1 complaints were partially upheld. A further School admissions complaint was found to be partially upheld, and the other complaint concerned an ‘alternative education home tuition’ issue.

Compliments

Compliments	Children Services	Education Services	Strategic Development	Curriculum & Wellbeing
Compliments received per division	0	11	5	1

Service	Compliments received
Education Services	
Additional Learning Needs	1
Local Management of Schools	5
Education Systems	2
School Improvement	3

Strategic Development	
Pupil Admissions	2
Participation	1
Business Support	2
Curriculum and Wellbeing	
Adult Community Learning & Basic Skills	1

Analysis of the trends
<p>Children’s Services It is noted that no compliments were passed to the team for recording by Children’s Services.</p> <p>Education Services</p> <p><i>“May I thank you for involving the officers, they have been very supportive”</i> Additional Learning Needs Team</p> <p><i>“...been a great help...please pass on to the team how grateful I am.”</i> School Admissions Team</p> <p><i>“..one of the easiest people to work with, organised, methodical and go out of your way to be helpful”</i> – School Grants Officer</p> <p><i>“Thanks for all of the support. It is much appreciated.”</i> – School Improvement Team</p> <p>Strategic Development BSU <i>“Thank you for everything you do. You are amazing and have helped out of some sticky spots”</i></p> <p><i>“Please pass on our sincere thanks to the Carmarthen Music Service for all they have done to help Cor Merched Sir Gar”</i></p> <p><i>“Thank you and your team to ensure that our meeting was informative and constructive”</i> – Welsh Government Participation Visit.</p>

9.3 Corporate Services

Complaints	Financial Services		Audit and Risk Management	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	27		0	
Upheld	6	22%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	4	15%	0	0%
Not Upheld	17	63%	0	0%
Stage 2 Complaints Investigated	2		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	2	100%	0	0%

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

27 Stage 1 complaints were received regarding Financial Services.

16 complaints related to Council Tax, with four being upheld. One related to an error on a Welsh language online form, two concerned comments made by members of staff during telephone calls and another related to an error with a Council Tax rebate. 2 Complaints were recorded as partially upheld – one relating to clarity of communication and one to the accuracy of a Council Tax account.

8 complaints concerned Housing Benefit, with 2 being upheld. One related to a temporary problem with the recorded message on the Housing Benefit telephone line and one related to rent arrears that had occurred following a change to Housing Benefit.

One partially upheld complaint was recorded for Pensions, it related to concerns with the way a new pension for a retiring Councillor was administered.

One partially upheld complaint was recorded for Payments, it related to the length of time taken to progress an outstanding invoice.

2 Stage 2 complaints relating to Council Tax were investigated. Neither were upheld.

Compliments	Financial Services	Audit and Risk Management
Compliments received per division	1	1

Analysis of the trends:

- Risk Management were thanked by a school for the guidance given regarding an insurance claim - *"Thanks to everyone for your help, guidance and very quick response"*
- The Council Tax section were thanked for the way they dealt with a concern regarding single persons discount - *"Thank you for the impressive and positive response I have received from you in dealing with my issue"*

9.4 Communities Department (excluding complaints relating to adult social care)

Complaints	Cross Divisional		Public Protection		Housing		Leisure	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	1		6		59		43	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	9	15%	9	21%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	22	37%	16	37%
Not Upheld	1	100%	6	100%	28	48%	18	42%
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	0		0		7		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	3	42%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	0	0%

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Public Protection

6 Stage 1 complaints were investigated during the year, none were upheld. Two related to the Dog Warden service, one concerned the Taxi Licencing process and a resident was unhappy with the way Trading Standards addressed a concern. Complaints were also raised regarding the handling of a pest control case and the investigation of reported nuisance from bonfires.

Housing

There were seven complaints recorded at Stage 2. Of these, two were upheld. One investigation acknowledged that the support given to secure suitable accommodation could have been better and the other noted that the handling of noise problems could have been improved. Three complaints were found to be partially upheld. Two concerned Anti-Social Behaviour cases, where although the cases were addressed correctly, with hindsight, improvements to the process could have been made. The third related to the support given to a family following a fire at a property, where it was acknowledged that the allocation of a specific case officer would have been beneficial in such difficult circumstances. The remaining two Stage 2 complaints were not upheld.

59 Stage 1 complaints were investigated, with 9 being upheld. Issues highlighted included some concerns with delays, the cleanliness of communal areas in a block of flats, effective identification at a visit and problems updating account records for a rented garage. 22 complaints were partially upheld. A number of these cases relate to communication between Officers and tenants, highlighting the importance of keeping tenants informed and ensuring they understand processes.

Leisure

43 Stage 1 complaints were investigated. 9 complaints were upheld. Concerns included incorrect information online regarding swimming lessons, the manner of a member of staff during a class, being unhappy with Splash Sessions, Data Protection issues when sending group emails to the public, difficulty updating car details on a season ticket for the Country Park, the maintenance of a Public Right of Way, difficulties booking a caravan pitch by phone, visitor centre being closed when it was advertised as being open and a delay providing library books following a request.

Compliments	Public Protection	Housing	Leisure
Compliments received per division	7	36	40

Analysis of the trends

Public Protection

"I really appreciate the time you have taken to perform this comprehensive investigation" – Food Safety enquiries

"May I pass on my thanks to you and your colleagues...jointly investigated with colleagues from Ceredigion. My colleague spoke very highly of your proactive and thorough investigation into those cases" – Public Health Wales

Housing

"Thank you for the swift ,and professional way in which you handled this matter" – Housing Officer

"Eternally thankful for your efforts to secure this relocation...would like to extend unstinting gratitude" – Housing Officer

"Sorting things out was "as stress free as possible" – Housing Officer thanked for assistance following death of the tenant

"Reassuring, pleasant and very understanding of difficult situation" – Housing Officer

"Very grateful for all the help he received from Housing Options and Temporary Accommodation"

"This is my best experience of letting this property in the 12 years I have owned it" – Social Lettings

Leisure

"Interesting & informative talk...enthusiasm...advice & support...thanks for the sheer fun we had" – Introductory talk to Walking Hockey

'...like to congratulate staff and officers for the commendable facilities and cleanliness' – Carmarthen Leisure Centre

'thank you very much for all your hard work, support and co-operation for our Nutcracker Ballet' - Russian State Ballet & Opera House

"The Actif Storytelling was so popular and we have received some nice pieces of feedback" Comment from The National Trust following support provided by the Active Young People Officer

"Thanks to the proactive and professional approach of your countryside access/rights of way team"

9.5 Adult social care

Complaints Received	95	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	90	
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	5	
Upheld	0	0
Partially Upheld	0	0
Not Upheld	5	0

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Older People

The majority of complaints received have related to Older People, this in part reflects the number of clients in this service area. These complaints cover a wide range of issues including a lack of continuity with domiciliary care workers and complainants feeling that they are not always being listened to in relation to their care. One complainant wanted their grandmother's care needs re-assessed.

Finance

Complaints were received relating to the length of time it had taken to produce an invoice for care that had been provided. Service users were unhappy with 'late' invoices they had received for care which was provided some time ago. Also a number of families were unhappy to pay outstanding invoices as they felt the care their family member received was not of the quality they expected.

Corporate complaints

A number of these complaints were in relation to neighbours, and carers parking in front of people's houses. We also had a number of complaints regarding the blue badge process, one complainant was unhappy with the 28 day flexibility process and another regarding the renewal process.

Transition Team

A service user's family complained about a review the Transition Team had carried out and was unhappy with the outcome.

Learning Disability and Mental Health

We have received a number of complaints requesting a change of social worker.

These complaints have included a family complaining about gaining access to Ty Elwyn for an appointment and another requiring the social care records changed as they were getting nuisance calls. These complaints are normally recorded as Redirected complaints.

Compliments	
Compliments received per division	106

Analysis of the trends

Management

"Thank you for your helpful, professional and sound advice. You have been a great advert for social workers and a very reassuring presence during a time of great uncertainty for my Dad."

Care Home

*"My sister *** and I are extremely pleased that a place was available in Awel Tywi and that he has settled so well. When I saw him last Thursday he looked better than he had for the last 18 months or so. Lots of negative reports in national newspapers create the impression that social care is broken and that care homes are dreadful. I have to say that this has not been our experience. I have nothing but praise for you all and for the staff at Awel Tywi."*

Domiciliary Care

"There were times when I was very demanding, and I know that you pushed the boat out many a time for me to ensure that Dad was looked after in the best possible way. Your girls were angels and it's because of you all that I survived and Dad was looked after correctly. Your presence at the funeral only mirrored how much you thought of Dad and supported me."

Careline

"Thank you for your wonderful service; you provided a support for all of us as a family. The phone responses from your operators is quick, professional and emotionally intelligent. We cannot thank you enough."

Reablement

*"I wanted to email you to say how wonderful Catrin was when we visited *** this morning. I'm sure she represents the excellence of your Team, but I wanted to officially make a compliment regarding her high quality interaction with this very anxious gentleman. Catrin was extremely professional, positive and empathetic throughout our time with ***, resulting in a very positive step forward – a real breakthrough, which I sincerely hope he will fulfil – thank you."*

9.6 Environment

Complaints	Planning		Street Scene		Property Services		Transport & Engineering	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	19		391		59		45	
Upheld	4	21%	210	54%	23	39%	10	22%
Partially Upheld	3	16%	86	22%	20	34%	17	38%
Not Upheld	12	63%	95	24%	16	27%	18	40%
Stage 2 Complaints Investigated	11		3		1		2	
Upheld	1	9%	0	0%	1	100%	1	50%
Partially Upheld	6	55%	1	34%	0%	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	4	36%	2	66%	0%	0%	1	50%

Analysis of the trends

Planning

11 of the 30 complaints recorded were at Stage 2. One was upheld, a planning enforcement concern regarding wind turbine shadow flicker, and 6 were partially upheld. The 6 varied from communication concerns to delays with enforcement action. One complaint focused on the wording advertised with a planning application. It was acknowledged that the wording could have been slightly clearer.

Of the 19 Stage 1 complaints, 4 were upheld, 3 partially upheld with the remaining 12 were recorded as not upheld.

It was acknowledged in 3 of the upheld complaints, a delay in communication, or a lack of correspondence by the department. One concerned an issue around a listed building consent. An apology was given in relation to all three.

The remaining complaint which was upheld, concerned a visit by an Enforcement Officer. The complainant was unhappy with the *attitude and demeanour* of the officer during an unannounced visit. It was identified that additional training needs was required for the new member of staff.

Street Scene

Highways – 1 complaints recorded at Stage 2, this was not upheld. 10 Stage 1 complaints were upheld, 18 were partially and a further 18 were not upheld.

Of the 10 complaints recorded as upheld, a variety of concerns were raised. A delay in a request for cutting a grass verge. Another delay in addressing a surface water drainage concern. Lack of signage giving warning for some road closures; a replacement bollard which had taken some months to source and the behaviour of a member of staff who delayed a recovery vehicle from attending an RTA.

Refuse, Recycling & Cleansing

328 complaints were recorded during the reporting period. This included a single Stage 2 complaint, following damage caused to a home owners' grass verge, by a refuse vehicle.

199 Stage 1 complaints were upheld, 59 partially upheld, with the remaining 69 recorded as not upheld.

There were 99 complaints recorded following the introduction of the new garden waste scheme. 78 of these complaints were upheld. The remainder of the complaints concerned regular missed collections, including properties who receive an assisted lift, and general litter/cleansing concerns.

Street Scene – Remaining Complaints

One stage 2 complaint relating to the Environmental Enforcement Team was not upheld.

Of the remaining 19 stage 1 complaints, 1 was upheld. This related to the cleanliness of a public toilet.

An apology was given by the contractor Danfo. 7 of the complaints were partially upheld, 3 of which were for the Environmental Enforcement team. These were following a request for some feedback, a delay in responding to an enquiry and the conduct of an officer while issuing a penalty notice for dog fouling. One complaint was recorded for the public lighting department, a concern as to a light on a pedestrian crossing. This was not upheld as the light was fixed as soon as the team had been made aware of the problem.

Property Services

There was one Stage 2 complaint, which was upheld. It concerned the removal of a chimney. The investigation acknowledged a safety concern and the inconvenience caused to the elderly resident. Improvements in future work are in place.

23 of the 59 Stage 1 complaints were upheld. A delay in work accounted for 11 of these. Missed, and appointments cancelled at the last minute, contributed for a handful of others.

A number of the partially upheld complaints also were as a result of delays to scheduled work.

16 complaints were found to be not upheld.

Transport and Engineering

There were 2 Stage 2 complaints recorded. One, concerning a delay in addressing a stopping up order, was upheld. An apology was given. The matter is now being progressed via the Legal and Environment departments. The other Stage 2, concerning a dual car parking permit was not upheld.

Of the 45 Stage 1 complaints, 10 were upheld, 17 partially, and 18 recorded as not upheld.

7 of the 25 Parking Services complaints were upheld. Three related to car parking machines not working. Three were in relation to a delay in correspondence, and the remaining raised a concern about the issue of a parking permit.

Two complaints were upheld in relation to School Transport.

The 17 partially upheld complaints varied from ticket machines, car parks and civil enforcement officers. From speed bumps, the issuing of a new travel pass, to a concern raised about the quality of an MOT, undertaken by Trostre depot.

Numerous correspondence and concerns have been directed to the team during this reporting period, regarding the new A484 Sandy Road traffic lights. Seven complaints were formally recorded, and a number of further correspondence received were recorded as redirects.

Compliments	Planning	Street Scene	Property Services	Transport & Engineering
Compliments received per division	13	85	40	28

Analysis of the trends

Planning

"personally thank you for your help given over the last two months" - Planning Officer
"Really appreciate all your efforts to get this over the line" – Planning Officers
"What an excellently speedy service" – Regarding a decision notice.
"My sincere thanks for your input in this project, been most helpful and a credit to your team" – Planning Enquiry

Street Scene - Highways

"Thanks to the crew that attended the flooding, worked very hard to clear the road"
"Big thank you to the Highways crew for their prompt action re flooding issues"
"Thanks for arranging last week for the road gullies to be cleared"
"Well done to the crew for cutting the verges along the A483 from Llandovery today"
"Grateful public thankful for the crews; efforts" – Numerous online gritting compliments

Refuse, Recycling & Cleansing

"Very thoughtful, professional and much appreciated. A first class service"
"Cleaner ensured roads in Burry Port were spotless by 8:30am following our very busy Carnival"
"Thank you to the litter pickers here on Monday, working diligently in such cold weather"
"Compliment scheme, professionalism and helpfulness of staff on site" – Waste Amnesty Llandovery
"They are doing a very good job....keep up the good job bin boys"

Street Scene – Remaining Compliments

"VERY helpful... excellent feedback and LISTENING to our concerns" – Environmental Enforcement
"Thank you street lighting team for their excellent service and response in fixing the light"

Property Services

"Thanks for your professionalism, expertise and support in attending the fire" - Building Inspector
"I had an efficient service with the repairs service, and wanted to pass on my thanks"
"Workmen were very polite and were clean in their work, did an excellent job"
"The plumber, electrician & roofers did their jobs very well & professionally"
"Appreciate considerable assistance and professional expertise of Grounds Maintenance Team"

Transport and Engineering

"...most understanding, pleasant, polite & cheerful parking attendant" – CEO Compliment

"The officer was so polite, professional and tactful throughout" – CEO Compliment

"Thank you for your courtesy and willingness to assist at all times" – Road Safety & Traffic Manager

"Enjoyable and very useful information and advice, thoroughly recommended" Biker Down Cymru

"Thank you to your team for all your hard work and commitment" – Kerbcraft Road Safety Team

"May I personally thank you for all your help, guidance and support" – Bus Pass Appeal

9.7 Cross Departmental and External Providers

Complaints	External Providers		Cross Departmental	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	3		5	
Upheld	3	100%	3	60%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	1	20%
Not Upheld	0	0%	1	20%
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	0		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%
Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends				
<p>3 of the Cross Departmental complaints were upheld, one was partially upheld and one was not upheld. Of the complaints that were upheld, one concerned a telephone call to report a missed refuse collection.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that the explanation provided could have been clearer. The Legal and Planning sections apologised for a delay in responding to correspondence. The third complaint related to an error with the invoicing system for Council Tax. The Complainant also highlighted that the online complaints form was not currently working, this was rectified and an apology provided.</p> <p>The partially upheld complaint concerned advice provided to the public regarding the best way to dispose of second hand furniture. Waste Services agreed to provide the Contact Centre with up to date guidance regarding Charities that accept such items for reuse / resale.</p> <p>Three partially upheld complaint were received in relation to the erecting of a sign on behalf of SWTRA. The sign were erected to SWTRA's specification but they were not bilingual and required adjustment.</p>				
Compliments	7			
Analysis of the trends				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FOIA & IT sections were thanked for a quick response to a request for information. • The Contact Centre and Waste Services were thanked for arranging a missed collection. • Thanks were given to the Contact Centre, Plumber and Electrician who attended to an issue on Saturday morning <i>"a very big thank you"</i> • Staff in the Contact Centre and Concessionary Bus Pass Teams were thanked for arranging for a replacement pass to be issued quickly. • Staff were praised for the assistance given to the organisers of a cycling event at Pembrey Country Park <i>"The team went out of their way to help me with various aspects of the event planning. We genuinely could not have made the event happen if it wasn't for their input, help, and support"</i> • A member of Contact Centre staff and refuse crew were thanked for listening to concerns with food waste collections and for resolving the issues. 				

- *“The help & support I have received from the Manager has been exceptional... repair issues addressed in a very friendly, professional and efficient way... Whenever I have contacted the Council the response times to resolve these problems has been brilliant” – Supported Housing & Property Services.*

10. Conclusions

- There was an increase of 116 in the number of complaints the Council recorded and responded to during 2017/18 (847), compared to 2016/17 (731). This equates to a 16% increase.
- During 2017/18, 99 complaints were recorded following the introduction of the new garden waste scheme.
- Despite the increase in the number of complaints, there was an overall increase in the number of cases that received a response within the allocated time period: 65% in 2017/18 compared to 60% in 2016/17.
- In addition to formal complaints, the Complaints Team (669) and adult social care (45) managed a total of 714 re-directs, which are considered as enquiries and requests for assistance which the teams manage in order to try and rectify difficulties before complaints arise.
- During 2017/18, 23 complaints were concluded by the Ombudsman, compared to 37 in 2016/17. This represents a significant 38% decrease.
- There was a decrease of 99 in the number of compliments received by the Council during 2017/18 (416), compared to 2016/17 (515).