
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

9 March 2021

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: April to September 2020 Complaint Report

Purpose: To inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's complaint performance and the volumes and trends of complaints in the first 6 months of Financial Year 2020.

Recommendation: That the Committee notes the report and the information provided.

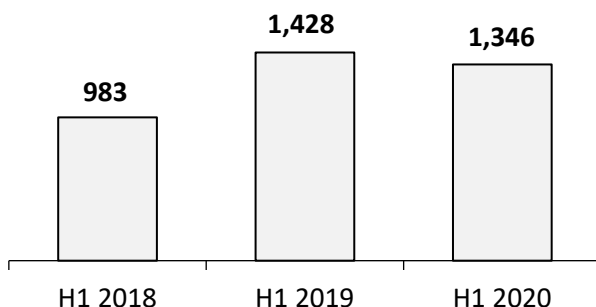
1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details complaint information relating to North Ayrshire Council covering the period 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 (referred to in the report as H1 2020).
- 1.2 In order to allow comparisons the report also details some complaint data covering the same periods in 2018 and 2019 (referred to as H1 2018 and H1 2019).
- 1.3 Complaint handling performance is measured through a number of Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) performance indicators, some of which have national targets.

2. Background

- 2.1 This section contains statistical information and commentary on some of the key complaint performance indicators devised by the SPSO in conjunction with all 32 Scottish councils. More information relating to all the indicators can be found in the attached report.

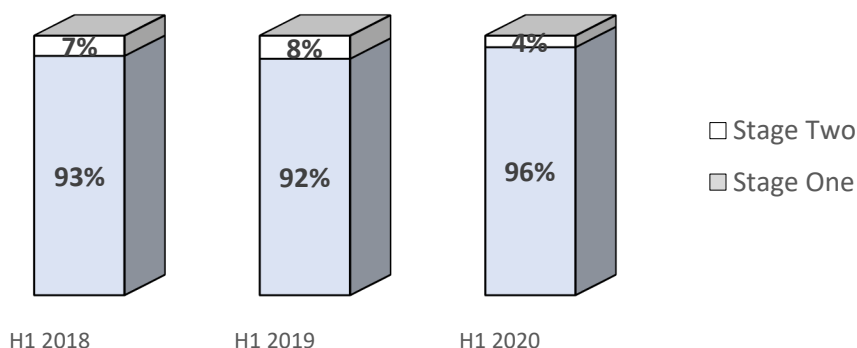
2.2 *Volume of complaints received and closed*



2.2.1 Whilst the Council had to introduce measures and change policies, processes and practices to combat the Covid-19 pandemic during this period, there has been a 6% reduction in complaints when comparing the first six months of 2020 with 2019. More details can be found in the attached report.

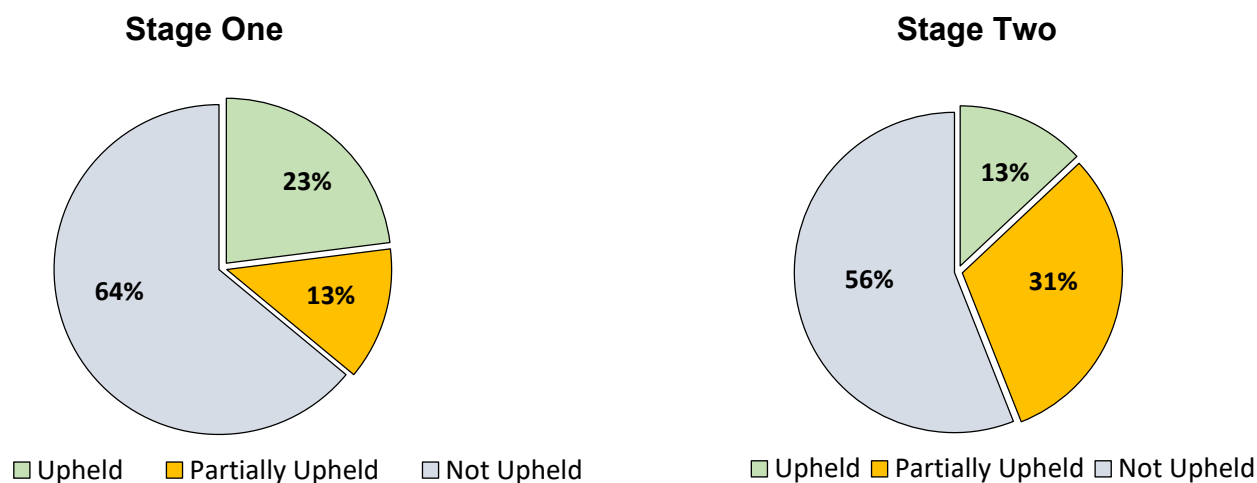
2.2.2 Whilst complaint volumes are recorded, the key point is to ensure lessons are learned as a result of complaints in order to prevent reoccurrence.

2.3 ***Complaints closed at each Stage***



2.3.1 Whilst there is no national target for the number of complaints to be closed under each Stage, the Council always seeks to maximise closure at Stage One as complainants receive a quicker resolution, reduce the impact on complaint handlers' time and reduce the possibility of SPSO referrals.

2.4 ***Complaint outcomes***



2.4.1 Upheld complaints are those where the Council has had to take action to address or fix something. Partially Upheld complaints are complaints that have more than one complaint element where at least one of them was upheld.

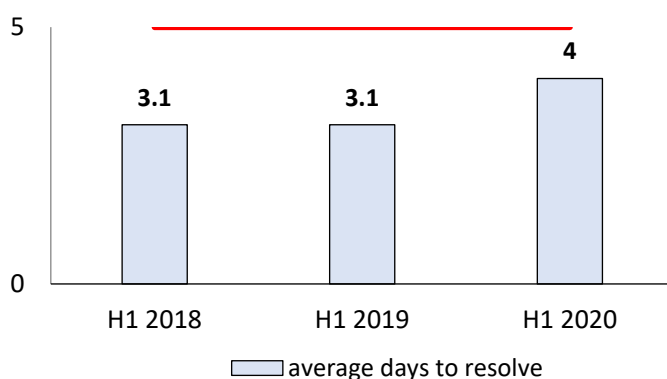
2.4.2 Analysis shows the majority of complaints received during the period related to Waste Services partly as a result of issues the service encountered as a result of Covid-19.

Given the high volume of upheld missed bin collection complaints during the period, the Stage One pie chart above shows the outcomes with these complaints excluded. A chart including these complaints can be found in the attached report, together with further information regarding the impact Covid-19 has had on Waste Services.

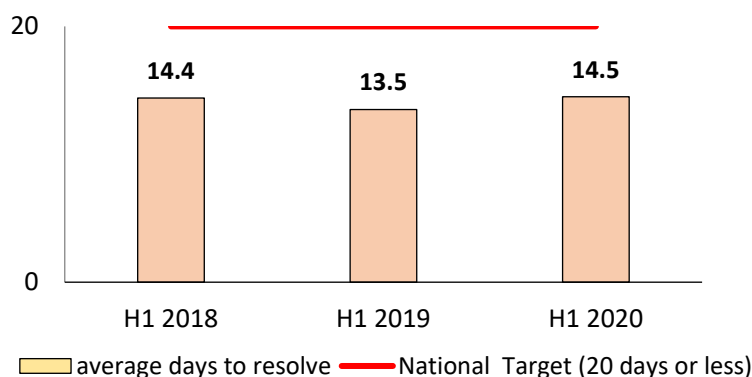
2.4.3 Complaints that were not upheld related to policies, regulations, poor quality complaint submissions or complaints that were proven to be unfounded.

2.5 *Average time in working days for a full response at each Stage*

Stage One

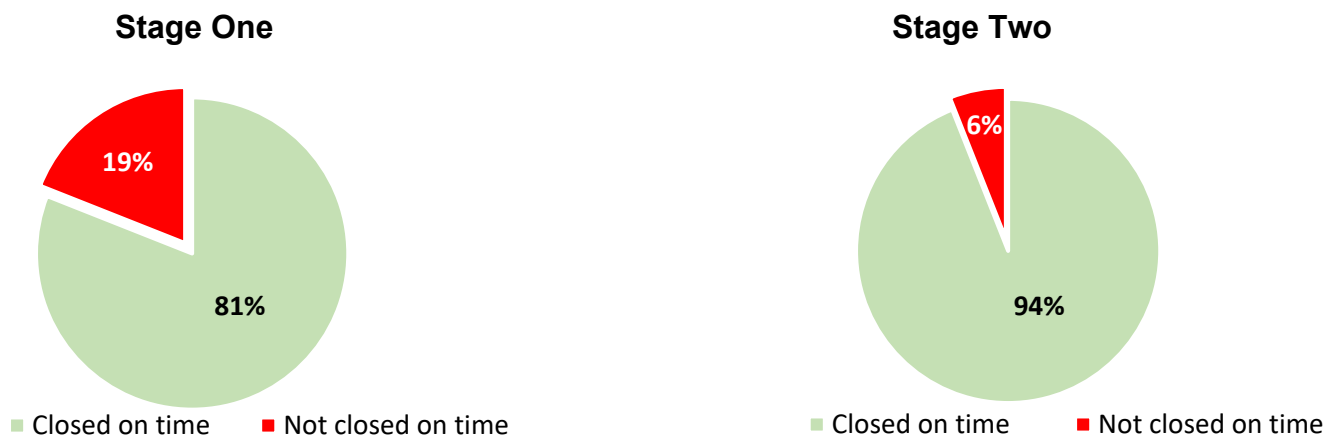


Stage Two



2.5.1 The average time in working days for a response under both Stages has met the SPSO target response timescales consistently for the last three years.

2.6 ***Complaints closed within timescale***



2.6.1 The national target for complaints closed under Stage One is 80% or above and the target was exceeded.

2.6.2 The national target for complaints closed under Stage Two is 85% or above and again the target was exceeded.

2.6.3 There were several factors complaints that did not meet timescale during the period and further details are contained in the attached report.

2.6.4 It should be noted that whilst the Council has been tackling a major health crisis during this time, national targets for complaints closed on time were still met.

2.7 ***Complaint timescale extensions***

2.7.1 Stage One complaints should be responded to within 5 working days, but we can extend them an additional 5 working days (10 if the complaint relates to Social Work) under certain circumstances. Stage Two complaints should be responded to within 20 working days but again services can extend the timescale of these to a date in the future if certain circumstances are met.

2.7.2 A total of 25 complaints had their timescales extended during the period and just over half were Stage Ones. Reasons for extension included complainants and individuals being unavailable to assist with investigations, additional information having to be sought to support investigations and issues arising from the Covid-19 outbreak.

2.8 ***Trends identified from upheld/partially upheld complaints***

2.8.1 Key complaint topics for upheld or partially upheld complaints within some Services are noted in page 9 of the attached report.

2.9 Changes or Improvements made as a result of complaints

2.9.1 Not all Services can implement improvements due to a number of factors, including the feasibility of making changes and resource/budget considerations. That said, improvements were made in some Services as a result of complaints received during the period and a selection are noted in page 14 of the attached report.

2.9.2 During the period 160 compliments were recorded. Some praised specific individuals or teams, some related to more than one Service.

2.10 Coronavirus impact

2.10.1 Since March 2020 the Council has been continually assessing the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak and its ability to continue to deliver critical and key services. Section 10 in the attached report provides more information on complaints received during the period that related to Covid-19.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed the Committee approves the report and recognises NAC performance in relation to the information listed in Section 2 above.

4. Implications

Financial:	None
Human Resources:	None
Legal:	None
Equality:	None
Children and Young People:	None
Environmental & Sustainability:	None
Key Priorities:	<p>The Two Stage CHP supports the Council's key priority of delivering more effective and efficient service provision.</p> <p>Regular reports are produced with the focus on determining trends and service improvements.</p> <p>Support and guidance from the Complaint Manager ensures greater consistency in complaint handling, improvements in response times and a reduction in duplication of effort.</p>
Community Benefits:	The Two Stage CHP demonstrates a commitment to improve service delivery for North Ayrshire residents, customers and visitors.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A working group comprising officers from a number of Scottish Local Authorities is producing a standard Complaint Handling Satisfaction Survey that Councils can issue to complainants to capture their views and feedback on how their complaints are handled. As this piece of work is currently suspended due to the Covid-19 outbreak any update on progress will be provided in the 2020/21 annual complaint report.

Andrew Fraser
Head of Democratic Services

For further information please contact **Darren Miller** on telephone number **(01294) 322988**.

Background Papers

N/A



Complaint Report

1 April to 30 September 2020



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Introduction

North Ayrshire Council always seeks to deliver the best services possible to its customers and residents but it is recognised that dissatisfaction will sometimes occur. When it does we want to know what went wrong, why it went wrong and what we can do to make things right.

The Council recognises valuable lessons can be learnt from complaints which are defined as being expressions of dissatisfaction from members of the public about actions, or lack of actions, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The Council's complaint handling procedure (CHP) has two stages for handling complaints from the public:-

1

Stage One complaints (also known as *Frontline Resolution*) are straightforward, non-complex complaints the Council can resolve at the initial point of contact or as close to the point of service delivery as possible. The Council has up to 5 working days to resolve these.

2

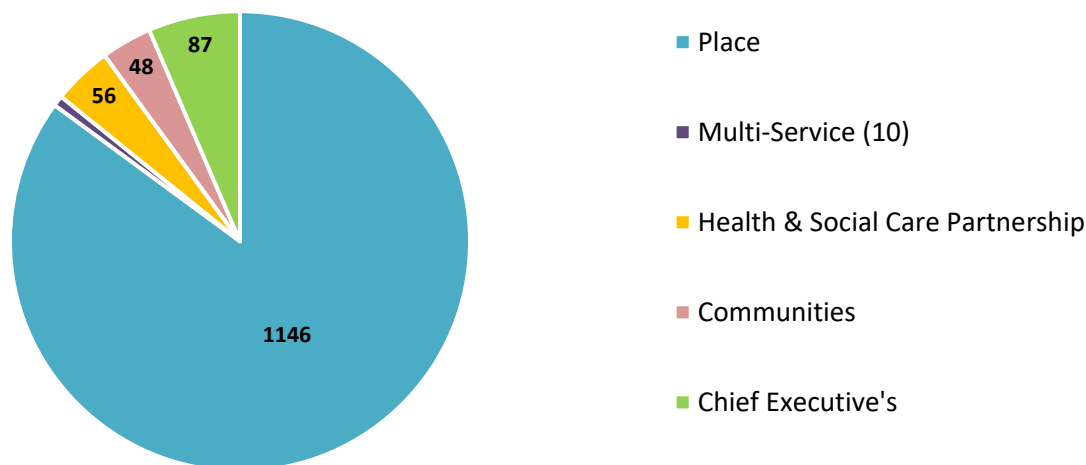
Stage Two complaints (also known as *Investigations*) are complaints the Council are typically unable to resolve at Stage One and need more time to carry out further investigation. This may be because the nature of the complaint is complex, serious or high risk. The Council has up to 20 working days to resolve these.

This report details the Council's complaint handling performance covering the first six months of financial year 2020 (1 April to 30 September 2020) and is referred to in the report as **H1 2020**. Performance is measured via several Scottish Public Services Ombudsman indicators (some of which have national targets) and complaint data relating to previous years has been included in certain sections to allow comparisons to be made.

Reporting complaints is a statutory requirement and is monitored by Audit Scotland.

1 Volume of complaints closed

1,346 complaints were closed during the period and the chart below provides a breakdown per Directorate:



The following tables highlight complaint volumes per Directorate under each Stage:

Place	Stage One	Stage Two
Building Services	59	1
Facilities Management	5	-
Housing	63	10
Planning	-	2
Property Management & Investment	28	1
Protective Services	7	1
Regeneration	2	-
Roads	24	1
Streetscene	89	-
Waste Services	852	1
Total	1129	17

Multi-Service	Stage One	Stage Two
Complaints involving more than one service	5	5
Total	5	5

Health & Social Care Partnership	Stage One	Stage Two
Children, Families & Criminal Justice	14	10
Health & Community Care	17	9
Mental Health	2	-
Support Services	4	-
Total	37	19

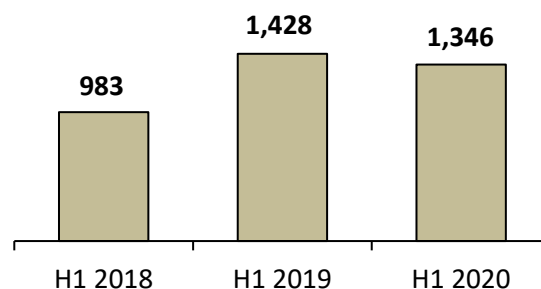
Communities	Stage One	Stage Two
Community Learning & Development	1	-
Education (HQ)	27	9
Education (Schools)	9	1
Total	38	10

Chief Executive's	Stage One	Stage Two
Customer Services	76	1
Benefits	9	-
Legal	1	-
Total	86	1

- Although there is no target for the volume of complaints handled under each Stage, the Council seeks to maximise closure at Stage One wherever possible and 96% were handled at this Stage during the period.
- Some Services handled all their complaints at Stage One.
- Whilst 63% of all complaints received related to Waste Services (the majority being missed bins and assisted pullouts), the Service empty over 102,000 household waste bins each week. As this equates to approximately 2.5 million collections during the period, 0.03% of these collections resulted in complaints being raised. The service is currently developing an improvement plan to address missed collections and assisted pull-outs, including the use of technology to verify genuine missed collections (as opposed to occasions where the householder has not presented the bin on time).
- Complaints received that related to measures the Council took to combat Covid-19 can be found later in this report.
- Multi-Service complaints have a table of their own as they are not attributed to one Service.

Year on Year comparison

The graph below shows a comparison of the volume of complaints received over the half year period in the last three years:



The table below shows the volume breakdown for each Directorate over the three years (based on the new 2020 structure):

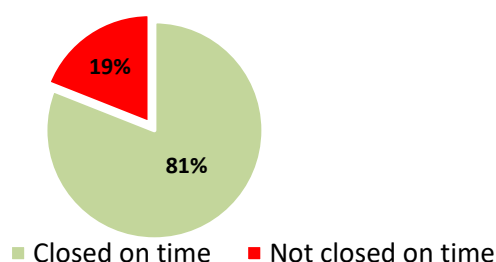
Directorate	H1 2018	H1 2019	H1 2020	Variance (2019 – 2020)
Chief Executive's	144	105	87	-17%
Communities	75	67	47	-30%
HSCP (Social Work complaints)	72	48	56	+17%
Place	675	1,202	1,146	-5%
Total	966*	1,422*	1,336*	-6%

*Multi-service complaints have been excluded to allow for true Directorate comparisons

- Whilst the Council had to introduce measures and change policies, processes and practices to combat the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a 6% reduction in complaints when comparing the first six months of 2020 with 2019 (the high volume of complaints in Place in H1 2019 related mainly to changes made to the Waste collection service from 1 April 2019).
- Two Directorates saw sizable reductions in complaints received when comparing H1 2020 with H1 2019.

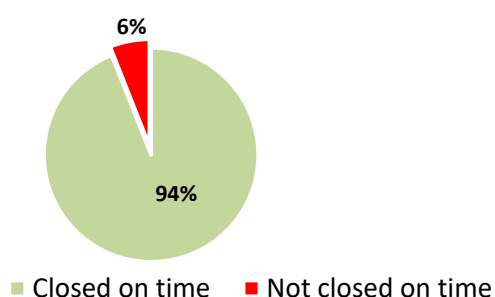
2 Volume of complaints closed on time at both Stages

Stage One



- The national target for closing Stage One complaints on time is 80% and above.
- The volume closed on time includes extended complaints that met their new due dates.

Stage Two



- The national target for closing Stage Two complaints on time is 85% and above.
- The volume closed on time includes extended complaints that met their new due dates.

3 Volume of complaints not closed on time per Directorate

This section provides details of complaints not closed on time under each Stage and includes extended complaints that did not meet their new timescales.

Stage One

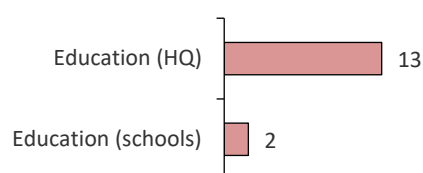
Notes

Chief Executive's



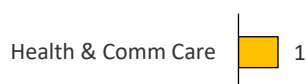
Reasons for these three complaints breaching included the service being unable to contact complainants to discuss the issues and a complaint being incorrectly routed when it was logged.

Communities



Some of these complaints breached due to their complexity and complaint handlers being unable to contact complainants to agree complaint elements. Some also breached due to schools closing due of Covid-19 which caused difficulties in arranging meetings of parents, Headteachers and teachers to resolve the complaints.

HSCP (Social Work complaints)



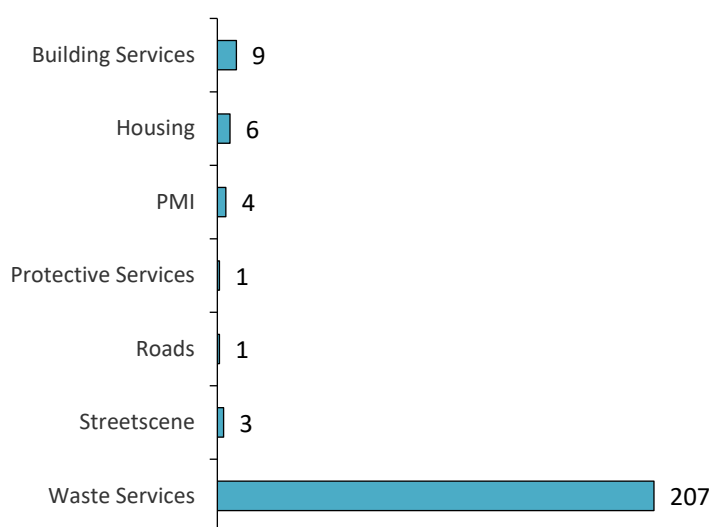
One complaint breached its due date because the Principal Manager requested additional information be added to the response and there were also complications as a result of Covid-19.

Multi-Service



This complaint breached its timescale as it was initially allocated to PMI who determined it involved multiple service several days later. When reallocated to Multi-Service it was resolved the following day.

Place



Reasons given for Place complaints not meeting the 5 working day timescale included complaint handlers not being available to progress complaints and complainants being unavailable to assist with investigations. Some complaints also breached due to factors related to Covid-19 measures and restrictions.

Many of the complaints that breached were closed only one or two days beyond their due dates.

Regarding the volume of Waste complaints that did not meet timescale, see the additional commentary below.

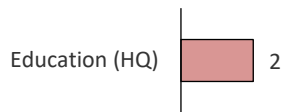
Covid-19 and impact on Waste Services

As a result of Covid-19, Waste Operations had to re-write operational risk assessments and change operating arrangements which included drivers and crews dispersing at the end of a shift to prevent employees congregating at the depot at finish time. This made supervision more difficult as foremen were unable to have face to face time with drivers and crew. Levels of absence also had an adverse effect on service delivery and resolving complaints. During April and May in particular absence levels peaked at 40% and during this period employees were redeployed from other service areas. Although vehicles were fully optimised and operating there were many unfamiliar staff on vehicles which inevitably resulted in mistakes being made, particularly with missed assisted collections. The operating outlook for waste collection remains difficult and is still being disrupted by individual positive Covid-19 cases causing those working in a “crew bubble” being forced to self-isolate. Vehicle availability has been stretched throughout the period of the pandemic which has also impacted on the service delivery of operations.

It is important to consider the above when reviewing complaint data for Waste Services and it should also be recognised that North Ayrshire Council was one of only a few local authorities in Scotland that managed to maintain a normal waste collection service during the pandemic.

Stage Two

Communities



These two HQ complaints were sensitive in nature and were closed just beyond the 20 working-day timescale.

Multi-Service



This complaint breached its timescale due to a technical issue with a shared mailbox. The issue was subsequently fixed by IT.

4 Key complaint topics

Key topics for upheld and partially upheld complaints for Services are listed below. Services will not be listed if there were low complaint volumes that did not allow meaningful analysis.

Chief Executives

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Customer Services	• Waiting times (to speak to Advisers)
	• Issues regarding free school meal vouchers

Communities

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Education (HQ)	• Sensitive issues relating to teachers and/or pupils

HSCP (Social Work complaints)

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Health & Community Care	• Service provision/delivery

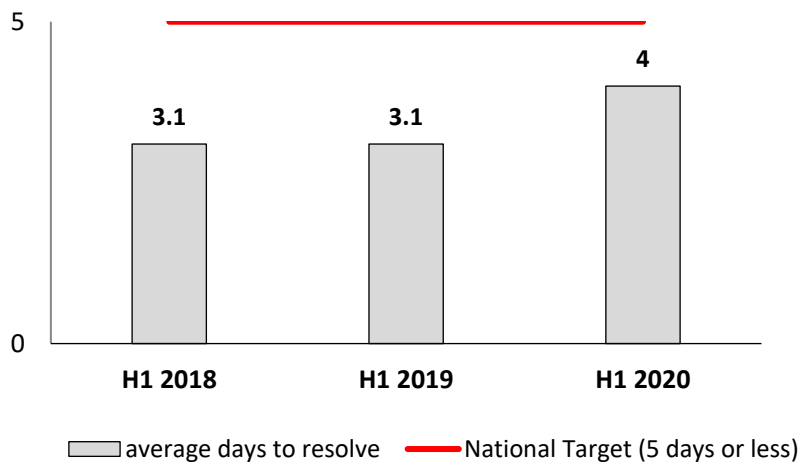
Place

Service	Key complaint topic(s)
Building Services	• Follow Up appointments
Streetscene	• Quality/lack of grass cutting
Waste Services	• Missed bins (all colours)
	• Missed pull outs (all colours)
	• Employee actions
	• Spillages when emptying bins

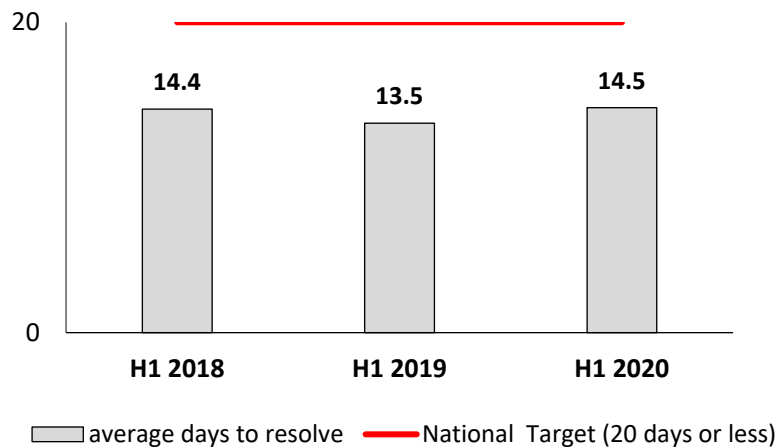
5 Average time in working days for a full response

The average time in working days to close complaints under both Stages during the period is noted below. Values for previous years have been included to allow comparisons to be made and any complaints that had their timescales extended have been excluded from the calculations.

Stage One



Stage Two

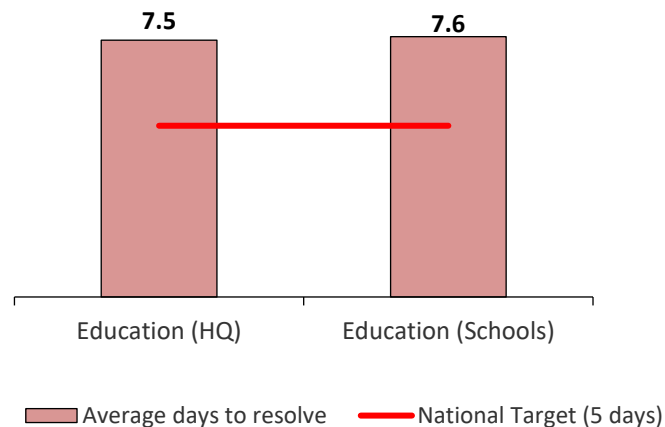


- The average time to close complaints under both Stages has consistently exceeded target.

The bar charts below detail Services that did not meet the average time in working days for a response under either Stage. Services that met the target are not listed and any complaints that had their timescales extended (and met their new due dates) have been excluded from the calculations.

Communities

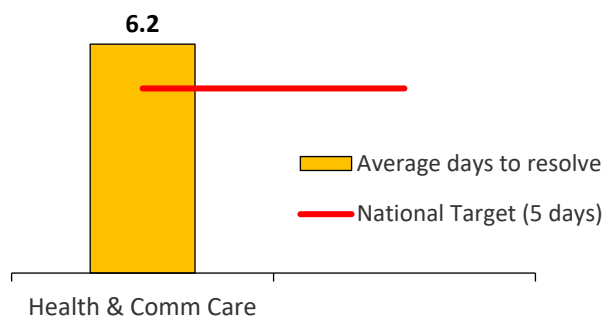
Stage One



Some complaints for HQ and schools did not meet their timescales by considerable margins, which resulted in the average number of days target not being met for both. The main reason for this was complaints no longer being able to be progressed or concluded as a result of national Covid-19 measures that were introduced.

HSCP (Social Work complaints)

Stage One



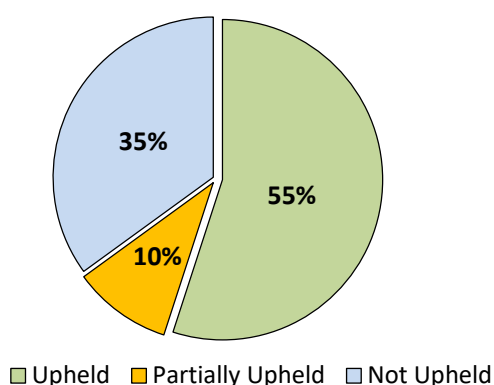
A Health & Community Care Stage One complaint was closed on working day 38 which resulted in the average time to resolve all complaints in the Service being 6.2 working days. It was closed on day 38 due to additional information being required to conclude the complaint and complications as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions.

6 Extended complaints

- 25 complaints had their timescales extended during the period (13 at Stage One and 12 at Stage Two). The complaints related mainly to services within the HSCP and Place Directorates.
- There were numerous reasons for extending, including complainants and individuals being unavailable to assist with investigations, additional information having to be sought to support investigations and issues arising from the Covid-19 outbreak (see section 10 for more information).
- All 25 extended complaints were closed within their new due dates.

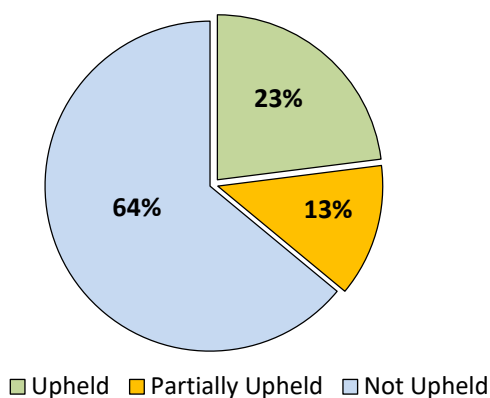
7 Complaint Outcomes

Stage One



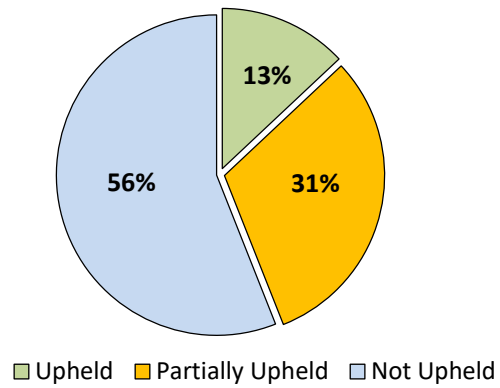
- Of all the complaints upheld and partially upheld* at Stage One, many related to Waste Services and in particular bin collections. This was anticipated given issues the service encountered as a result of Covid-19.
- Of the 35% of complaints not upheld, over two thirds related to policies (and in particular policy changes as a result of Covid-19).

Given the high volume of upheld missed bin collection complaints during the period, the chart below shows the outcomes with these complaints excluded. As you will note, there is now a significant difference when comparing the upheld and partially upheld figures between both charts:



*Partially Upheld complaints are complaints that contain more than one complaint element and at least one of them is upheld

Stage Two



- 44% of all Stage Two complaints upheld or partially upheld* and were split across services within Communities, HSCP and Place.
- Of the 56% of complaints not upheld, these related to policies, regulations and complaints that were determined to be unproven/unfounded.

*Partially Upheld complaints are complaints that contain more than one complaint element and at least one of them is upheld

8 Improvements made as a result of complaints

Some improvements were made as a result of complaints received during the period and a selection is noted below.

What happened?	What we did
An elderly tenant called the Council's Out of Hours service to report a problem but the correct processes were not followed.	A briefing note was issued to the Out of Hours Team reminding them how to handle calls from elderly tenants, tenants that may be living alone and what repairs should be classed as emergencies. An apology was also offered to the complainant.
A resident booked a special uplift which went to an incorrect address.	When it was determined that the resident's customer record showed a previous address, the system was updated to reflect the new address, the special uplift items were removed and an apology was offered to the complainant. Consideration is also being given to include the address of the special uplift when uplift confirmation emails are issued to customers.
A driver complained about road works at a roundabout where the diversion took them up a rural road.	The driver was advised that there were numerous signs advising the road was closed and additional signs had also been erected since the works had started. The driver commented that a 'local access only' sign could have been erected and this suggestion will be considered for any future works planned at this location.

9 Compliments

Over 160 compliments were recorded cross-Council during the period and whilst they cannot all be highlighted in this report a selection is noted below.

*"I reported a dangerous tree which was removed promptly. I would like to pass on my compliments to **Business Support** and **Streetscene** for the prompt action."*

Multiple compliments were received for **Building Services** regarding the "fantastic", "brilliant" and "amazing" jobs that joiners, electricians, plumbers and other staff have carried out over the last six months.

Multiple compliments were received regarding the service provided by HSCP **Care at Home** staff during the Covid-19 pandemic. Comments included that they provide a fantastic service with personal care support as well as offering emotional support at a time when families are unable to visit.

*"I want to say a huge thanks to **Angela Watson**, Library Assistant. She went above and beyond to assist with my membership. A great job, thank you!"*

"Just want to say thanks to those working in the Local Offices, those who may still be at their desks or working from home, those in Waste Services who are still collecting our waste and other staff who are carrying out other essential jobs during this historically remarkable time, you are doing a great job and deserve our thanks and gratitude. Thank you."

"I just wanted to say I think the Council is doing a wonderful job during the lockdown. The specific information on your website about all the services and support available is comprehensive and helpful. The speed with which you set up the Community Hubs is amazing. The Q and A session held by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive was comprehensive and helpful too."

*"I had a query with council tax and it was dealt with by **Kaye Robertson** in the **Contact Centre**. She was polite, efficient and a credit to your team."*

Multiple compliments were received for **Waste Services** thanking drivers and crews for continuing to maintain a collection service during Covid-19.

"Congratulations to the Council regarding food boxes being issued to families on benefits whose children receive free school meals. These goods really help to feed families and are so much better than vouchers as it means fewer visits to the supermarket are necessary. Well done NAC!"

*"Thanks to **John Mack** in your **Planning Team** for his prompted clear response to my question. Well done and thanks for all you do for us at this time"*

(multiple compliments were also received from people who benefitted from this initiative)

Multiple compliments were received for **Roads** regarding repairs and faults being addressed swiftly during the last six months.

10 Coronavirus impact

Since March 2020 the Council has been continually assessing the impact of the Coronavirus outbreak and its ability to continue to deliver critical and key services. Whilst robust business continuity plans are in place for unforeseen events, these unprecedented circumstances presented substantial challenges and service provision in some areas of the Council was affected.

Of the 1,346 complaints closed during the period, 160 (12%) related directly or indirectly to the pandemic. Below is a table detailing the Directorate and Service breakdown.

Directorate	Service	No. of Covid-19 related complaints	Volume that were policy-related
Chief Executives	Customer Services	7	4
	Legal	1	1
Communities	Community Learning	1	1
	Education (HQ)	6	5
	Education (schools)	2	1
HSCP	Children & Families	4	0
	Health & Community Care	7	0
	Support Services	2	0
Multi-Service	Multiple services	5	3
Place	Building Services	18	12
	Housing	7	6
	PMI	10	10
	Protective Services	4	1
	Roads	5	5
	Streetscene	35	35
	Waste	46	22
TOTAL		160	106

Looking at services that received most Covid-related complaints, analysis identified:

- Some **Customer Services** complaints related to long waiting times (due to Contact Centre Advisers having to work from home) and council tax/2nd home reductions not being offered during the pandemic/lockdown
- Some **Education** complaints related to school closures and children having to be taught from home
- Some **HSCP Health & Community Care** complaints related to delays to service provision
- Some **Building Services** complaints related to the change in policy where only emergency repairs were to be carried out
- Some **PMI** complaints related to a reduced service as a result of contractors having to close their offices/businesses
- Some **Protective Services** complaints related to the closure of non-essential businesses

- Some **Roads** complaints related to the closure of the Council's car parks
- The majority of the 35 Covid-related **Streetscene** complaints related to grass cutting being suspended and the time taken to phase it back in
- Covid-related complaints about **Waste Services** related mainly to the closure of the Household Waste Recycling Centres; the suspension of special uplifts; missed collections (due to redeployed employees being unfamiliar with the service) and new bin requests only being processed for new properties (although these new bins were delivered in a timely fashion between March and August which is worthy of note given the difficulties the Service was facing).

Further information and analysis on the impact Coronavirus has had on our complaint handling performance will be reported in the 2020/21 end of year complaint report.

11 ALEO complaints

An Arms-Length External Organisation (ALEO) is an organisation formally separate from a local authority but still subject to its control and influence. North Ayrshire Leisure Limited (NALL) is an ALEO for North Ayrshire Council and this section normally highlights complaints handled by NALL using the same Two Stage procedure the Council uses.

As the NALL H1 2020 report was still being prepared when this report was produced, details of NALL complaints will be included in the Council's 2020/21 end of year complaint report.

12 SPSO complaint referrals

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about Local Authorities in Scotland. The SPSO recently published its 2019/20 referral statistics and the table below details the volume of complaints (relating to North Ayrshire Council) that were referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman during the year:

Type of complaint	Volume
Education	3
Environmental Health & Cleansing	1
Finance	4
Housing	8
Personnel	1
Planning	1
Roads & Transport	1
Social Work	5
Subject unknown or Out of Jurisdiction	2

- The SPSO received 1,249 complaints about Scottish Local Authorities during 2019/20 and 3% related to North Ayrshire Council. This referral rate is consistent with previous years (typically between 2% to 3%).
- The highest number of referrals made to the SPSO about the Council related to Housing but this was expected given many of the Local Authority referrals made to the SPSO during the year related to Housing or housing services.

The outcomes of the North Ayrshire Council complaints referred to the SPSO are noted below.

Stage	Outcome	Volume
Advice	Not duly made or withdrawn	8
	Out of jurisdiction	1
	Premature	6
Early Resolution	Not duly made or withdrawn	2
	Out of jurisdiction	1
	Proportionality	8
	Resolved	1
Investigation	Fully upheld	2
	Not upheld	1

- The majority of the referrals made by North Ayrshire complainants were resolved by the SPSO at the Advice or Early Resolution stages. Only 3 were taken to investigation where 2 were upheld and some recommendations made (which the Council implemented).

- Many of the referrals at Advice stage were either withdrawn by the complainants, out of SPSO jurisdiction or premature i.e. complainants approached the SPSO before exhausting the Council's Two Stage process.
- Many Early Resolution referrals were considered under proportionality meaning the SPSO decided it would not be proportionate to investigate the complaints given the need to use public resources effectively. Instances include where evidence suggests the Council has already carried out a thorough investigation or the sole outcome being sought by the complainant is not one the SPSO can achieve by investigating and making recommendations.

More details regarding complaint referrals for North Ayrshire Council can be found on the SPSO website at <https://www.spsso.org.uk/decision-reports>.

13 Glossary

Term	Explanation
Stage One	Stage One (aka <i>Frontline Resolution</i>) aims to resolve straightforward customer complaints that require little or no investigation. Any employee may deal with complaints at this stage and they can be resolved via any channel. The main principle is to seek resolution at the earliest opportunity and as close to the point of service delivery as possible. Stage One complaints must be responded to within 5 working days unless an extension (a maximum of 5 additional working days or 10 if the complaint relates to Social Work) is requested and approved by a senior manager. The Council should, however, always aim to resolve these types of complaints within 5 working days.
Stage Two	Not all complaints are suitable for Frontline Resolution and not all complaints will be satisfactorily resolved at that stage. Complaints therefore handled at Stage Two (aka <i>Investigation</i>) typically require a detailed examination before the Council can state its position. These complaints may already have been considered at Stage One, or they may have been identified from the outset as being complex, serious or high risk and needing immediate investigation. The investigation under a Stage Two should establish all the facts relevant to the points made in the complaint and give the customer a full, objective and proportionate response that represents our final position. Stage Two complaints must be responded to within 20 working days unless an extension is approved by senior manager in conjunction with the customer. Stage Two complaints require a written response, signed by a senior manager.

Complaint criteria

When an expression of dissatisfaction is received the Council determines if the issue falls into one of six complaint categories:

- A service the Council should be providing is not being provided (or is not available)
- A request for a service was provided but not to an appropriate standard
- A request for service has not been answered or actioned within the agreed timescale
- A Council employee was rude, unhelpful or unprofessional
- A Council employee did not attend an appointment or call-out on a date/time agreed
- The complaint relates to a policy (internal or external)

If the issue being raised relates to one or more of the above, the matter is considered a complaint and will be recorded and handled as such. If not, the matter will be handled as a request for a service, observation or enquiry and actioned accordingly.

END OF REPORT