



Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest
to create a better borough

Corporate Feedback Report

Improving our Customer Experience

Annual Report 2024/25

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Report summary

Our residents are continuing to experience the impact of ongoing cost of living pressures. These impact upon almost every aspect of our residents' lives, including their health and wellbeing, their housing options and family life. This in addition to the boroughs growing and aging population has resulted in the Council continuing to see significant demand, rising expectations and increased pressure on, all its services.

The Council emptied 11.1 million bins during 2024/25, issued approximately 160,000 council tax bills, handled 180,546 calls to our Corporate Contact Centre, laid 51 kilometres of road markings, cleaned 15,000 gullies and applied 84,000 square meters of surface dressing, 92,262 people attended events and Telford Theatre on tour, in addition to this the borough welcomed some 3.2 million visitors to Telford.

It is therefore positive that this annual feedback report shows that there has been a sustained increase in the number of residents and customers who have taken the opportunity to give a compliment on the service they have received. Overall, the Council has seen a 128% increase in compliments in the last 6 years from 290 in 2019/20 to 660 in 2023/24 and a 17% increase since 2022/23 (566).

In January 2022, the Council became members of the Institute of Customer Services (ICS). During our first year of membership, we asked our customers to complete a benchmarking survey in order to allow us to measure our improvement over the next 3 years. In September 2024 a further benchmarking survey was completed which has informed our new Customer Strategy, which will be published in September 2025. The feedback from this survey and the accompanying workforce survey was recognised as excellent by the Institute who invited the Council to be considered for a ServiceMark Accreditation.

Following a rigorous external assessment of performance the Council was awarded the Institute's national customer service standard- ServiceMark. As the first Local Authority to achieve this accreditation from an Institute with both public and private sector members this is a notable achievement and further demonstrates that we are committed to driving continuous improvement in customer satisfaction. We are also pleased that the assessment showed how committed our workforce are to ensuring they deliver exceptional services for our customers and truly understood the aims and ambitions of our Customer Strategy. This accreditation also

fulfils the ambition of our Customer Strategy in 2021 which was called 'Our journey to excellence by 2025'. This accreditation gives us a platform to continually improve, which is at the heart of our new Customer Strategy 2025. More details can be found at page 6.

We have also seen an increase in the complaints received across the Council in 2024/25. Corporate complaints increasing from 659 in 2023/24, to 710 in the last year. Complaints about council policy and anonymous complaints accounted for 14 complaints and 16 complaints, respectively. When considering the total number of transactions and interactions undertaken by the Council during the year, the data therefore clearly shows that the number of complaints received continues to be well within accepted customer service industry standards and appreciably under 1% of all transactions.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman also states that the number of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-published and accessible complaints procedure.

The report highlights that the Council continues to manage complaints well, with response timescales improving by 2 days compared with last year's performance from average 10 working days to 8 working days. In addition, 84% of responses have been sent within the 10-working day timescale outlined within the new Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Code since the new code was adopted. The Council has committed to the revised timescales working with the Ombudsman as an early adopter, 2 years ahead of the point that the Ombudsman will start to monitor compliance by Local Authorities in 2026/27.

The improvements detailed in this report evidence the Council's commitment to respond to complaints positively and seek to put things right where things go wrong. There are areas of opportunity for continued improvement, and the Customer Relationship team will continue to work with senior leadership teams to robustly utilise complaints intelligence and customer feedback to support positive improvements in service delivery.

During 2024/25 the Customer Insight Programme has seen a number of projects completed supporting our new Strategy with Mystery Customers testing all our access channels so that we identify any areas that need to be improved. Mystery Customers reviewed the new Community Calendar and carried out user testing on Ask Tom telephony. More information regarding this work can be found from page 15. The Customer Insight Programme now has over 235 volunteers registered as Mystery Customers – an increase of 9% increase during 2024/25.

Highlights 2024/25

Over 235 volunteers registered to be Mystery Customers	158 completed Mystery Customer assignments	Institute of Customer Services ServiceMark Accreditation achieved
Average of 8 days to respond to corporate complaints	84% of corporate complaints* responded to in 10 working days *Since new timescale adopted 16 May 2024.	UK Customer Satisfaction Index Score of 74.0 (exceeding the national average for other local Councils 64.4)
100% LGSCO* recommendations completed	Institute of Customer Services Customer Effort Score of 4.3 (exceeding average for all organisations across UK- 4.5, a lower score demonstrates ease of accessing services).	17% increase in Compliments since 2022/23

ICS Business Benchmarking and ServCheck

In January 2022, the Council became members of the Institute of Customer Services (ICS), allowing us to benchmark our services against public and private sector organisations across the UK. We completed our first Business Benchmarking survey in June 2022 and in September we completed our second round of surveys. The outcome of this led to the Institute inviting the Council to seek Institute ServiceMark accreditation.

On 8 April 2025 following a rigorous assessment of the Council it was confirmed that we had demonstrated that we are meeting the Institute's national customer service standard- ServiceMark. Telford and Wrekin Council are the first Local Authority to achieve this standard representing excellence in performance and also demonstrating that we are committed to driving continuous improvement in customer satisfaction. The results below highlight some of our key achievements in reaching this standard.



UK Customer Satisfaction Index Score:

74.0

An improvement on the 72.1 scored in 2022 and also this is significantly higher than the 71.0 average for other public services. Our score is closer to the average for all organisations across the UK 76.1¹. This includes Amazon, John Lewis and Nationwide.

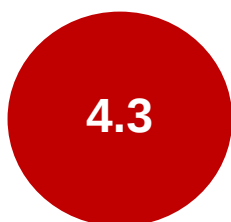
Net Promoter Score:

19.4

Another improvement on our 2022 figure and higher than the average for all organisations nationally (18.0) showing that an increasing number of our customers are likely to promote our organisation to others. The average for other local councils which was a negative -33.1 (a negative indicates a larger proportion of customers who would not promote the service (detractors) against those that would promote the service (promoters)).

¹ All scoring as of UKSCI January 2025

Customer Effort:



This score reflects the effort our customers must make to access our services (the lower the score the better). This is an excellent score comparing to the average for other local councils which was 5.8 and exceeding the average for Public Services at 5.1 and the average for all organisations across the UK which is 4.5. This is a clear indicator that improvements to our online offer and service access is being received positively by residents.

A workforce survey (ServCheck) was also completed to measure our workforce's engagement with our customer strategy, culture and processes. The results of this survey were benchmarked with other organisations in the Local Government Sector, which includes local Fire Services, Ambulance Services, Police Services and Councils.

ServCheck Index Score:



Significantly higher than the average for other Local Government sector organisations (70.56) and only slightly below the figure for all sector organisations across the UK (78.36).

Strategy & Leadership: Credibility Score:



This is another strong score exceeding all organisations average score of 80.4.

This is also reflected in responses from our workforce;

- ***“Our organisation has a vision, a mission and goals that deliver great customer service”***
- ***“The Directors/Senior Managers believe that great customer service is important to our business performance”***
- ***“The Senior Management Team fully promote the importance of customer service”***

Purpose of the Report

- To provide an overview of Telford and Wrekin Council's corporate customer feedback, including complaints and compliments, from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. This includes highlighting areas of positive performance and those for development.
- To outline the key developments and planned improvements to customer feedback processes operated by the Council.
- To consider how learning from customer feedback can be used to gain a better understanding of the experience customers are having accessing council services, drive continual improvement and development of services, prioritise quick wins and ensure that longer-term actions feed into the Customer Strategy.

Background

The Customer Relationship team co-ordinates complaints relating to three separate complaints processes. These are:

1. The Adult Social Care Statutory Process, reported separately in the Adult Statutory Complaints Annual Report 2024/25
2. The Children's Social Care Statutory Process, reported separately in the Children's Statutory Complaints Annual Report 2024/25
3. The Corporate Complaints Process. These are complaints relating to other services provided by the Council where there is no statutory complaints procedure, our corporate process includes complaints from our Council Tenants and also complaints involving Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

In addition, the team deals with a wide range of interactions with customers that do not go on to become formal complaints. These include general enquiries, MP Enquiries, Leader and Cabinet Member Enquiries, comments and suggestions, as well as any matters that are exempt from consideration under our complaints policies.

We recognise that our customers have a range of experiences when contacting us, working with us and using our services. Some of these experiences are positive, and we want to recognise and celebrate where good practice is evident, while others fall short of our standards, where it is essential that we learn from them. As an organisation, we provide customers with a mechanism to feedback to

us both positive and negative experiences, and encourage a culture of learning, where the focus is on resolution and continual improvement. Whenever possible, we take immediate action to put things right at the first point of contact, and if this cannot be done, we operate a robust complaints procedure.

Above all, the way we deal with customer feedback is based on our co-operative values, as published on the Council website www.telford.gov.uk/info/20268/co-operative_council/779/our_co-operative_values and the following key principles:

- Customer focus – listening to what people tell us and seeing things from the customer's perspective
- Responsiveness – acting on what people say to us
- Promptness – making sure people get answers in good time
- Transparency – dealing openly and honestly with problems
- Proportionality – making sure that the resolution fits the complaint
- Learning – making sure complaints result in changes and improvement

Our policies are also published on the website www.telford.gov.uk/complaints . A complaint is defined within the Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure as:

'An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standards of service, action or lack of action or decisions taken by the Council, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or a group of individuals'.

Telford and Wrekin Council operates a two-stage process for all corporate complaints.

For more information regarding corporate complaints in 2024/25, please go to page 22 of this report.

Accessibility of Council Services

Across the Council we take steps to support access to our services taking into consideration the diverse range of needs of our customers.

- Written materials are simplified, and efforts are made to remove jargon and technical language, so that as many of our customers as possible can understand the information that we provide.
- We make sure that the documents, flyers and written materials we release include information on how to contact us so that we can answer any questions you may have.
- We use clear signage in our buildings to help people get about.
- Staff are trained to greet you appropriately and take account of your needs when supporting you.
- All of our buildings welcome assistance animals and accommodate their needs where appropriate.
- Our safety and evacuation procedures for all buildings take account of the needs of visitors to make sure that they are safe at all times.
- Notes regarding additional needs can be added to some of our systems at your request. If you consider that this will assist your communication with us, please let us know when you make initial contact with our services and they will try to accommodate your request.

These are some of the things that we do to make sure that you can access our services easily, fairly and safely. For more information about how we support access to our services please visit our website at [Telford & Wrekin Council | Supporting access to services](#).

MP/ Leader/Cabinet and Member Enquiries

During 2024/25 the number of enquiries received from democratically elected members was as follows.

MP Enquiries- During 2024/25 a total of 253 MP enquiries were received. A 41% increase on the 159 received in 2023/24. We aim to respond to enquiries from MPs within 10 working days and our average response time was 8 working days with 88% responded to in the timescale.

Leader Enquiries- A total of 448 enquiries were received from residents via the Leader of the Council, Cllr Lee Carter and the former Leader Cllr Shaun Davies. The average number of days to respond to these enquiries was 3 days with 89% responded to in timescale.

Cabinet Member Enquiries- Enquiries from Cabinet Members amounted to 348. The average number of days to respond to these enquiries was 3 days. 91% were responded to in timescale.

Member Enquiries- 302 enquiries were received from Ward Members during 2024/25 a 9% increase on the 277 received in 2023/24. These were responded to in an average of 5 days, 96% within our response timescales.

Compliments

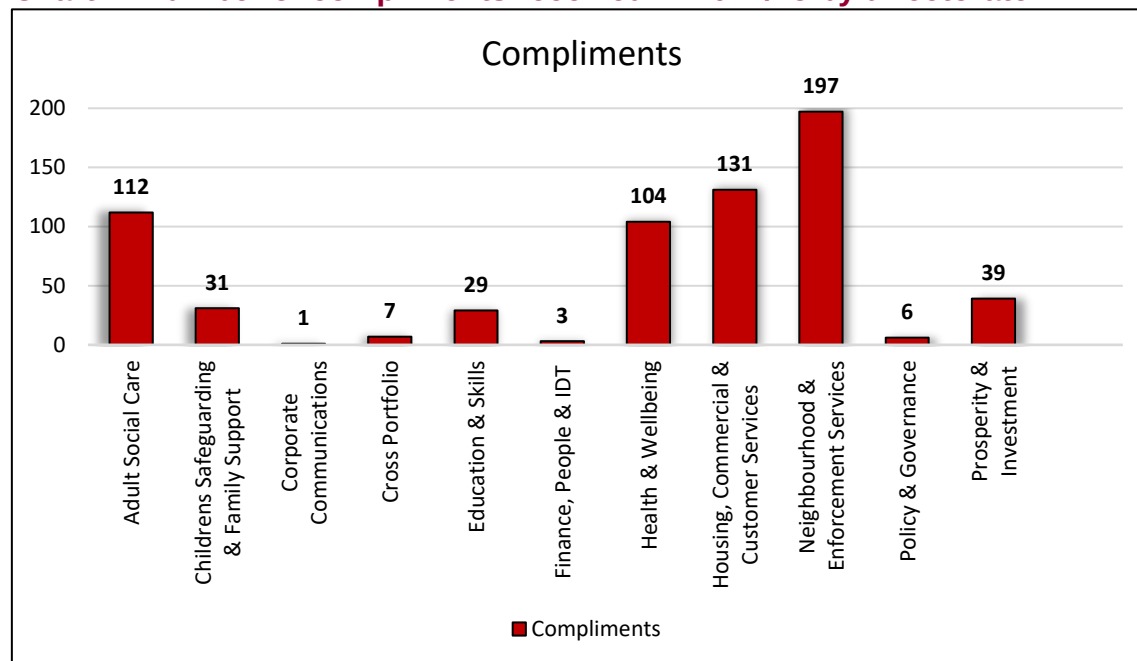
In 2024/25, there was a 3% increase in the number of compliments received – 17% since 22/23. A total of 660 instances were received compared to 639 in 2023/24. The Council has seen a 128% increase in compliments from 290 in 2019/20 to 660 in 2024/25. Compliments are logged and copied to Directors and Line Managers. This is recognised at service level through team briefs/ meetings and individual ‘one-to-ones’.

Where a member of staff has gone above and beyond, they may be awarded a Chief Executive Commendation to celebrate their achievement. An Excellent Customer Service Award is also made at our annual Employee Awards. Some examples of where employees have gone above and beyond can be seen below.

Chief Executive Commendation	Chief Executive Commendation	Customer Care Award Winner 2024
Following a customer collapsing during a panto performance at Telford Theatre Officers were first on scene and recognised for ensuring emergency services were called and for working alongside the medics to provide lifesaving support. The customer was very grateful for the actions taken which contributed to saving their life	In recognition of officer's actions and going the extra mile to support our vulnerable residents with their mental health and wellbeing. Working beyond hours of work to ensure the right support was in place. Officers showed real dedication and a great asset to the council.	The award was given to a social worker in the Early Intervention Team for working with people who are in crisis and desperately need support and guidance navigating the social care system. The Officer supported one family that had a negative experience when previously involved with social services. It was difficult for them to trust the system, but the social workers calm, and professional nature shone through, and their faith was restored and together they worked in a positive way to ensure that the customer received the best possible outcome. The Worker also supported peers and offers training and support to new staff.
Telford Theatre	Mental Health- Adult Social Care	Early Intervention Team Social worker

The chart below highlights the compliments received for each directorate during 2024/25.

Chart 1: Number of compliments received in 2024/25 by directorate



This year, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services (169) received the most compliments and saw an increase on the number received in 2023/24 (176). Housing, Commercial and Customer Services (133) also saw a significant increase on the number received for its services in 2023/24 (81) with 30 received by the Customer Contact Centre and 23 by the Housing team.

"Thank you everything you have done to support me over the last few months especially the last couple of weeks. I now have the payments owed and also a new Adult Practitioner (Social Worker). I know you have done more than your job role expects but I just wanted you to know how much it is appreciated."

Adult Social Care

"I must say it is refreshing to get this level of service, and the ability to fast track certain applications. I can confidently say that I know of no other LPA that offers the same."

Local Planning Authority

Here are some examples of compliments received during the year:

"I experienced an issue with my house purchase...I contacted your team member (Land charges officer) who for the past week has been absolutely outstanding in supporting me to urgently obtain all I need for my move to progress. The officer was emailed by me on Friday night and since then has moved heaven and earth to help, keeping me informed of everything each step of the way...I have been blown away by this lady's kindness and professionalism."

Legal Team

"I would particularly like to commend your colleague for the sensitive and caring way he handled the matter. Although a young man, he has a maturity way beyond his years and has a great gift and talent when dealing with people. I would certainly recommend his for any promotions that may be available in the future...He gave me sensible advice and for this I thank him and wish him all the best."

Grounds and Cleansing Team

"I just wanted to say a huge thank you to you for making this happen for me and my children, after a few years of hardship we now finally have a place of our own to call home! The kids are so excited to be able to have their own space again and it wouldn't have been possible without you! I appreciate all the help and support you have given me! Can't give you a hug in person but here's a small one from me! ☺❤ xx"

Housing Team

"It's good I accepted to come on this programme because it has been very useful to me and my family...I enjoyed every bit of it all thanks to the lovely personality who took time to walk me through! Thank you"

Healthy Lifestyles Team

"When SF was mentioned to me I never really wanted you to be involved, but now on reflection it was 100% the best decision I have made. You have helped me have an understanding of why I was permanently stressed, why I was permanently nagging my child, permanently feeling that the school thought I was demanding. You have been lovely and helped me tweak things...The meetings are great when you attend, they are no longer daunting for me, you help recap and move things forward. Things are better...you made me stop and think that really none of us are perfect, thank you"

Strengthening Families

Customer Insight Programme

Our Customer Insight Programme was launched in October 2019 with the aim of helping us review our services from customers' perspective. The programme is designed to deliver organisational intelligence to drive transformation and continuous development by identifying trends and improvements that could be made to enhance customers' experience of our services. Some key customer satisfaction results from in 2024/25 include:

95% Of customers were satisfied with call handling *Corporate Contact Centre Satisfaction	98% Of customers were satisfied with the help given on our website by 'Ask Tom' *Corporate Contact Centre Satisfaction	92% Of customers were satisfied with webchat *Corporate Contact Centre Satisfaction	91% of customers were satisfied with their overall experience of the Council Tax web pages *Mystery Customer Assignment
89% Of customers were satisfied with their experience whilst exploring Community Calendar *Mystery Customer Assignment	88% Of customers were satisfied with the experience of accessing services at Telford & Wrekin Council *Mystery Customer Assignment	98% Of customers were satisfied with their overall experience of Sky Reach & Outdoor Education *Mystery Customer Assignment	93% Of customers were satisfied with the ease of navigating the Community Calendar *Mystery Customer Assignment

The Customer Insight Programme now has 235 volunteers who have registered with us as Mystery Customers to undertake assignments. We have seen a 9% increase in volunteers during 2024/25, and the team will continue to promote the recruitment of the programme in the coming year.

158 assignments have been completed across the Customer Insight programme since April 2024 with an **86%** satisfaction score overall.

Customer Strategy Refresh

In January 2021 we launched our Customer Strategy which set out our commitment to improve our customers' experience over the next 4 years www.telford.gov.uk/customerstrategyandcustomercontract. Our new Customer Strategy will be launched in September 2025. To inform this we have asked our mystery customers to complete various assignments testing our access channels including Ask Tom online, Ask Tom telephony, MyTelford, Telephone, Website, Front of House/Face to Face.



"My experience was good and I was pleased with all aspects"

89% of customers were satisfied with the access channels.

Transport Telephone Reviews Revisited

Our focus for this review was revisiting accessing the Transport service via telephone, reviewing both Dial-a-Ride and our Passenger Transport Team. Recommendations were given to service following this assignment.



"I found this an excellent site, very easy to navigate with helpful links."

An email survey continues to be displayed on all staff members' email signatures to capture customers' feedback. We intend to continue to utilize these email surveys going forward to encourage continued feedback over an extended period.

Real time Customer Feedback

Since April 2021, posters have been in all front facing buildings asking our customers to comment on the service and experience that they receive. These short surveys, designed to take 30 seconds to complete, can be accessed via a QR code on a smart phone or via a website link. Any comments received are shared with services so they can consider if improvements can be made with feedback detailed on our 'You said, We did' web page.

90% of customers were satisfied with the service provided at these locations during 2024/25

Community Calendar Review

In October, we asked our Mystery Customers to test our 'Community Calendar' during its development to ensure that it would be effective as a community resource.

88% of customers advised the community calendar was accessible.

93% of customers advised it was easy to navigate.

89% of customers were impressed with their experience.



"The Staff have high quality of knowledge and are amazing with the children. They learn the children's names quickly and become personable giving them the confidence to engage in all activities!"
Outdoor Education

Recommendations taken forward included suggestions regarding improving the look and feel of the calendar.

MyTelford Satisfaction

A focus for 2024/25 has been on improving the overall satisfaction with logging jobs through MyTelford. 86,749 of submissions were logged through MyTelford during 2024/25. A satisfaction survey was included on all job closure emails to customers and there is an ongoing review of all closing emails that are sent to customers to ensure that the information provided is clear and outlines the reasons why the job has been closed. This has resulted in clear improvements in our customers satisfaction particularly using the MyTelford app.

As a comparison, the tables below track satisfaction with reporting issues through MyTelford (both app and web-portal) against satisfaction with reporting through all channels, which includes reports through the customer contact centre.

Chart 2: Satisfaction- Ease of Reporting

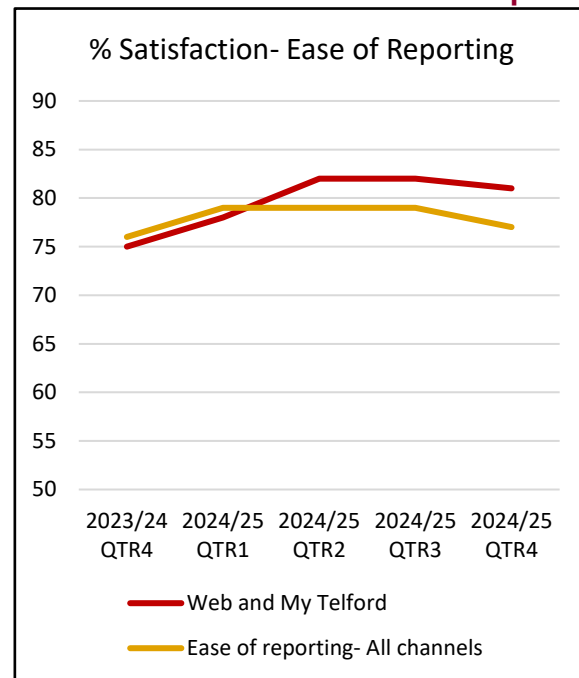


Chart 3: % satisfied with resolution

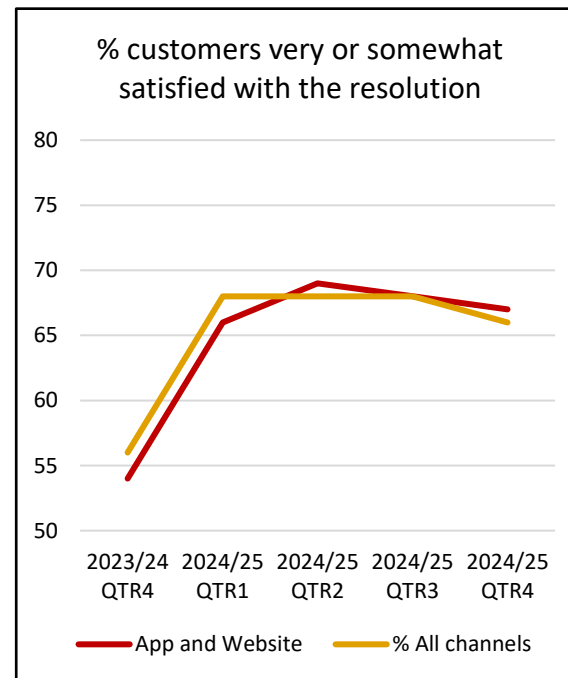
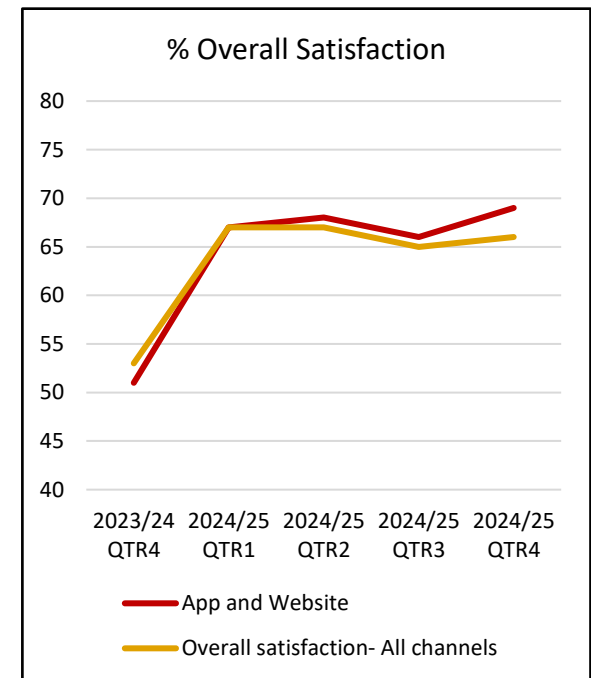


Chart 4: Overall Satisfaction



Ask Tom Telephony



In August 2024, we commenced a trial of Ask Tom Telephony. Ask Tom Telephony is designed to answer the more routine, straightforward and everyday queries, which can then free up Contact Centre Advisors to deal with more complicated enquiries and issues. If Tom cannot answer a customer enquiry, it will transfer the call through to an advisor.

Ask Tom Telephony was expected to be able to handle around 30% of enquiries providing customers with links to the information they require on our website and were requested also providing these links by text message. In practice Ask Tom is consistently handling upwards of 39% of customer enquiries without needing to pass them through to an advisor, this equates to 21,834 calls being handled by Ask Tom from its launch in August 2024 until end of March 2025. This has significantly reduced the average wait time for a call to be answered, cut from average 72 seconds to just 41 seconds. Around 26% of enquiries are

outside of normal office hours – and growing. The out of hours service, is one that the Council was not able to offer until Ask Tom Telephony was introduced.

Whilst the introduction of this technology has seen positive performance improvements, we recognise that experiences were initially mixed, and it represents a change to some regular customers. We are therefore continuously reviewing customer interactions to make sure that the Ask Tom knowledge base is developed and where we have identified gaps or can make an improvement based on customer feedback we've been doing so. We remain committed to continuous improvement.

Some of the most recent updates and improvements include;

- Introduced a new welcome message which reassures and clarifies to customers that they will be transferred to an advisor if Tom is unable to address their enquiry
- Refining the knowledge base meaning Tom can respond to a wider range of leisure, school transport and blue badges inquiries particularly
- Improving how Tom transfers calls to sites or services outside their opening hours to help manage customer's calls.
- Working closely with service areas to review Tom's knowledge base and understand the impact and accessibility of Tom on specific customer groups

- Tom has also been trained to recognise local words and phrases better, for example it now understands that 'Ab-Dab' refers to Abraham Darby
- We're working to develop a better way to capture customer satisfaction with Tom, so we can continue to monitor and improve the service we provide
- Removal of the second clarification question. Tom will now transfer a customer through to the appropriate team if it cannot understand the question on the first attempt
- Expansion of auto escalation keywords which connect the customer directly to an advisor if certain words are used that suggest the call is either urgent or relating to an area where Tom would have difficulty answering a question.

Our Mystery Customers have been involved in testing Ask Tom Telephony from the outset, testing the system before it went live and on a further three occasions since it was introduced. They continue to be engaged as we work to further improve performance.

On each occasion to date Mystery Customers have been positive about the system confirming the following scoring

- Overall satisfaction rate of **87%**
- Ease of using Ask Tom Telephony of **98%**



"Do you need help, information or advice from Telford and Wrekin council? If so, use the new service call Voice Tom. It's a completely automated service which operates both within and outside of business hours and is very easy to use. It also confirms the advice or answers given by text message which contain links to the council website for your detailed perusal."

Mystery Customer

During the year the Council has received 31 complaints involving Ask Tom Telephony. All have been investigated and just two of these complaints were upheld.

You said, We did

Our vision is to work with our customers to develop quality services that are accessible to all and to make every contact count. Feedback plays a vital role in our continuous development to make our customer service of the highest standard. Feedback is received via complaints, enquiries, through our Customer Insight Programme and from instant, real-time QR code feedback surveys, which have been introduced into many of our buildings - including libraries and leisure centres. Please find below some of this feedback from 2024/25 and the actions that we have taken as a result.

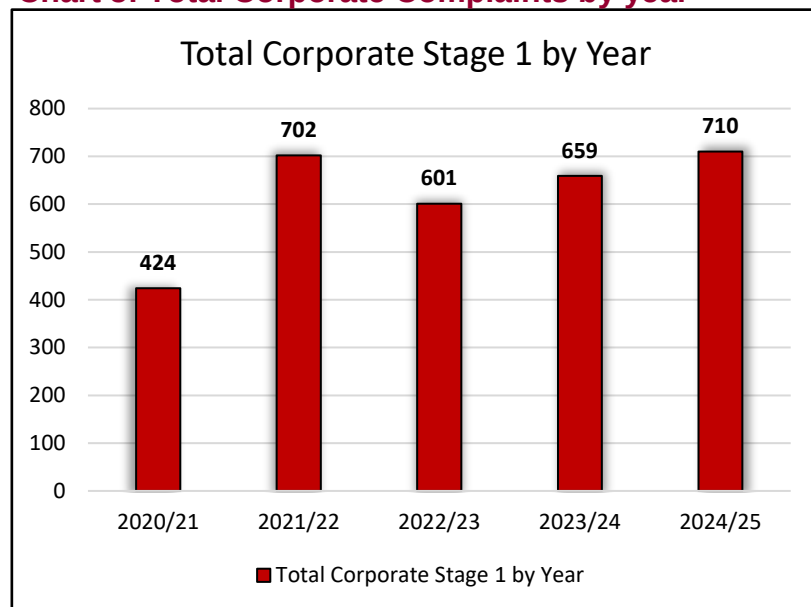
You said	We did
A virtual exercise class at Wellington Leisure Centre was delayed due to an issue with the virtual system.	The issue with the timing of the virtual cycle class has been addressed with the Council's independent system Fitbox which connects the virtual classes via the internet.
A Mystery Customer suggested that information on the website regarding Hartshill Park is updated to confirm availability of car parking	Additional car park information has been added to the Council's webpages
Some of the map signage at Apley Park was dirty, particularly at the North and West entrance	The signs have now been cleaned
Aspirations members were unable to book onto a class at Wellington Leisure Centre.	A waiting list functionality has been added to the booking system. Members can now join a waiting list if the class is full.
SEND Post 16 communication needs improving.	Updated Glossary of Terms , with links direct into content on the SEND Local offer. We have recommended Post 16 providers issue monthly communication via email and face to face meetings. We have engaged with post 16 providers as part of a SENCO network meetings.

For further examples of 'You said, We did' please visit www.telford.gov.uk/yousaidwedid, and [You Said, We Did - SEND - Local offer](#). Additional examples of improvements that have been made following complaints can be found from page 31 of this report.

Corporate Stage One Complaints 2024/25

In the year 2024/25, there were 710 corporate Stage One complaints (those dealt with by more than one service simultaneously are counted as a single complaint) from 658 complainants. This is a 7% increase on 2023/24.

Chart 5: Total Corporate Complaints by year



Of these 710 complaints, 93 were escalated to Stage Two of our procedure and 11 were the subject of Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries (please note that some of these may have been for Stage One complaints prior to 2023/24). One corporate complaint was subject to a detailed investigation, one case remained outstanding with the LGSCO on 31 March 2025. 9 cases were not investigated by the LGSCO.

Stage	Number of complaints
One	710
Two	91
LGSCO	11

For further information regarding Stage Two complaints, please see page 30.

For further information regarding Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman enquiries, please see page 34.

During the year, 7 Stage 1 complaints were refused (were not accepted as complaints), this is because of reasons including that they were subject to court proceedings or a Tribunal process. One complaint was refused as it was related to historic matters. All cases were provided with the details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

40 further complaints were appropriately redirected because they were for other organisations including, Police, Wrekin Housing Group, Schools and Telford Town Centre owners.

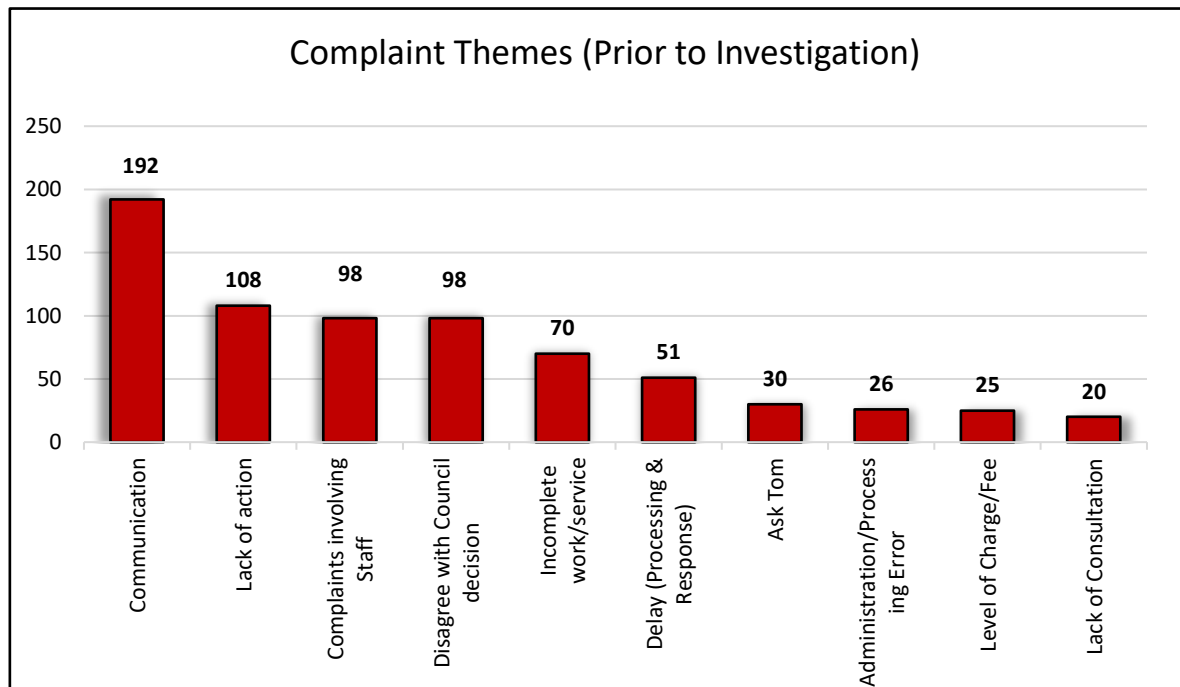
Customer Access Channels and Digital Contact (Stage One Corporate Complaints):

Complaint channel	Number of complaints
Email	180
Web form	316
Telephone	191
Letter	19
In Person	4
Total	710

In 2024/25, 70% of corporate complaints were received via a digital access channel. While a small reduction on 23/24 this is still the preferred way for customers to make complaints. The number of customers raising a complaint via telephone has increased this year by 22% indicating the importance of continuing to provide an omnichannel service.

Complaint Themes:

Chart 6: Corporate complaint themes 2024/25



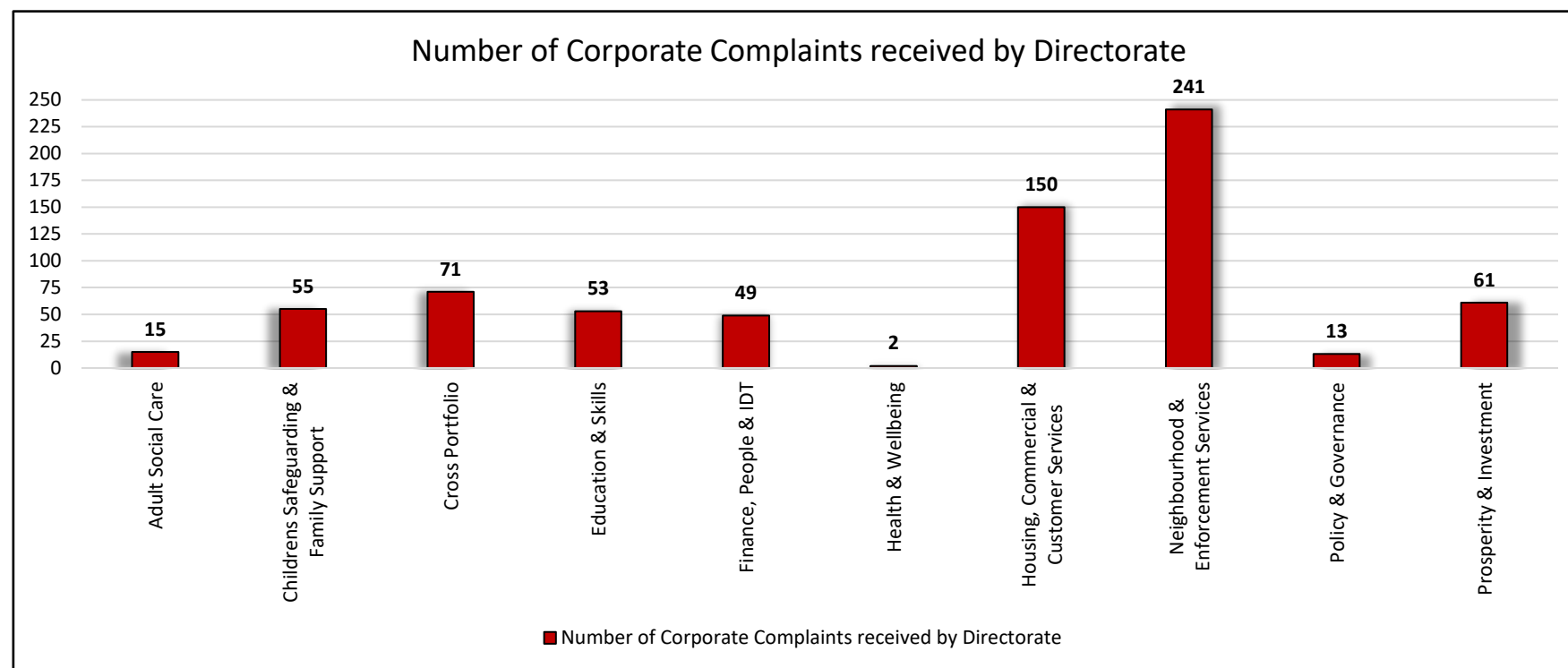
This chart shows the top 10 complaint themes for 2024/25 recognising that some complaints have multiple themes. Communication and lack of action were the most prevalent themes, although this has reduced during 2024/25. However, there is more work to be done in this area.

From May 2024 the Policy and procedure for complaints involving Child Sexual Exploitation has been combined into the corporate complaint procedure. No complaints were received relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) during 2024/25. For more information please see our reference guide on 'How we respond to complaints involving Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)' which can be found here [Complaints procedures - Telford & Wrekin Council](#).

18 Complaints were received that related to discrimination (1 Age, 7 Race, 10 Disability), these complaints were investigated and not upheld. 7 complaints were raised regarding accessibility during the year, two of which were upheld, and the Council has completed improvements.

Further analysis of upheld themes can be found later in this report at page 25.

Chart 7: Number of Corporate Complaints received by directorate



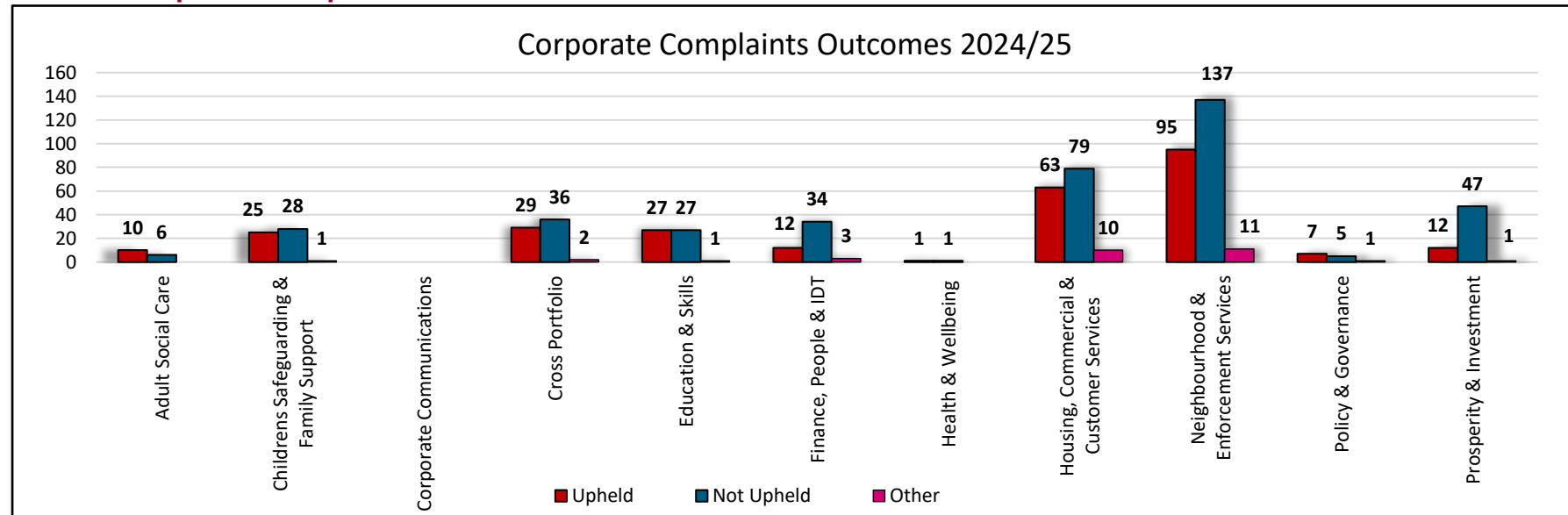
Complaints have increased across all services with the exception of Education & Skills and Health and Wellbeing. The number received by Neighbourhood and Enforcement Services (241) has remained the same as 2023/24. It remains the area where the highest number of complaints are received but given the huge number of customer interactions that take place through Waste, Highways, Grounds Maintenance, Public Protection, Community Safety and Enforcement, this figure is very low. The second highest number of complaints were received by Housing, Commercial and Customer Services (150) this is a newly combined directorate and therefore cannot be compared with previous years. This directorate also handled a very large number of customer interactions including through Leisure Services, Events, Housing and Customer Services. The number of complaints that required investigation across all directorates increased from 46 last year to 71 during the year. However, complaints received continue to represent a very small percentage against the volume of interactions across the directorates and the council as a whole.

Stage One Complaint outcomes

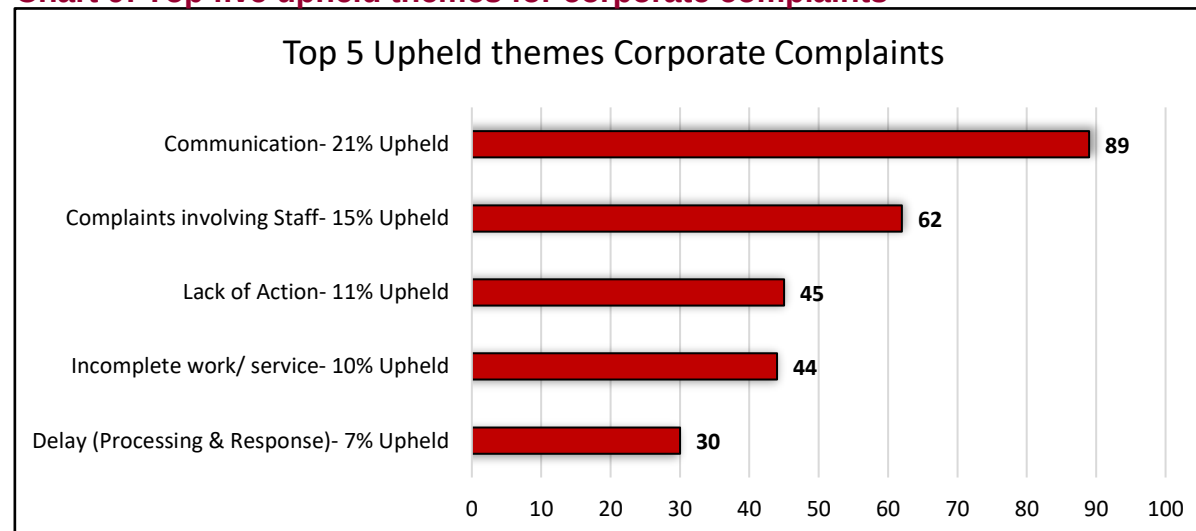
Of the 711 Stage One complaints responded to in the year, 40% (281) were upheld, this is where services acknowledged that they could have done better. The figure for upheld complaints has reduced since last year. 56% (400) were not upheld, 4% of complaints were either withdrawn or resolved by the service before the complaint was processed.

The highest number of upheld complaints were in Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services (95) and Housing, Commercial and Customer Services (63). This is not unexpected given that these directorates responded to the highest number of complaints. The highest percentage of upheld complaints by directorate were in Adult Social Care (63%) which upheld 10 of the 16 complaints received.

The outcomes by directorate can be seen in the following chart. This has been broken down into upheld, not upheld and other. 'Other' can include service resolved, dealt with through courts, out of jurisdiction or withdrawn.

Chart 8: Corporate complaint outcomes 2024/25

The top five upheld themes identified corporately at Stage One were:

Chart 9: Top five upheld themes for corporate complaints

281 complaints were upheld, some complaints had multiple issues. Across the upheld complaints there were 427 upheld issues.

Please note: For the purpose of this report the percentages upheld is displayed as a percentage of the upheld issues 427.

The top five upheld themes include:

Communication was the most prevalent theme across services. The concerns raised included.

- Failure to transfer to the correct service or completing call backs
- Incorrect and incomplete information provided during calls
- Customers not updated regarding delays, or on the outcomes of decisions
- Contacts details not provided to customers and out of office not applied whilst officer away
- Inadequate communication regarding meetings and following meetings,
- Inadequate internal communication
- Calls dropping on call centre due to a technical issue

Reminders have been issued to officers to ensure that they keep customers updated and services have made changes to procedures. There will be ongoing monitoring of telephone calls to ensure a high standard of customer service.

Complaints involving Staff represented 15% of the complaints upheld, a slight increase on 2023/24. Concerns included timekeeping and how staff spoke to customers as well as some concerns with conduct of contractors and drivers.

The issues highlighted for the Council's contractors, have been picked up via contract management processes and others via the individual services. In all cases an apology was given, and ongoing monitoring of specific concerns are in place.

Incomplete work/service was a theme within 11% of the complaints upheld this is an increase on the 9% in 2023/24. This issue crossed many different services. Cases included failure by contractors to return and complete work, failure to complete work to agreed standard, and where Job closures had not been completed.

Contractor issues were raised in contract meetings for ongoing monitoring; contractors have returned to complete works. In the cases upheld an explanation and apology was given.

Lack of Action was a theme within 10% of the complaints upheld, a reduction on the 12% in 2023/24. The issues included delays in response/ action resulting in perceived lack of action as well as failures to provide advice reviews or referrals to other services.

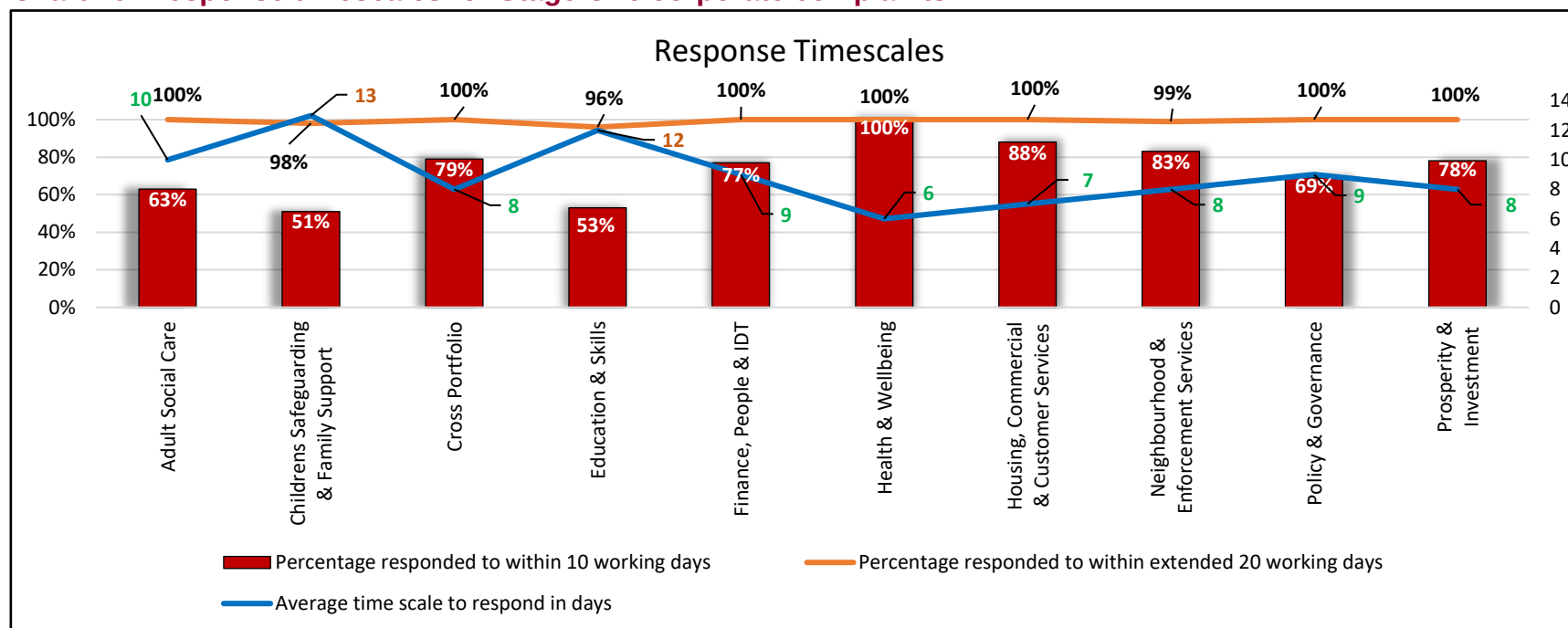
There were no trends with the theme reported across all Directorates. It is noted that this issue is linked to lack of communication which often results in complaints of lack of action. In the cases upheld, an explanation, apology and service were provided. Issues with contractors have been picked up via contract management processes.

Delay (Processing & Response) was a theme within 7% of the complaints upheld and an increase on the 4% reported in 2023/24. This issue crossed many different services and included delays in sharing minutes from meetings, responding to enquiries from customers, processing payments, invoices and applications for services. In the cases upheld an explanation and apology was given, and the service was provided.

Timescales for responses at Stage One

With effect from 16 May 2024 the Council became an early adopter of the Ombudsman's new Complaint handling code effectively reducing the response target for stage one corporate complaints from 15 to 10 days. This may be extended in exceptional circumstances by a further 10 working days.

During 2024/25 the Council has responded to corporate complaints in an average of 8 days, which is well within the 10-working day timescale and an improvement on the 10-day average achieved in 2023/24. Since 16 May 2024 84% of responses have been issued within 10 working days.

Chart 10: Response timescales for Stage One corporate complaints

The following chart shows the % of stage one complaints responded too by Directorate meeting the 10 day and extended target, and the average number of days taken.

The data indicates that, given the early adoption of the target in the main, directorates are showing strong performance in meeting the corporate timescale.

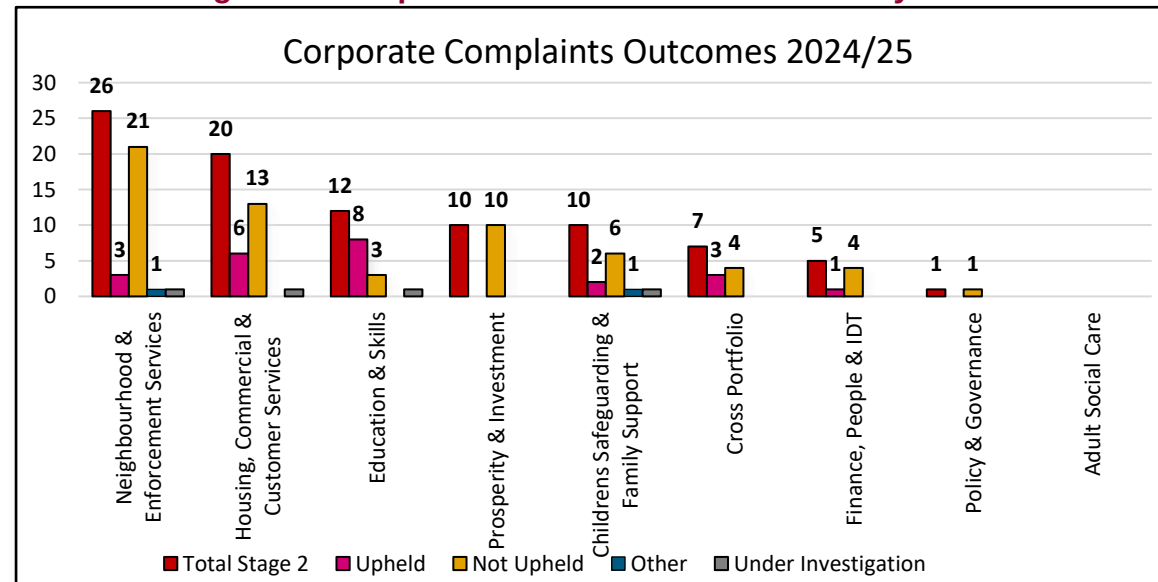
Our local target is to respond to 90% of corporate complaints within 10 working days, we will continue to work towards this target. This year Health & Wellbeing (100%) with other Directorates including the two receiving the highest number of customer contacts and complaints, Housing, Commercial & Customer Services (88%), and Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services (83%), performed strongly.

Since the introduction of the complaint handling code 4 complaints were responded to outside of the 20-working day maximum timescale all of which were sent within 22 working days which is a significant improvement on the 26 that exceeded the 20 working days timescale in 2023/24. Reasons for exceeding the maximum timescale included, complex cases and staff absence. In each case the complainant was updated throughout the process and also provided the details for the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. No complaints handled under the Housing Ombudsman Schemes code exceeded the 20-working timescale, for more information on these complaints please see page 35.

Corporate Stage Two complaints

During 2024/25, 91 Corporate Stage One complaints progressed to Stage Two of the process. This represents a 30% increase on the 70 that progressed in 2023/24. 87 Stage two investigations have been completed, there are 4 stage two corporate complaints that were still under investigation on 31 March 2025.

Chart 11: Stage Two complaints received and outcomes by directorate



A higher volume of Stage Two complaints was seen in Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services (26). Five of the Cross Portfolio cases were also related to Neighbourhood & Enforcement areas including Transport, Neighbourhood Enforcement and Grounds and Cleansing. This is an increase on the 15 received in 2023/24. Housing, Commercial and Customer Services received 20 stage 2 complaints as this is a new combined directorate there is no comparison for previous years. Health & Wellbeing and Adult Social Care were the only directorates that did not have a case escalated to Stage Two in 2024/25.

In line with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling code the timescales at stage 2 investigations changed with effect from 16 May 2024 reducing to 20 to 40 working days from 25 to 65 working days in 23/24.

No stage 2 complaints were refused with all 87 receiving a full investigation and response. 26% were upheld with an average of 31 working days taken to complete a full investigation. This is a decrease on the 43 days taken in 2023/24. Two particularly complex and exceptional cases exceeded the 40 working day target.

Learning and outcomes from Corporate Complaints

Complaints are a valuable source of information that can help to identify recurring or underlying problems and potential improvements.

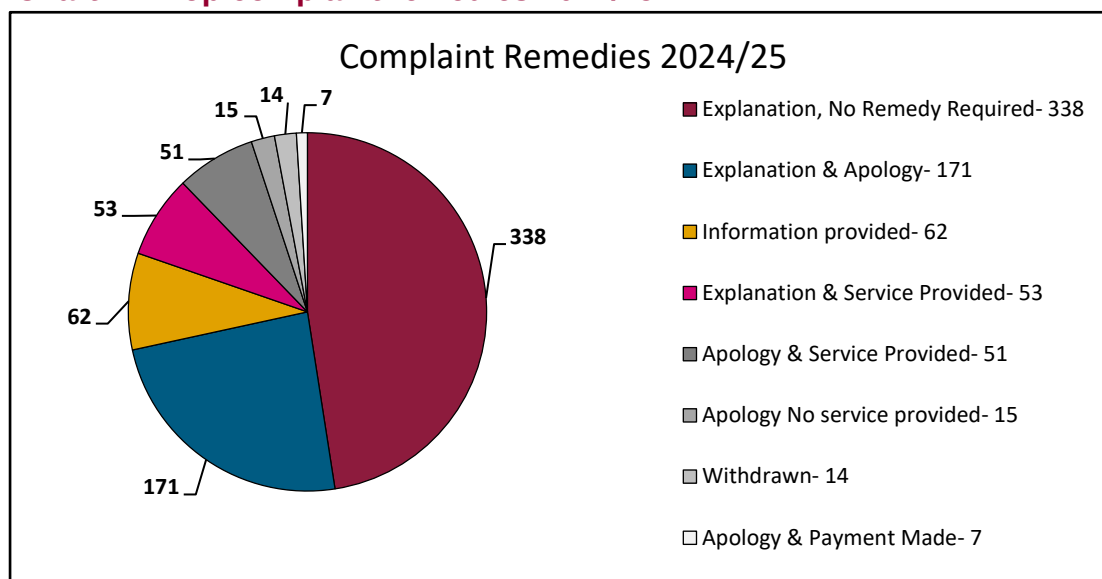
Lessons can usually be learnt from complaints that were upheld, but also in some instances where no fault was found but the Council recognises that improvements to services can still be made.

Occasionally, during an investigation, issues will be identified that need to be addressed over and above the original complaint. The Customer Relationship team will then work with services to ensure that they address the "bigger picture" so that residents receive the best possible service from the Council.

Remedial actions taken from resolved complaints at Stage One in 2024/25

All 285 complaints where fault was found have been reviewed by the Customer Relationship team to ascertain actions taken by the services involved and to identify any wider learning to avoid such issues recurring in the future.

Remedial action can include an apology or carrying out overdue work or wider actions that may affect a number of customers. On some occasions, the fault has already been remedied - so the complaints process is used to ensure that the appropriate action has been taken.

Chart 12: Top complaint remedies 2024/25

Of the remedies recorded against corporate complaints in 2024/25:

- 48% only required and explanation and no remedy was required
- 24% were provided with an explanation and an apology
- 9% were provided with information
- 7% had both an explanation and a service was provided

Positive Improvements

Throughout the year, we record the learning identified from each complaint to build up a picture of common themes or trends. Learning from corporate complaints is considered alongside that from statutory complaints as part of our quality assurance activities.

Below are some examples of positive changes that have resulted from learning from complaints:

- A recording error for litter bins in the reporting system has been rectified and contractors have been made aware.
- There will be closer and more timely communication with Special Educational Needs (SEND) out of borough placements and the families of young persons placed in them to ensure they understand processes and timescales. There will also be better explanation with regard to decision making processes.
- Reminder to staff that full details are obtained when processing a change of address, including cross referencing the landlord details to ensure the correct property has been identified, before closing down Council Tax Liability.

- Regular monitoring of calls to the contact centre will be undertaken to ensure the customer service, advice and information, as well as the overall call quality is of sufficient standard, this also allows us to identify and address any issues identified.
- Operators of bus routes have completed monitoring of journeys to ensure that standards are maintained. Drivers have also been reminded of their responsibilities. We will continue to engage with the operators to hold them to account and ensure the journeys they perform under contract are completed safely.
- A new process has been introduced to ensure that Adult Social Care brokerage is alerted to urgent placement referrals without delay.
- Learning Disability and Autism will be monitoring any support plans at weekly peer review to ensure there are no unnecessary details which could result in delays in payments made.
- Personal Transport Budget contracts have been reviewed to ensure that the wording is clear on what the budget is related to and what it can and cannot be used for.
- Operatives at the Housing hold recycling centre have been trained on the correct approach when accommodating accessibility at the centre.
- The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team have refreshed their code of conduct and customer service training as part of their learning and development commitment.
- The SEND team will ensure that they consult with parents and carers before placement decisions are made.
- At ticketed outdoor events there will be a dedicated entrance for those with wheelchair accessible tickets and a steward will be positioned within the section to ensure that space is made available for access and wheelchair users. Stewards will be assigned to escort or guide these customers to the viewing area.
- The Google version of the My Telford App was tested for the subcategories fix. The changes have now deployed to a new version of the MyTelford App for Apple and Android.



"I've been very impressed by how my complaint has been handled and how I've been kept informed throughout the process, and I'm, very satisfied by the outcome."

- The developers of the new Transport system have launched a way to plan the Travel Assistance taking customers previous assistance into account. This will help give the Transport Team the full picture when planning the Travel Assistance for young people.
- Development Management are exploring new process as part of the council's online system to ensure that pre-application enquiries can only be closed down by authorising officers, ensuring that enquiries remain in officers existing work trays until these have been completed.

The following actions are currently being monitored until completion.

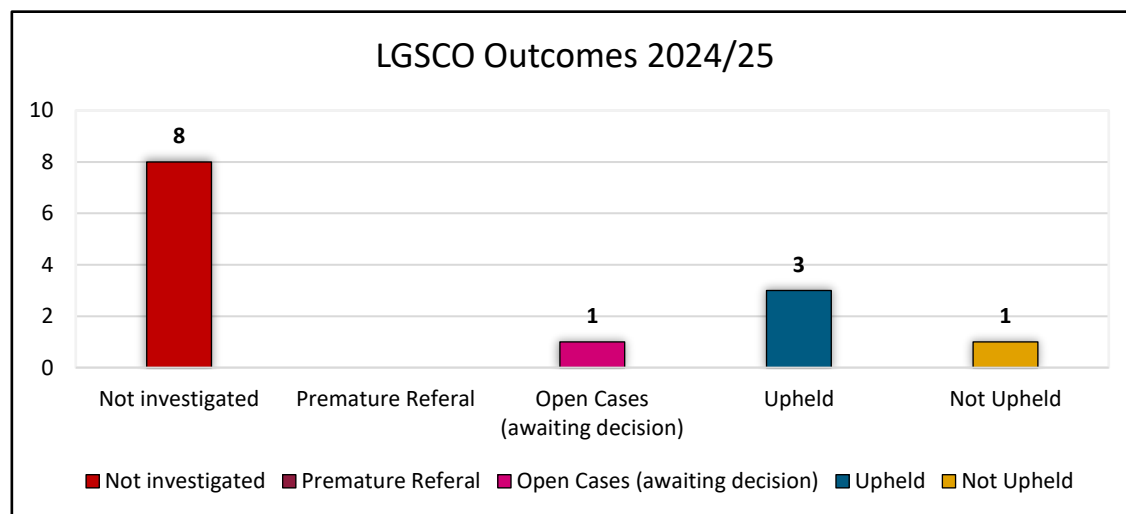
- Family Hubs are in the process of reviewing communication for separated parents and will be developing a practice guidance that is agreed through family support, and this will be completed by the 1 September 2025 in co-production with parents with lived experience of working with Family Hubs. DWP have also agreed funding for new family hub practitioners to undergo training or triple transitions to support parents who are separating or divorced.
- The Social Worker guidance will be updated to reflect that a provisional driving license can be applied for under an alternative address, if necessary.



“Thank you...for your patience with taking the complaint and your empathy and kindness, you were great and so helpful.”

Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman enquiries

The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has the authority to investigate complaints when it appears that our own process has not resolved them. Complainants can refer their complaint to the LGSCO at any time, although the Ombudsman will refer them back to us if they have not been through our process first. In exceptional circumstances, the Ombudsman will look at things earlier; this usually being dependant on the vulnerability of the person concerned. During the last year 30 new enquiries were forwarded to the LGSCO. Six new enquiries related to statutory complaints which are detailed in the Adult Statutory and Children's Statutory Complaint Reports.

Chart 13: Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Outcomes

The LGSCO determined it would not investigate 8 of the corporate matters referred to them. Two corporate decisions remained outstanding on 31 March 2024, the decisions have been received during this year and both cases were upheld these are included in the figures detailed in chart 12.

The LGSCO has completed two detailed investigations during the year, one was upheld, and one was not upheld. One corporate complaint remained under investigation at 31 March 2025.

All the recommendations made by the LGSCO have been implemented. More information regarding the Council's performance and LGSCO decisions can be found at: www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre.

Complaints from Council Tenants

In September 2020 Telford and Wrekin Council became a registered provider of social housing. As a registered provider we currently have 219 properties.

With effect from 1 April 2024 the procedure for managing complaints from these tenants was incorporated into the Council's Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's Service complaint handling code.

During 2024/25 we received **5** complaints from our tenants.

- 5** of the complaints escalated to stage 2 of the procedure
- 0** of the complaints were the subject of the Housing Ombudsman Scheme enquiries
- 0** complaints from tenants were refused during the year

Complaint Themes:

During 2024/25 there were no specific complaint themes. Issues raised related to access to loft space, windows and water ingress, ventilation and anti-social behaviour from a neighbour.

Complaint Outcomes:

Of the 5 complaints received at Stage1

2 complaints were upheld, **2** complaints were not upheld, **1** was withdrawn

The upheld issues related too,

- **Access the loft area-** the tenancy agreement did not specifically state that lofts hatches are locked in our properties, where the lofts are not boarded, as they are not suitable for storage. Tenancy agreements have now been amended to state that there is no access permitted to loft spaces.
- **Windows and water Ingress-** An inspection noted that the window to the external washroom area had deteriorated considerably. The window and weather bar were replaced.

Of the **5** complaints investigated at stage 2, one was upheld. This was related to the an inspection that had indicated no evidence of water ingress from the roof but proposed this be monitored. Following this monitoring remedial works have been completed.

Timescales for responses:

The Council's Complaints policy for Council tenants outlines that a complaint at stage one of the procedure should be responded to within 10 working days. 100% of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints were addressed within timescales with average response time at stage 1 of 3.8 working days.

No cases were escalated to the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) and there were no findings of non-compliance with the HOS Complaint Handling Code in 2024/25.

The Tenant Satisfaction and Complaint Report 2024-25, which includes the HOS Self-Assessment 2025 and the Housing Management Board response can be found published on our website at [Complaints and compliments annual reports - Telford & Wrekin Council](#).

Oversight and support provided by the Customer Relationship Team

The Customer Relationship team continues to support service areas to both manage and learn from complaints. The key services they offer are:

1. To manage and support the Council's approach to customer intelligence, ensuring we robustly manage and learn from our interactions with customers
2. Perform in-depth and snapshot reviews of our services, our key physical front doors and digital front door
3. Provide services with complaints advice and support, including support with persistent and unreasonable complainants
4. Provide reports on the quality of complaint responses and make recommendations for improvement
5. Act as a critical friend to challenge service practice
6. Provide advice on drafting comprehensive responses to complaint investigations
7. Continue to escalate overdue complaints to Directors
8. Provide regular dashboards/ complaints samples to Directors, and performance is reported monthly to the Senior Management Team

Customer Relationship Team priorities for 2025/26

During 2025/26, the Customer Relationship team will focus on a number of key priorities:

- Supporting all services to meet new response timescales in line with the Ombudsman Service's complaint handling codes
- Continue to drive an improvement in the percentage of complaints responded to within timescales from 87% to 90%
- Complete all necessary self-assessments and providing dashboards of performance data to senior management to drive continuous performance improvement
- Continue to support service improvement through the Customer Insight Programme and utilising our Mystery Customer Volunteers
- Work to maintain low levels of maladministration findings by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman & Housing Ombudsman Service
- To develop a new customer service training package
- Support the delivery of our new Customer Service Strategy being launched in July 2025