

2017-18 Annual Customer Feedback Report

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1. Introduction

Welcome to Barnsley Council's annual customer feedback report, which provides the council, partners and members of the public with important information on what our customers have told us about their expectations and experiences of the services they have received during 2017-18.

This report looks at all of the complaints, compliments and comments that have been recorded by the council during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018, including those complaints received about adult and children social care services.

Whilst we have achieved so many great things this year, it is one of our challenges to ensure that we respond to and manage rising customer expectations and demands, but also recognise the opportunities this presents. To achieve this we need to listen to what our customers are telling us, manage their expectations and continuously improve our services. This is why customer feedback (compliments, complaints, and comments) is important, and why it is our aim is to ensure that our customers feel able to provide us with feedback, know how to do this, and that we respond fairly, in partnership with the customer and reach a swift resolution where putting it right is at the heart of what we always consider.

It is also vital to continuous service improvement to know when things have gone right and when people are happy with the services they receive. However, on those occasions when things go wrong, complaints are equally valuable because they provide a chance to identify areas for improvement to ensure the same mistakes are not repeated in the future.

Not all customer concerns need to be processed as a complaint and where a customer has contacted the service direct and their concerns are resolved by the service there is no need to escalate these to the council's complaints procedures. Therefore the information reported on below does not include these concerns unless the customer remained unhappy and pursued their concerns further. It is important though that we make sure the customer is always informed of their right to make a complaint if their concern is not resolved or they remain unhappy.

The Customer Feedback and Improvement Team are a part of the Business Improvement and Communication Business Unit and are responsible for the management, facilitation and collation of all customer feedback received for the council.

We Value Your Feedback

Customer feedback is a great way for us to understand and manage how customers experience the services we provide, and it enables us to monitor our performance against the values that are really important to us.



We've received a total of 490 compliments.



317 customer complaints have been received and we agreed that there were things we could improve upon for 193 of these complaints.



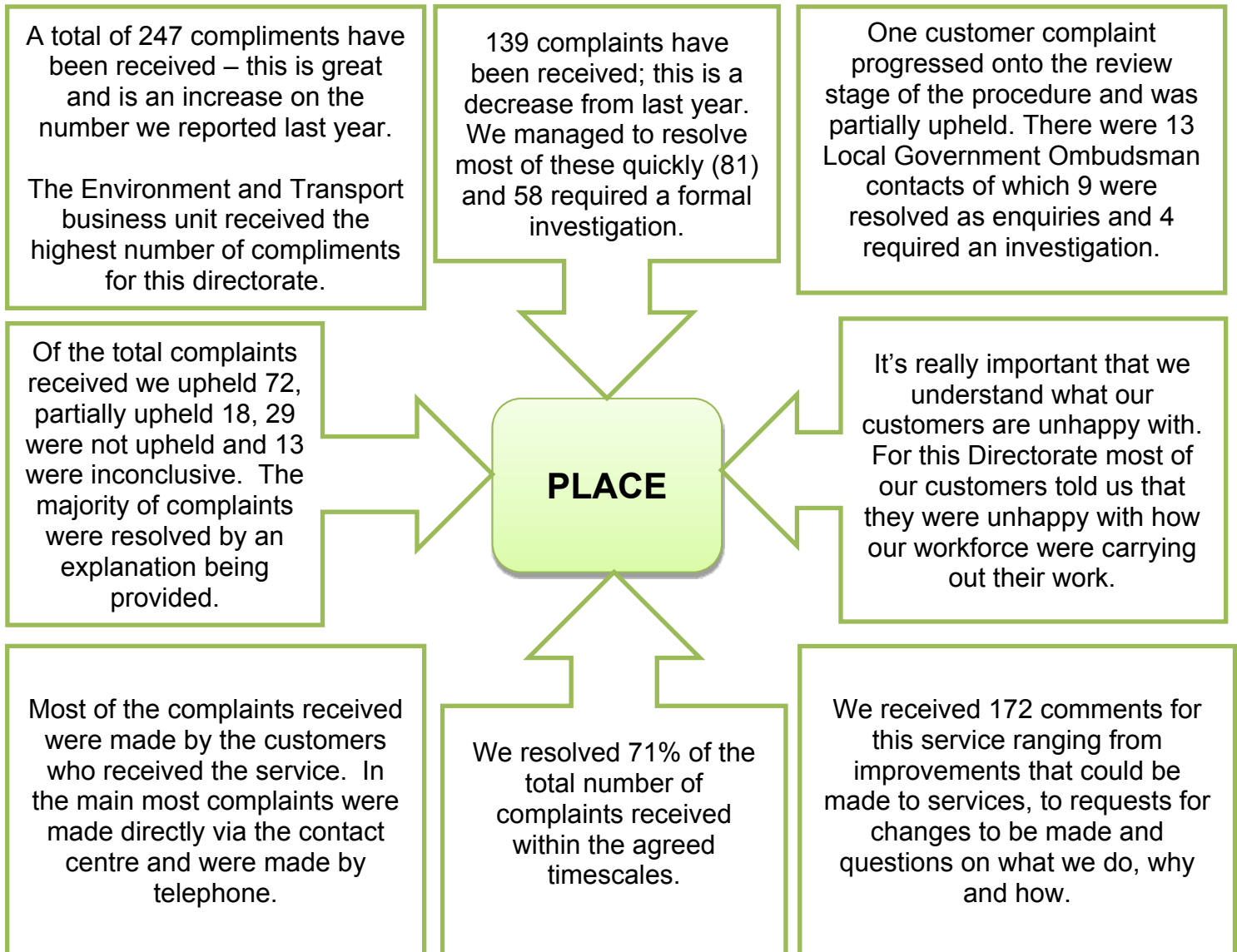
We want to listen to what our customers have to say and learn from when things go wrong – see our learning from feedback page



There's been 41 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Services Ombudsman contacts received, and 11 of these have been investigated by them.

Customer Feedback Place Directorate

This part of the report takes a look at the customer feedback that has been received from customers about the services which form part of the Council's Place Directorate. This includes: Environment and Transport (such as waste management and highways); Culture, Housing and Regulation (such as museum, housing; trading standards); and Economic Regeneration (such as planning, town centre redesign).



Here are some examples of compliments we have received:

Environment and Transport

A customer stated that they were happy with the service they received when they requested overgrown hedges to be attended to. They stated "The men did a wonderful job"

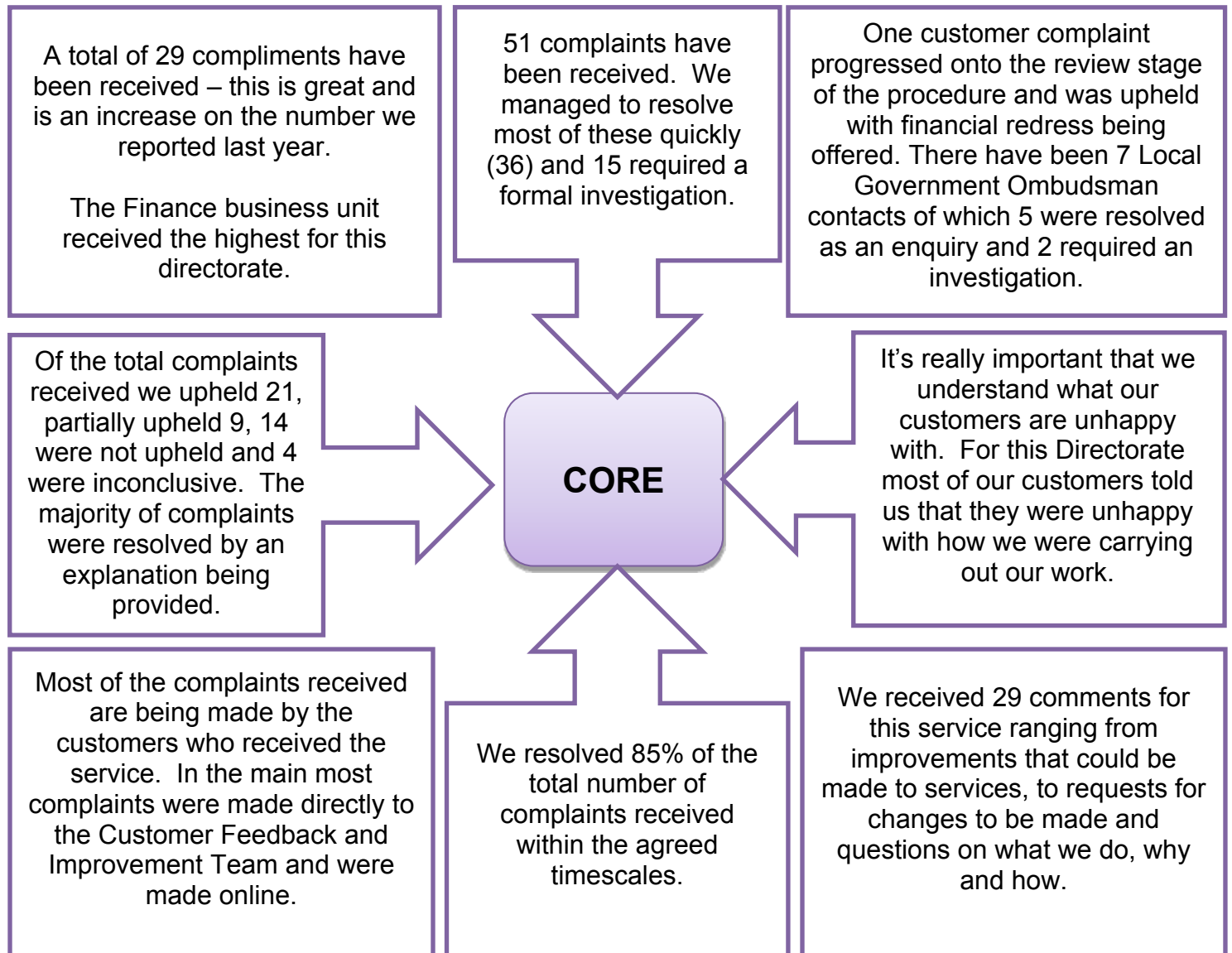
Economic Development

A customer told us "it's always a pleasure to work with Barnsley. I wish many others were half as good".

Customer Feedback

Core Directorate

This part of the report takes a look at the customer feedback that has been received from customers about the services which form part of the Council's Core Directorate. This includes: Finance (payments; council tax); Assets (buildings); Human Resources (employees; health and safety); Business Support (administration); Business Improvement and Communications (performance management; communication); Legal (law and compliance) and Governance (member support; elections).



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received:

Finance Service

A customer informed us "a big thank you for your support which is very much appreciated"

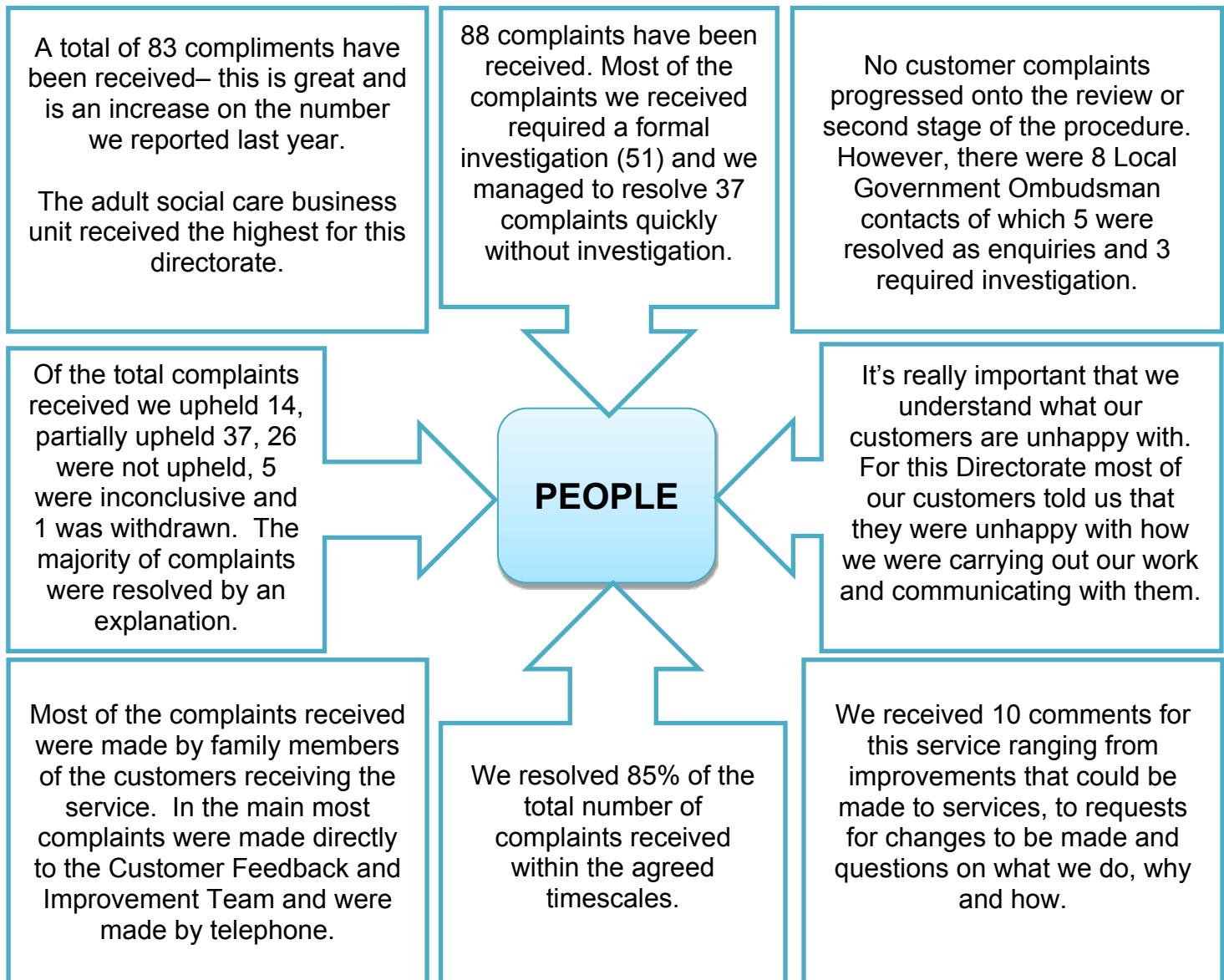
Legal Services

"I just wanted to pass on how helpful and polite the ladies are that run the land charges department. They have always assisted to accommodate any request and any information is always communicated so well."

Customer Feedback

People Directorate

This part of the report takes a look at the customer feedback that has been received from customers about the services which form part of the Council's People Directorate. This includes: Education (education welfare), Early Start (child care) and Prevention (Family Centres); Adult Social Care and Health; Children Social Care and Safeguarding.



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received.

Education, Early Start and Prevention

A parent told us that they were very happy with the support their young person had received and described that they had “come on leaps and bounds” since they had received support from the Targeted Youth Support Service.

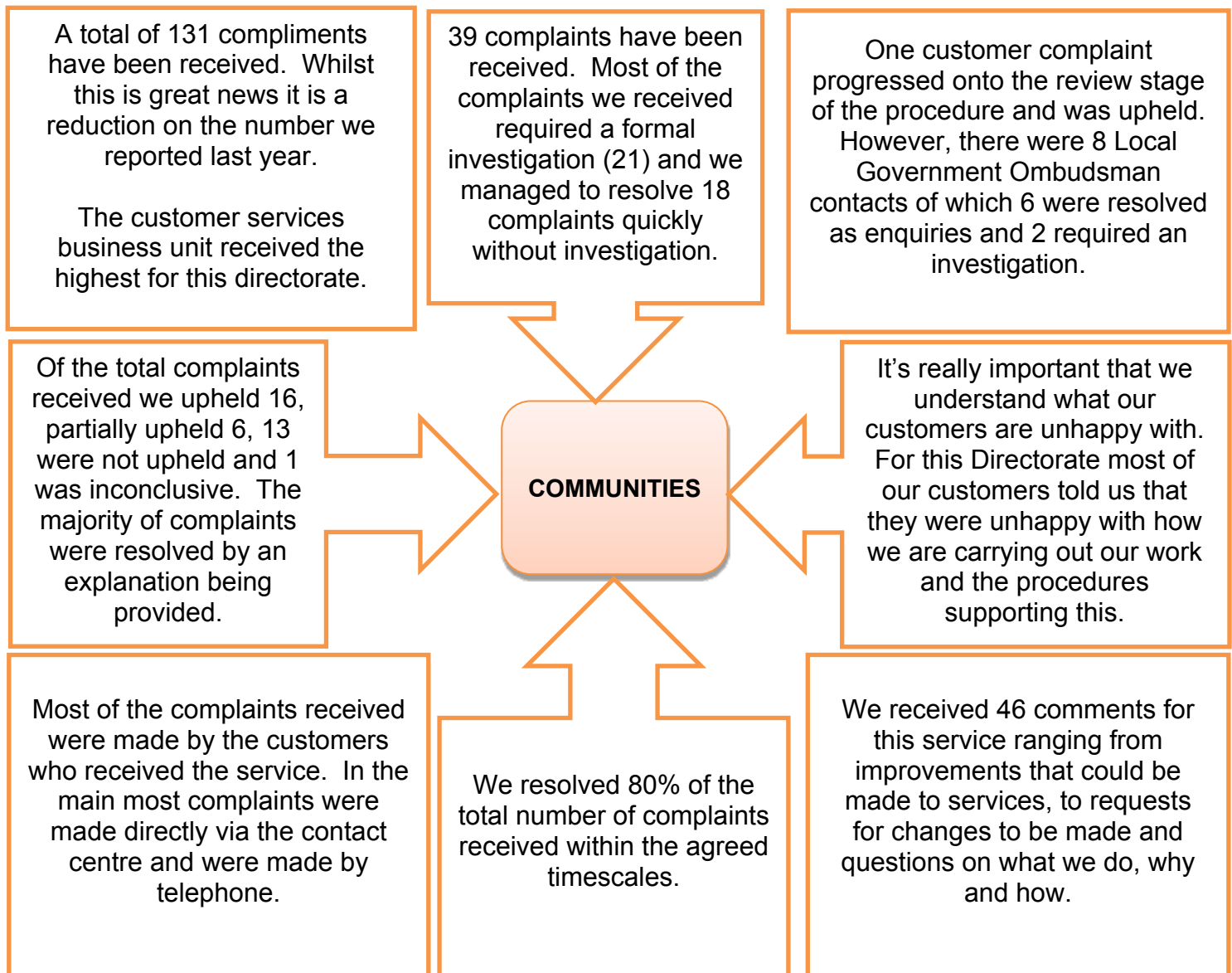
Adult Social Care

“I just felt it important to formally convey how impressed I have been by the way the team have responded to the increased ask of them this week. . . . A real can do spirit that is matched by speedy and effective action”.

Customer Feedback

Communities Directorate

This part of the report takes a look at the customer feedback that has been received from customers about the services which form part of the Council's Communities Directorate. This includes: Customer Services (libraries; digital; day opportunities; school catering); Information services (technology); Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities (parks, safer neighbourhoods and enforcement).



Here are some examples of the compliments we've received.

Customer Contact Centre

A customer who used the blue badge renewal process told us that the service was friendly and efficient.

Information Technology Team

A company who purchase IT support stated that they found the code green staff member to be highly effective and personable and provided support speedily and effectively and went above and beyond resolving the initial problem.

Learning from Feedback

Procedures and Processes

Customers shared with us their experiences of using our services such as planning enforcement, complaints and social care services, when we considered the complaints we found that some of our procedures were not as clear to staff as they could be, therefore we either updated or changed these to make sure we provide the best service we can.

Keeping customers informed

Customers told us that they would like to know more about what will happen next when they contact the council for services such as complaints, social care services and customer services. We agreed that it would be good practice to keep our customers informed on what will happen next when they contact us. Therefore some services have made changes to their practices and some are considering what changes they can make to improve the customers experience.

Handling your contact correctly

We have listened to our customers and know sometimes we haven't always handled the call correctly or customers have been unable to use our online forms and that there may have been occasions when we could have done more to help. We have therefore throughout the year made a number of improvements such as, creating an escalation process for handling complex customer queries within our contact centre, updated our web information and introduced web chat for some of our key online contact pages. We also ask for feedback on your online experience and use this information to understand a customer's experience to improve our online offer.

Customer Communication

We recognise the importance of how we communicate with our customers therefore we have identified opportunities to learn from what our customers have experienced in the following area:

- To review our transition process between different social care services
- Provide information explaining what happens during a children's social care Section 47 investigation
- To use individual experiences of social care services and include this as part of social work reflective practice
- To produce additional guidance to staff on deprivation of liberty assessments.
- To streamline the process for making payments to special guardians
- To agreeing individual communication plans with customers who have asked for this
- To improve our partnership working arrangements
- Implement online systems to improve customer communication such as Pin on the Map and reporting damaged bins
- To create key performance indicators to monitor our bin collection

Customer Feedback Data

One of the aims of the Customer Feedback and Improvement Team is to try and make the information we produce interesting and easy to read. However, we also understand it is important to be clear and transparent. It is for this reason that we have included the key data with an explanation on our performance. This data has supported the compilation of this report.

1. Number of compliments

Directorate	Business Unit	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Compliments Total	Directorate Compliments Total
Place	Culture, Housing and Regulations	8	8	6	3	25	247
	Environment and Transport	36	71	50	49	206	
	Economic Regeneration	4	8	1	3	16	
Core	Finance	1	1	5	9	16	29
	Assets	1	1	3	1	6	
	Legal and Governance	0	0	0	1	1	
	Business Improvement and Communications	1	0	0	2	3	
	Public Health	1	1	1	0	3	
People	Education, Early Start and Prevention	3	4	18	8	33	83
	Adult Assessment and Care Management	16	3	13	9	41	
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	2	1	3	3	9	
Communities	Customer Services	4	25	45	28	102	131
	Information Services	0	1	1		2	
	Stronger, Safer and Healthier Communities	3	11	12	1	27	
Total		80	135	158	117	490	

There has been an increase in the number of compliments we have received compared to last year (458).

Whilst this is great news work will be undertaken during 2018-19 to promote to services to share with us the compliments they are receiving.

2. Number of complaints and resolution method

Directorate	Business Unit	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Early Resolution	Total Early Resolutions	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Formal Complaint	Total Formal Complaints	Overall Total	
Place	Culture, Housing and Regulations	0	2	1	0	3	81	0	1	1	0	2	58	139	
	Environment and Transport	22	29	8	17	76		12	16	7	11	46			
	Economic Regeneration	0	2	0	0	2		5	1	0	4	10			
Core	Finance	10	11	6	8	35	36	0	3	3	6	12	15	51	
	Assets	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	1	1	2			
	Legal and Governance	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0			
	Human Resources and Business Support; Business Improvement and Communication; Health and Safety	0	1	0	0	1		0	1	0	0	1			
	Public Health	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0			
People	Education, Early Start and Prevention	2	0	1	2	5	37	0	1	1	0	2	51	88	
	Adult Assessment and Care Management	5	3	2	1	11		9	4	5	2	20			
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	6	9	2	4	21		10	5	8	6	29			
Communities	Customer Services	1	5	3	3	12	18	0	5	3	3	11	21	39	
	Information Services	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0			
	Stonger, Safer and Healthier Comuniteis	2	3	0	1	6		2	5	2	1	10			
Total		48	65	23	36	172		38	42	31	34	145			
		317													

There has been a decrease in the number of complaints we have received this year when we look at how many we received last year (504). However there have been more complaints which have required a formal investigation in comparison to last year (107). We think that this is may be because our customers could be actively trying to resolve their concerns with the service directly before making a complaint and are then being informed of their rights to make a complaint if they are dissatisfied with the initial response from the service they have contacted.

3. Number of complaints which progressed

This year 3 of our complaints that were investigated were reconsidered when the customer told us they were unhappy with their response. When we reviewed what we had said to the customer in our response we agreed that we had not quite got our response right the first time and agreed to take further action to address the complaint.

Whilst only 3 complaints were reviewed we understand that it is not to say that the rest of our customers were always happy after their investigation. However, when they let us know this we worked with them to establish why and worked with them to resolve their outstanding concerns through clarification and explanation of our original response to their complaint.

4. Types and outcomes

Types	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Workforce	21	33	16	27	97
Information	3	4	0	4	11
Communication and Consultation	21	31	17	18	87
Process and Procedure	41	38	19	20	118
Policy	0	1	2	1	4
Total	86	107	54	70	317

Types	Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not upheld	Inconclusive	Withdrawn	Outstanding	Total
Workforce	44	9	23	12	1	8	97
Information	4	3	3	1	0	0	11
Communication and Consultation	21	29	25	8	0	4	87
Process and Procedure	51	29	30	2	1	5	118
Policy	3	0	1	0	0	0	4
Total	123	70	82	23	2	17	317

Types	Apology	Explanation	Reassurance	Change to service	Financial redress	Other	Total
Workforce	30	23	17	0	2	16	88
Information	1	6	3	0	0	1	11
Communication and Consultation	15	43	14	2	3	6	83
Process and Procedure	16	50	16	2	12	16	112
Policy	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
Total	62	123	51	4	18	40	298

Most of our complaints were about the way we are delivering our services and how we are communicating with our customers. This trend is to be expected as these are the main interactions the council has with members of the public. However, we acknowledge that we have also upheld most of the complaints we have received, therefore we are agreeing that we need to improve and learn from what our customers are telling us. In doing this we have provided an explanation to the customer as a resolution to their complaint to explain what went wrong and what we will do to address this.

5. Timescales

Directorate	Business Unit	Total complaints	Total Early Resolution	Exceeded Timescale	Total Formal Complaint	Exceeded Timescale	Outstanding
Place	Culture, Housing and Regulations	5	3	0	2	1	0
	Environment and Transport	122	76	17	46	18	3
	Economic Regeneration	12	2	0	10	3	1
Core	Finance	47	35	5	12	2	3
	Assets	2	0	0	2	0	0
	Legal and Governance	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Human Resources and Business Support; Business Improvement and Communication; Health and Safety	1	0	0	1	0	0
	Public Health	1	0	0	0	0	0
People	Education, Early Start and Prevention	7	5	2	2	0	0
	Adult Assessment and Care Management	31	11	2	20	2	2
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	50	21	7	29	0	1
Communities	Customer Services	23	12	2	11	2	2
	Information Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Stonger, Safer and Healthier Comunitéis	16	6	1	10	2	1
Total		317	171	36	145	30	13

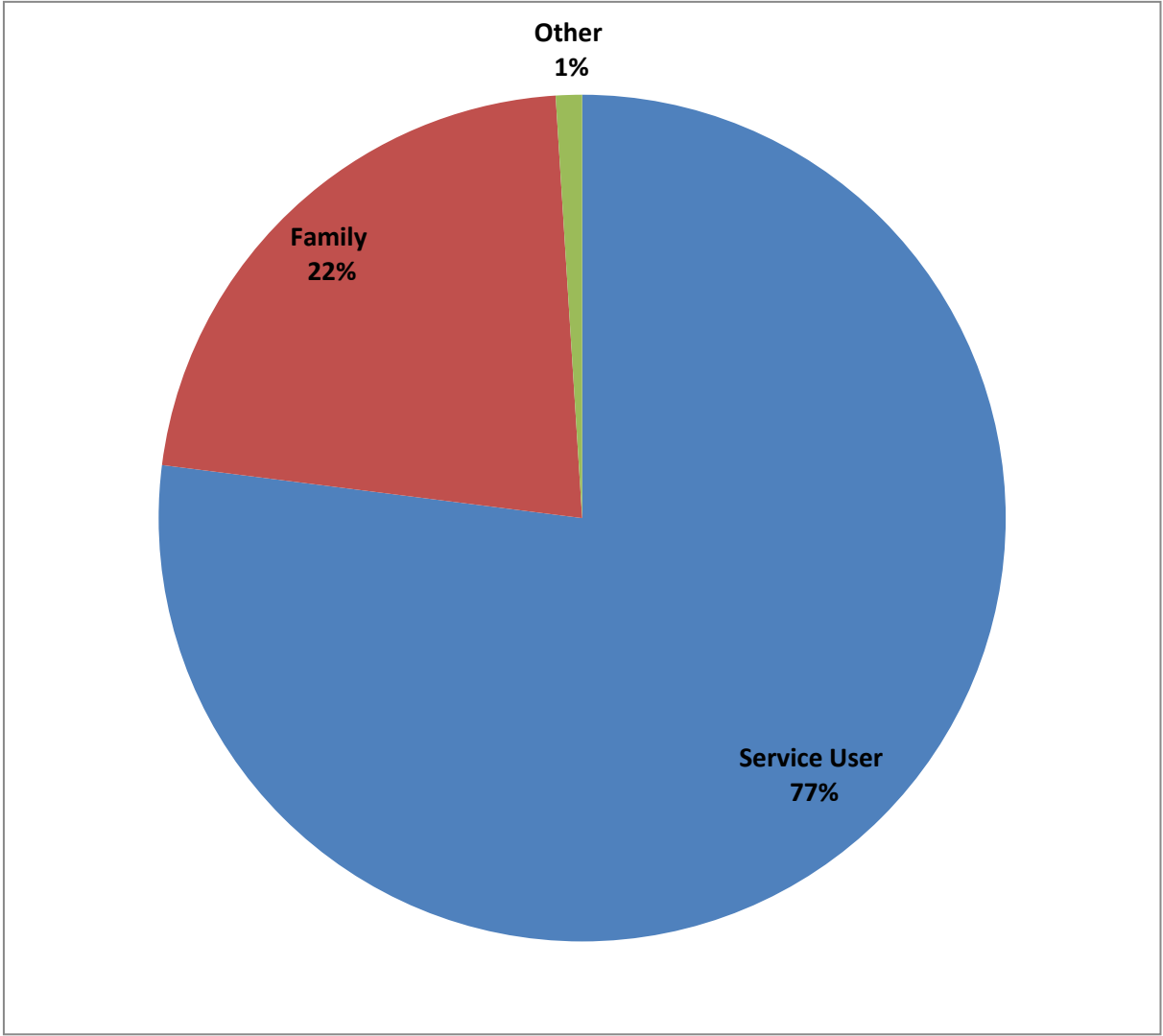
Whilst we resolved most of our complaints early (within 2 working days) we failed to meet the timescale on 21% of the occasions. We also didn't always meet our agreed timescales for our formal investigations and on 21% of occasions we had to extend these. We will continue to work to improve meeting the timescales we agree with our customers as we know that this is important. However, sometimes due to availability, work pressures and the complexity of some complaints these timescales are exceeded. We always aim to keep the customer up to date when there will be a delay with their complaint investigation.

6. Ombudsman

Directorate	Business Unit	Number	Enquiry	Decision	Investigation	Decision	Remedy
Place	Environment and Transport	9	7	5 council to pursue as a complaint; 1 no investigation as not enough evidence of fault; 1 pending a decision	2	No investigation as not enough evidence of fault	
	Economic Regeneration	4	2	1 Council to pursue as a complaint; 1 pending a decision	2	2 Pending a decision	
Core	Finance	4	3	1 outside jurisdiction; 1 council to pursue as a complaint and 1 pending a decision	1	Pending a decision	
	Assets	1	0		1	Outside jurisdiction	
	Legal and Governance	2	2	1 outside jurisdiction; 1 council to pursue as a complaint	0		
People	Adult Assessment and Care Management	7	4	1 discontinued investigation, 2 council to pursue as a complaint and 1 no investigation as not enough evidence of fault	3	2 - Fault causing injustice and 1 Pending a decision	One required a written letter of apology and £400 redress for distress and time and trouble. One required a review of support, a refund of expenses and guidance to be developed for staff.
	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	1	1	Council to pursue as a complaint	0		
Communities	Stonger, Safer and Healthier Comunitéis	8	6	4 council to pursue as a complaint; 1 discontinued investigation; 1 no investigation as not enough evidence of fault.	2	1 no investigation as not enough evidence of fault and 1 pending a decision	
Berneslai Homes		5	5	4 pending a decision; 1 no action required	0		
Total		41	30		11		

This year we have seen a slight increase in the number of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Service Ombudsman contacts than last year (36). We have received 2 decisions where fault has been found and action has been recommended to address. One of these resulted in financial redress being given. There are currently 12 cases which are still pending a decision, 5 of which relate to an investigation.

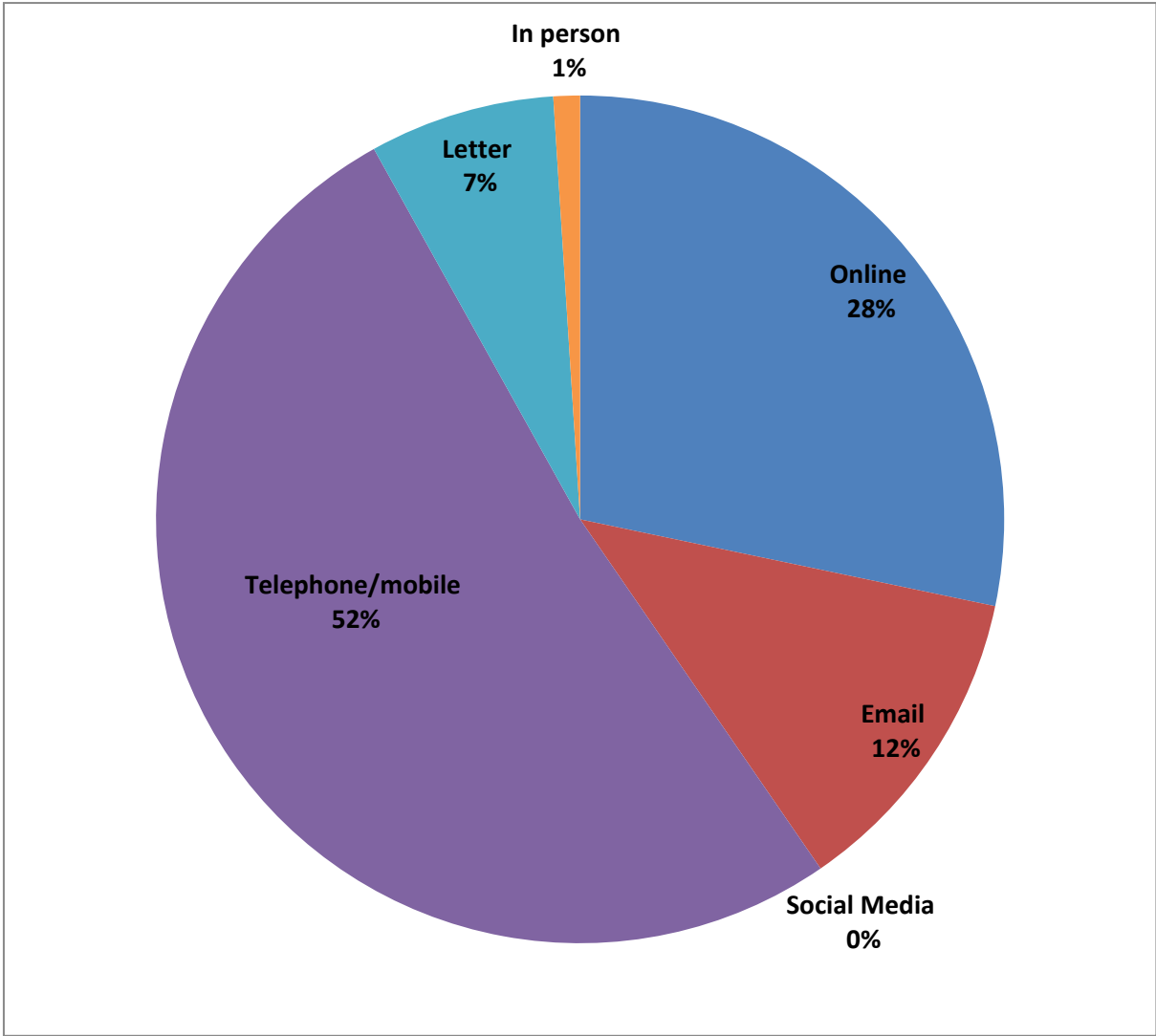
7. Who are making the complaints we receive?



It's great to report that the trend continues from last year that most of the complaints we receive are being made by the person who is receiving the service.

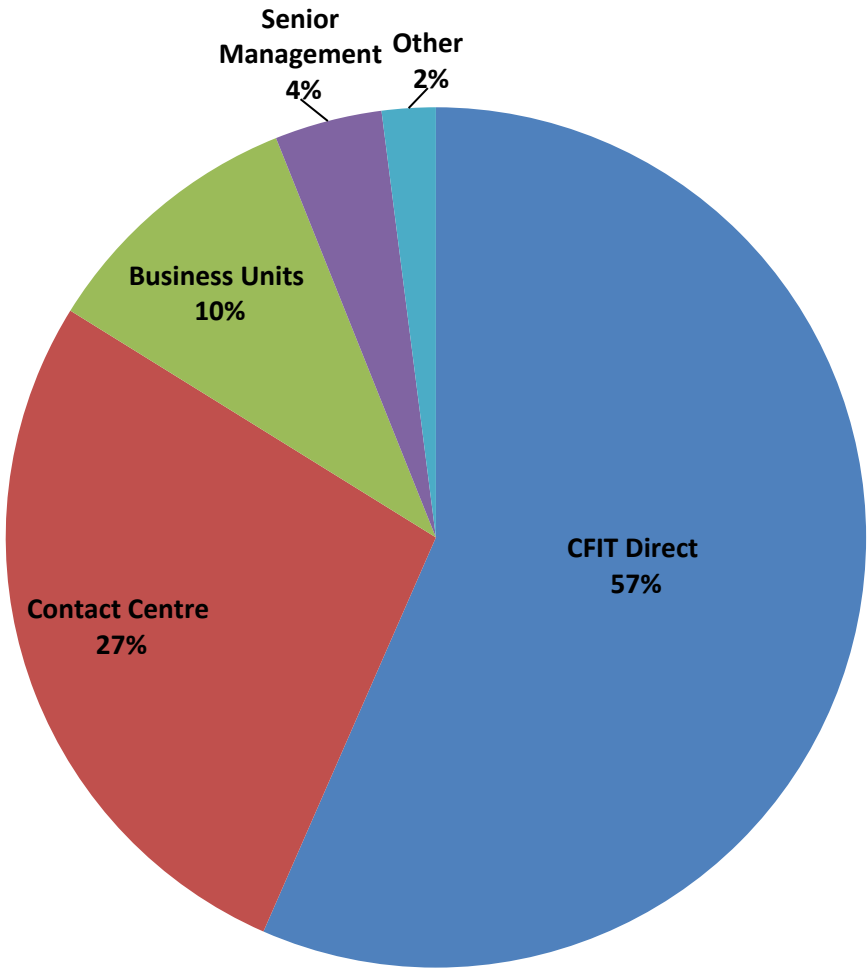
Unfortunately, again not many people have used an advocate this year to support them but a reason for this may be that because most of our complaints are resolved through early resolution the support of an advocate is not always needed.

8. How are the complaints being made to the Council?



Just over half of all the complaints we received last year were made by telephone. This is a change from last year where we reported that most of the complaints were being made online. We are keen to try and understand why this change has taken place as whilst we continue to promote that complaints can be made in any way, as a council we are keen to encourage and support our customers to use our online services.

9. Where are the complaints being made to within the Council?



It's pleasing to report that the trend continues that most of the customer who made a complaint raised their concerns directly with the Customer Feedback and Improvement Team. This shows that the team are continuing to be accessible to customers and that they are aware of their rights to complain. This is great news and we welcome all feedback from our customers.