

Somerset County Council

Annual Customer Feedback Report

1st April 2018 – 31 March 2019



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Introduction

This is the Somerset County Council annual customer feedback report for the year 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. Data used in this report is taken from the corporate iCasework system and the Ombudsman annual review.

The first section of this report is an executive summary, reflecting feedback across all Somerset County Council services and giving a brief analysis of the Ombudsman's data. Detailed data analysis for Adults and Children's Services and for Economic and Community Infrastructure follow later in the document.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman produces an annual review for each council and the Somerset County Council 2019 review can be found at <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/statistics>

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Overview

In 2018/19 there was a total of 1923 pieces of feedback recorded (all types) compared with 1933 in the previous year (0.5% reduction). Complaints reduced by just over 2% on the previous year with 1076 received (compared to 1101 in 17/18).

1.2 Volumes and Comparisons

Total feedback received across all council services for last 3 years:

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
Children's Social Care Complaints	267	272	277
Other Children's Services Complaints	131	187	134
Adult Services Complaints	305	269	216
ECI Complaints	196	275	349
Corporate Complaints	34	98	101
Total Complaints	933	1101	1077
Children's Social Care Compliments	124	67	73
Other Children's Services Compliments	144	110	113
Adult Services Compliments	128	83	124
ECI Compliments	261	273	188
Corporate Compliments	6	9	9
Total Compliments	663	542	507
Children's Social Care Comments	16	6	6
Other Children's Services Comments	9	4	14
Adult Services Comments	15	3	6
ECI Comments	51	60	104
Corporate Comments	7	5	18
Total Comments	98	78	148
Children's Social Care Member Enquiries	19	11	16
Other Children's Services Member Enquiries	35	34	62
Adult Services Member Enquiries	35	26	24
ECI Member Enquiries	2	113	82
Corporate Member Enquiries	36	28	7
Total Member Enquiries	127	212	191
Total Feedback	1821	1933	1923

Figures for 2018/19 show a 0.5% decrease in total feedback received when compared with figures recorded in the 12 months prior. Complaints have decreased by 2.2% compared with 2017/18 and compliments by 6.4%. The table below shows percentage increase/decrease per service area for all feedback types.

Service Area	Feedback Type	↑↓
Children's Social Care	Complaint	+1.83
	Compliment	+8.95
Other Children's Services	Complaint	-28.34%
	Compliment	+2.72%
Adult's Social Care	Complaint	-19.70%

	Compliment	+49.39
Economic & Community Infrastructure	Complaint	+26.90%
	Compliment	-31.13%
Corporate Feedback	Complaint	+30.6%
	Compliment	0.00%

1.3 Performance

The table below shows the resolution status for the 1077 complaints received in 2018/19. The vast majority of complaints received in the year (95%) have been managed at stage 1 of the complaints process. This is consistent with previous years. There has been an increase in cases escalating past stage 1 of the process with 13 cases escalating to stage 2 and 41 referred to the Ombudsman (6 and 17 respectively in 2017/18).

Resolution	Number
Stage 1 – resolved in year	937
Stage 1 – still open at end of year	86
Stage 2 – resolved in year	6
Stage 2 – still open at end of year	7
LGO – resolved in year	17
LGO – still open at end of year	24
	1077

Somerset County Council's complaint procedure sets a target resolution timescale of 10 days. The table below show the average resolution times at stage one by service area for the 937 stage1 cases resolved in year:

Service Area	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019
Children's Social Care	31 working days	29 working days
Other Children's Services	18 working days	26 working days
Adult's Social Care	23 working days	23 working days
Economic & Community Infrastructure	16 working days	13 working days
Corporate Feedback	13 working days	15 working days

For the 86 stage 1 complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 45. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	25
10 – 20	15
21 – 30	6
31 – 40	11
41 – 50	6
51 – 60	6
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	2

91 – 100	4
> 100	10
	86

1.4 Complaint Outcomes

The table below shows the percentage of complaints across all services that were resolved with the listed outcomes and a comparison with the previous year. The percentage of complaints that have been upheld or partly upheld in 2018/19 is broadly consistent with the previous year (31% compared to 32% in 17/18).

Outcomes	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019
Upheld	14%	11%
Not Upheld	38%	31%
Partly Upheld	18%	20%
Resolved Upon Receipt	11%	9%
Case Withdrawn/Rejected	19%	29%
	100%	100%

1.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the primary causes recorded for resolved complaints as a percentage of the total and the percentage change compared with the previous year. Service provision and communication remain in the top 3 causes for complaint and are joined this year by 'service quality' which has seen an 8% increase. Complaints regarding policy and procedures have reduced by 11%.

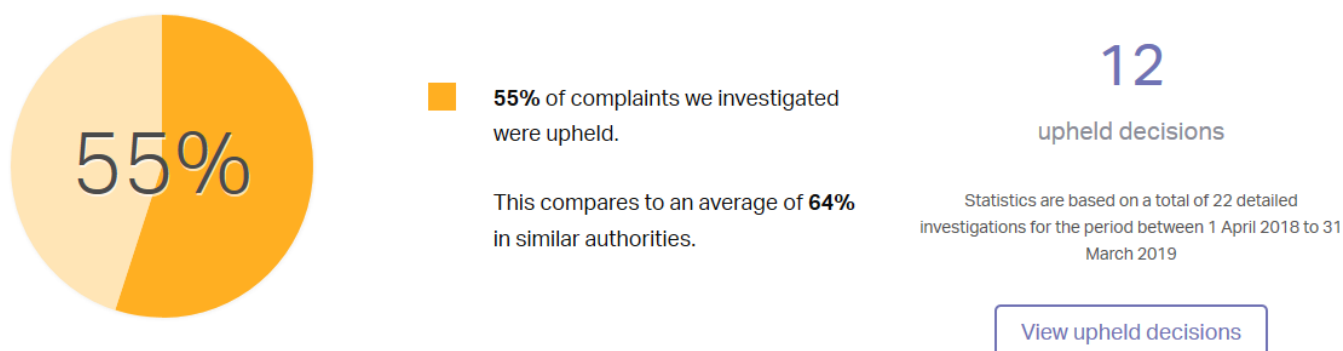
Cause Theme	% of total	+/- from previous year
Service Quality	25%	+8%
Communication	20%	+2%
Service Provision	18%	-4%
Staff Conduct	14%	+5%
Policy & Procedures	13%	-11%
Information	5%	Neutral
Financial	3%	Neutral
Confidentiality	1%	Neutral
Unfair Treatment	0.5%	-0.5%
Health & Safety	0.5%	+0.5%
	100%	

1.6 The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publish annual review letters to all local authorities. The letters include information about the number of customers that approached them to complain about the Council, how many were refused, signposted, investigated etc. and for the investigated cases, what the LGSCO judgment was. The letter supplies both high level statistical data and the case references to allow further analysis. All annual review letters are publicly available online. When considering the annual review data, it should be noted that the data supplied will not necessarily align with the data held locally. For example, the numbers quoted will include enquiries from people that the LGSCO signposts back to the Council, some of whom may never contact us. Additionally, some of the cases the LGSCO have closed within the year 2018/19 may fall in to a different reporting period for the Council (e.g. the case may have been received significantly earlier or later by SCC).

On analysis of the Ombudsman Review Letter, there was a slight decrease in the number of complaints and enquiries received by the LGSCO in 2018/19 compared with the previous 12 months (81 in 2017/18, 76 in 2018/19).

As a general picture, the LGSCO have reported that they have upheld 58% of detailed investigations nationally for the year (a slight increase on 57% nationally in 2017/18). It is therefore really pleasing that Somerset's uphold rate is below the national average by 3%, with a significant improvement on previous years (63% in 17/18, 79% in 16/17 and 78% in 15/16). Additionally, the LGSCO analysis shows that the number of Somerset complaints upheld is less than the average for similar authorities (which is 64%).



Our compliance with Ombudsman recommendations rate is a little below similar authorities (ours is at 91% compared to 99%) and we have volunteered to work with the LGSCO on a pilot in this area.

Sources:

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/information-centre/news/2019/jul/ombudsman-annual-report-focuses-on-sharing-the-learning-from-complaints>

<https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/statistics>

LGO Uphold Rates					
Authority	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	+/- SCC comparison
Somerset	78%	79%	63%	55%	N/A
Cornwall	57%	54%	61%	53%	-2%
Devon	39%	66%	53%	65%	+10%
Dorset	45%	55%	47%	71%	+16%
East Sussex	56%	66%	46%	67%	+12%
Gloucestershire	24%	50%	50%	52%	-3%
Herefordshire	48%	45%	43%	47%	-8%
Norfolk	47%	56%	75%	67%	+12%
Suffolk	38%	62%	81%	71%	+16%
Wiltshire	53%	50%	40%	53%	-2%
Shropshire	50%	48%	32%	61%	+6%

When looking at our statistical neighbours (a slightly different group of authorities than used by the LGSCO as 'similar' authorities), performance ranges between 47% and 71% with the average at approximately 60%. This puts us at 5% below the average for our statistical neighbours for 2018/19 which is a significant improvement on the previous year when we were 9% above the average.

The uphold rate is based on cases where the Ombudsman undertook detailed investigation in year. Further breakdown is provided below:

Finding	Service Category	No. of cases	% of total investigations
Upheld	Adult Care Services	9	55%
	Education & Children's Services	1	
	Environmental Services	1	
	Highways & Transport	1	
Not Upheld	Adult Care Services	5	45%
	Education & Children's Services	3	
	Highways & Transport	2	

Anonymised details of all cases upheld by the LGSCO can be found online - <https://www.lgo.org.uk/your-councils-performance/somerset-county-council/decisions/2018/u/Listing?t=statement&fd=2018-04-01&td=2019-03-31&dc=u&aname=Somerset%20County%20Council&atype=County%20council&sortOrder=DESCENDING>. In investigating complaints the LGSCO judges whether the Council's actions amount to fault, whether that fault caused the complainant injustice and what remedy should be made (if applicable). Remedy can be a range of measures including an apology, a review of policy, procedure and practice and financial redress.

1.7 Remedy, Learning and Improvement

Where a complaint is upheld, it is important that the Council puts things right for affected individuals and takes time to understand what went wrong in order that service can be improved for the future.

The Customer Experience Team are now working with services to produce a 'remedy and learning action plan' in cases where fault is found. This helps to identify what needs to be done to remedy the situation for the complainant but also looks more broadly to see if there are any practice changes that might prevent future errors or dissatisfaction. Each identified action is assigned a responsible owner and the Customer Experience Team oversee the implementation in order that remedies can be appropriately evidenced.

This year, the Customer Experience Team with Adult Social Care, tried out a new, additional method of considering lessons learned. This was in relation to a complaint made by a sister of a customer who was placed by the Council in a local care home. The customer was unhappy in the home and suffered physical and mental symptoms as a result of the care received. The complaint was upheld and remedy was put in place, including relocation of the customer to a new provision. We invited the sister to come and talk to the Safeguarding Board about her sister's experiences and about her own journey when trying to address concerns and make her voice heard. The customer made a very compelling and impactful presentation to the board which generated a number of actions for change. We will use this process again as and when suitable circumstances present.

1.8 Channel Shift

There has been a pleasing move towards 'self-service' with feedback this year, with more than half being submitted through the online option. This represents an increase of approximately 18% on the previous year. Feedback submitted by email, letter and telephone have all accordingly reduced.

2. Detailed Data - Children's Services

2.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Children's Services feedback received across the last 3 years broken down by social care and other children's services.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
CSC Complaints	267	272	277
CSC Compliments	124	67	73
CSC Comments	16	6	6
CSC Member Enquiries	19	11	16
Total CSC Feedback	426	356	372
Other Children's Complaints	131	187	134
Other Children's Compliments	144	110	113
Other Children's Comments	9	4	14
Other Children's Member Enquiries	35	34	62
Total Other Children's Feedback	319	335	323
Total Children's Feedback	745	691	695

2.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 411 complaints about children's services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%	
Stage 1 – resolved in year	348	237 CSC 111 Other	84.67% 57.66% 27.01%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	46	27 CSC 19 Other	11.19% 6.57% 4.62%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	2	2 CSC	0.49% 0.49%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	2	2 CSC 0 Other	0.49% 0.00%
Stage 3 – resolved in year	0		
Stage 3 – Still open at end of year	0		
LGO – resolved in year	5	4 CSC 1 Other	1.22% 0.97% 0.25%
LGO – Still open at end of year	8	4 CSC 4 Other	1.94% 0.97% 0.97%
	411		

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for children's services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019
26 working days	26 working days	28 working days

For the 46 stage 1 children's services complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 53. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	10
10 – 20	6
21 – 30	4
31 – 40	5
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	5
61 – 70	1
71 – 80	1
81 – 90	1
91 – 100	3
> 100	7
	46

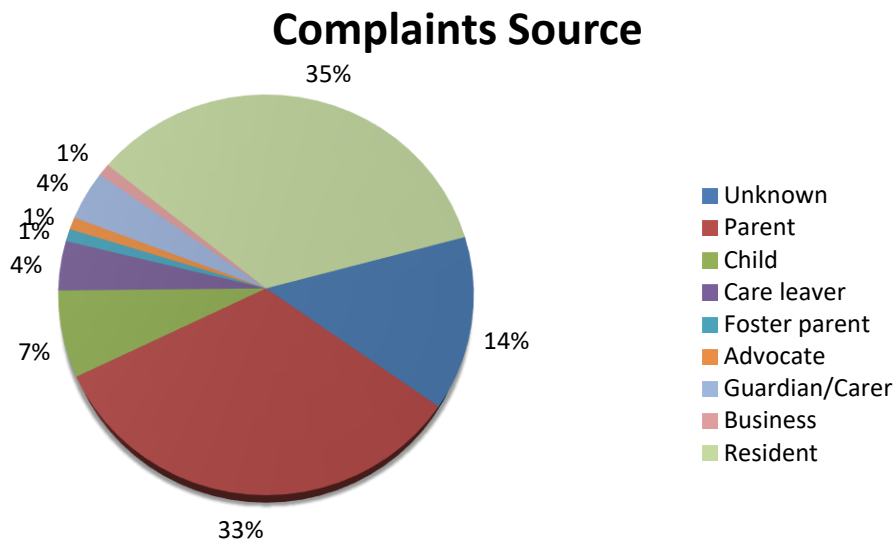
The table below shows the outcomes for the 348 stage 1 children's services complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	9%	10%	36	10%	Neu
Not Upheld	35%	48%	129	37%	-11%
Partly Upheld	33%	23%	83	24%	+1%
Resolved Upon Receipt	8%	7%	33	10%	+3%
Withdrawn/Rejected	15%	12%	67	19%	+7%
	100%	100%	348	100%	

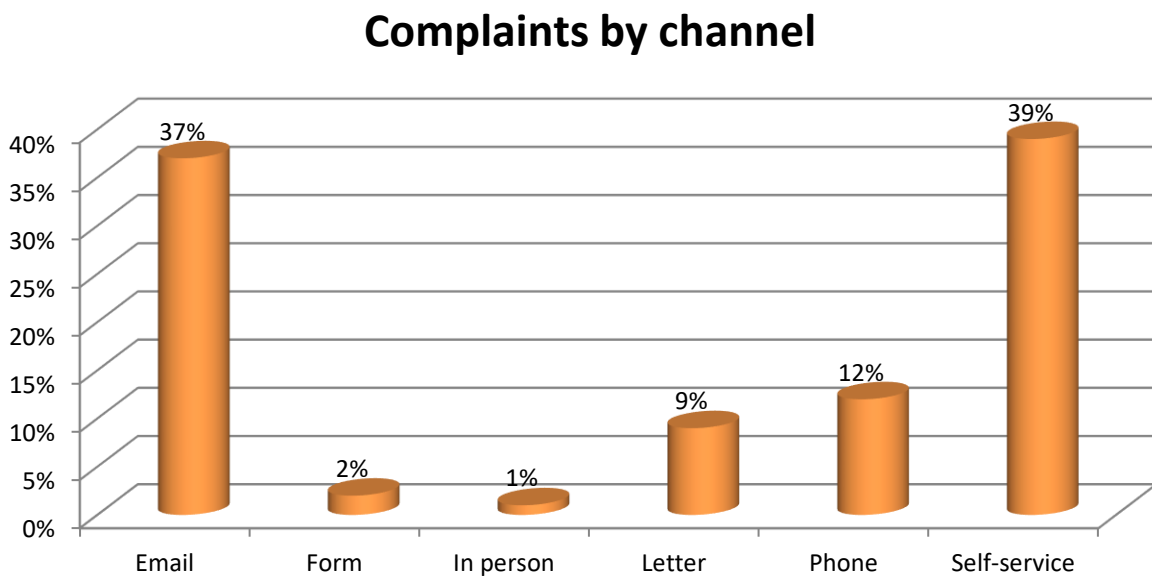
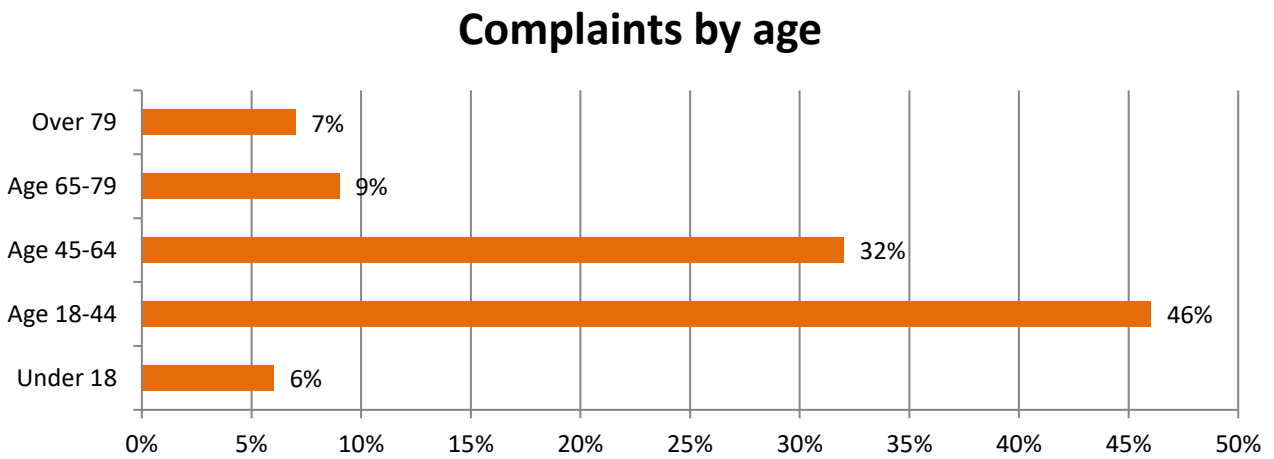
2.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting 'customer profile' information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data (whilst we aim to gather the information, discretion would be used by officers where it was clear that the customer was upset, frustrated or angry). Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



Only 35% of complainants about children’s services provided age data, the split is as follows:

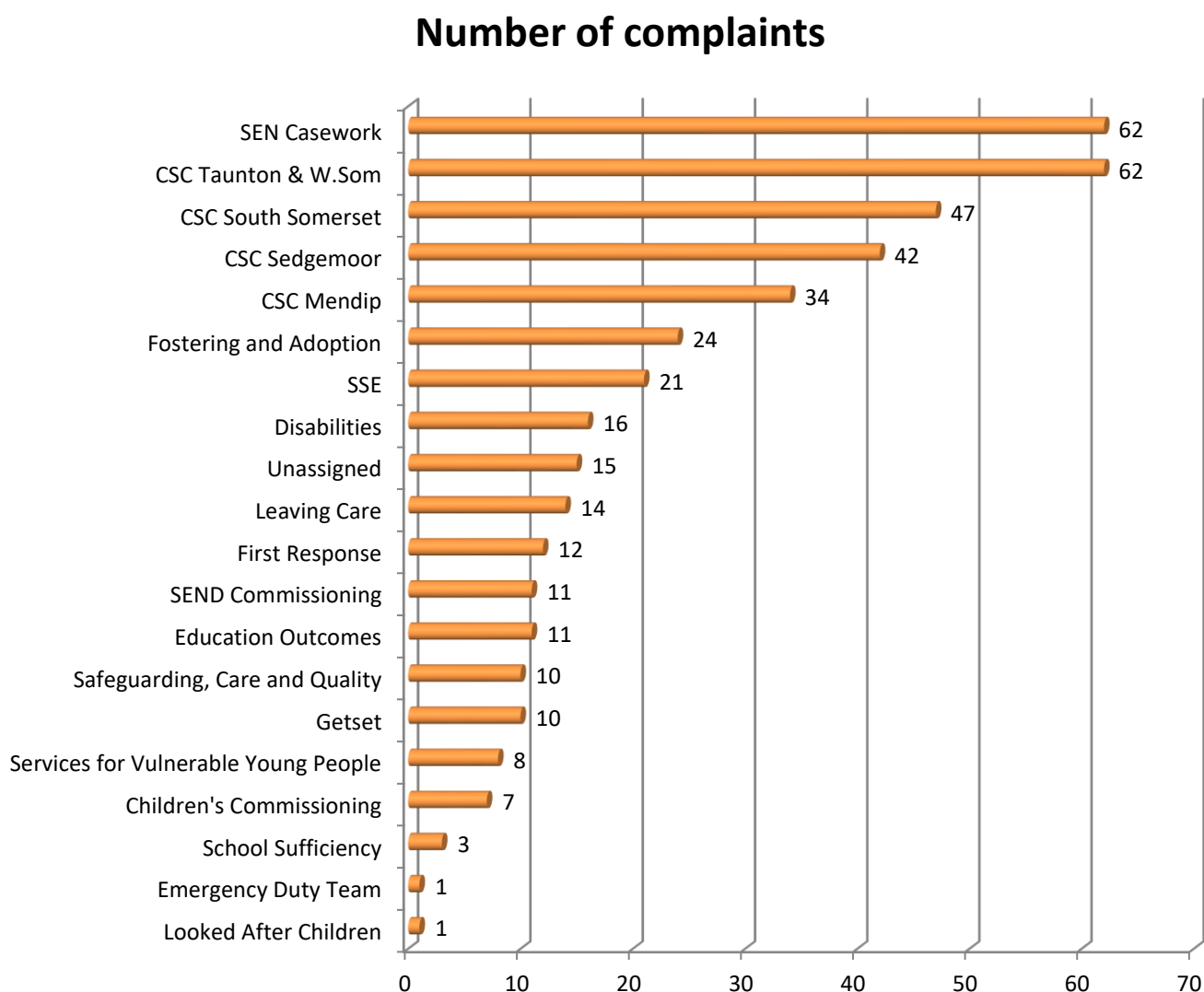


Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	13%	12%	-1%
Email	42%	37%	-5%
Letter	18%	9%	-9%
Self-Service	19%	39%	+20%
Form	6%	2%	-4%
In Person	1%	1%	Neu
Text	0%	0%	Neu
Apps	1%	0%	-1%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

2.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all children's services of the 411 complaints received during 2018/19.



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 348 stage 1 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time (working days)
Emergency Duty Team	1
School Sufficiency	1
Unallocated	4
First Response	13
Services for Vulnerable Young People	15
SSE	18
Disabilities	18
CSC Mendip	22
SEND Commissioning	24
Leaving Care	25
CSC Sedgemoor	28
SEN Casework	28
CSC South Somerset	29
Children's Commissioning	33
Getset	33
Fostering and Adoption	35
Education Outcomes	44
CSC Taunton & W.Som	45
Safeguarding, Care and Quality	49

2.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for complaints about children's services and the broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (inc. open/rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	48	14%
Accuracy of information	Information	17	6%
Quality of information/advice		4	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	33	20%
Implementation of policy and procedures		6	
Decision		7	
Result of assessment		13	
Plan		10	
Quality of service	Service Quality	14	15%
Arrangements for daily living		35	
Contact Arrangements		3	
Discrimination		1	
Confidentiality	Confidentiality	5	1%
Payments or charges	Financial	3	1%
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	10	11%
Timeliness of doing something		12	
Timeliness of service provision		6	

Service availability		10	
Communication by service	Communication	8	20%
Quality of communication		31	
Timeliness of communication		25	
Other communication cause		7	
Staff conduct		1	
Professionalism	Staff Conduct	32	12%
Staff rudeness		1	
Staff behaviour		6	
		348	100%

2.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 411 complaints received about children's services in 2018/19, 17 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 4 cases to stage 2 of the complaints process and 13 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO). This represents 4% of cases received.

Two stage 2 cases are still open to investigation at the close of year. The two cases closed at stage two were both partially upheld. One case related to Fostering and Adoption and the other to the Disability Service.

Of the 13 cases referred to the LGSCO, 5 have been resolved in year and 8 remain open at the close. Details of the 5 resolved in-year LGSCO complaints are shown below:

LGSCO Case 1

Customers complained that the Council failed to take proper account of all relevant information in its assessment of their grandchildren's needs. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate the complaint as it was felt that it would have been reasonable for the grandparents to raise their concerns in court.

LGSCO Case 2

Customer complained that she felt the Council had failed to safeguard her grandson. The Ombudsman decided not to investigate the complaint as it was felt that it would have been reasonable for her to raise her concerns in court.

LGSCO Case 3

Customer complained about the conduct of a social worker in relation to the assessment of her son's needs. The Ombudsman have declined to investigate at this stage as it considers the escalation premature (the complainant has not yet given the Council proper opportunity to address her concerns).

LGSCO Case 4

Customer complained that the Council had not implemented a remedy associated with an earlier complaint. The Ombudsman have declined to investigate at this stage as it considers the escalation premature (the complainant has not yet given the Council proper opportunity to address her concerns).

LGSCO Case 5

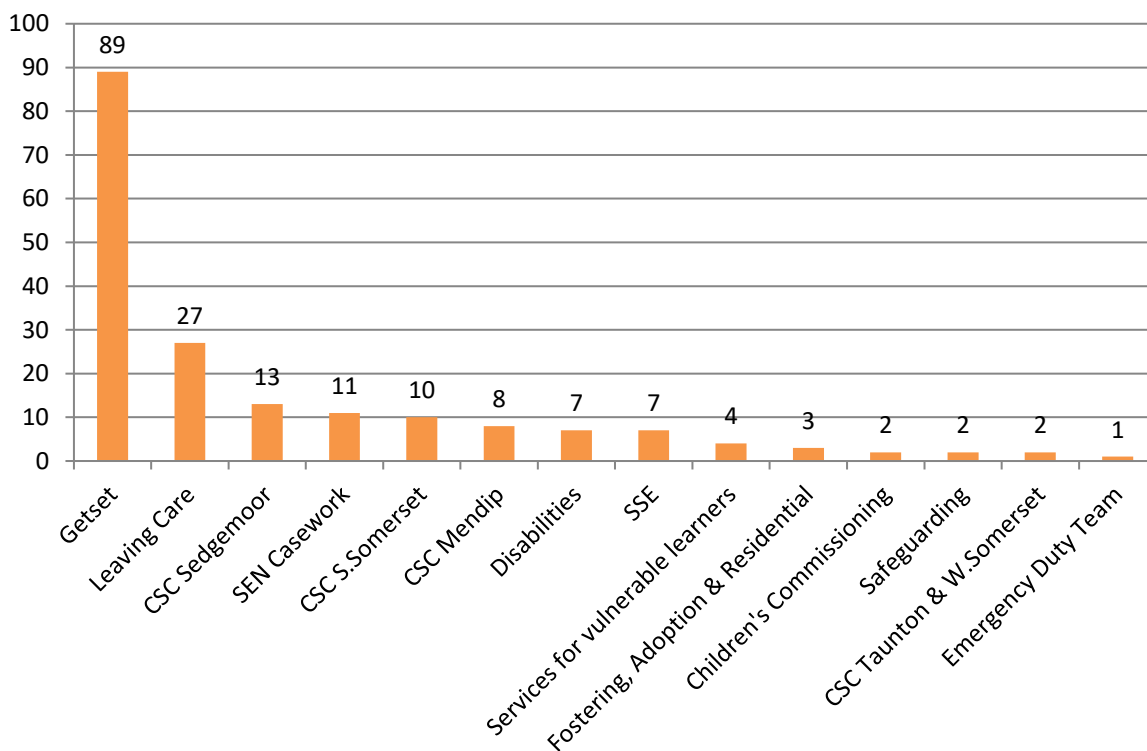
Customer complained that the Council had not asked two social workers to make an apology to him and his wife after making allegations regarding the standard of

care provided by him and his wife to a foster child. The Ombudsman did not find fault on the part of the Council in this matter.

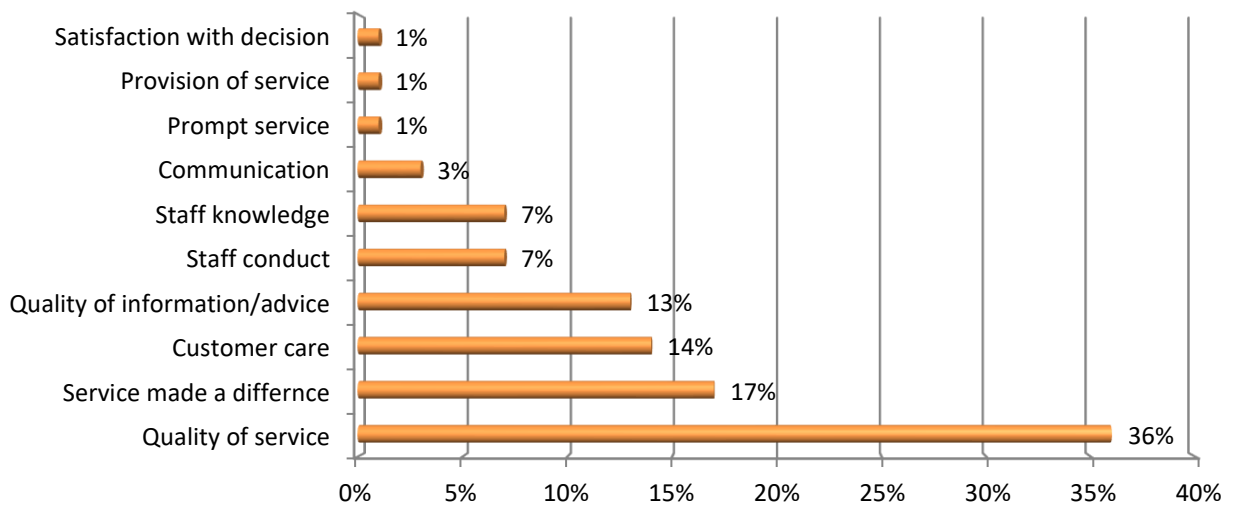
2.7 Compliments

There were roughly 5% more compliments recorded for children's services in 2018/19 than for the previous year. The charts below provide further information.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



2.8 Other Feedback

20 general comments about children's services were received during the year. Comments can range from suggestions for improvement to services to the thoughts and opinions of local residents regarding council services in general and the funding of them. Comments are monitored and practical suggestions are passed to appropriate managers.

78 enquiries relating to children's services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding children's services in 2018/19 was 28 working days.

3. Detailed Data - Adult Services

3.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of Adult Services feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
Adults Complaints	305	269	216
Adults Compliments	128	83	124
Adults Comments	15	3	6
Adults Member Enquiries	35	26	24
Total Adults Feedback	483	381	370

3.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 216 complaints about adults services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	178	82%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	15	7%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	1	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	5	2%
LGO – resolved in year	5	2%
LGO – Still open at end of year	12	6%
	216	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for adult services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019
30 working days	23 working days	23 working days

For the 15 stage 1 adult services complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 29. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	6
10 – 20	6

21 – 30	0
31 – 40	1
41 – 50	0
51 – 60	1
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	0
91 – 100	0
> 100	1
	15

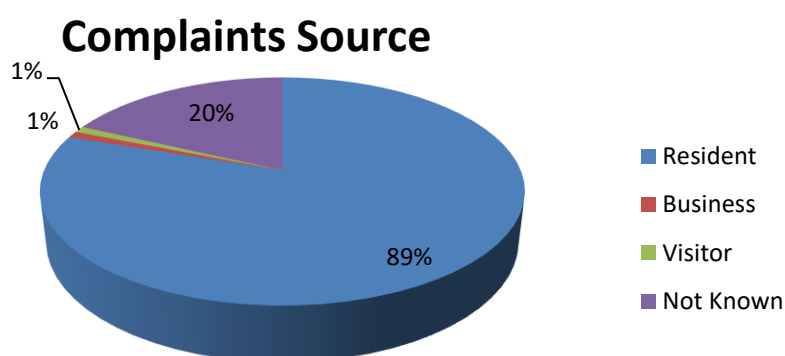
The table below shows the outcomes for the 178 stage 1 adult services complaints resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	19%	22%	36	20	-2%
Not Upheld	33%	32%	55	31	-1%
Partly Upheld	28%	25%	56	32	+7%
Resolved Upon Receipt	20%	10%	15	8	-2%
Withdrawn/Rejected	0%	11%	16	9	-2%
	100%	100%	178	100%	

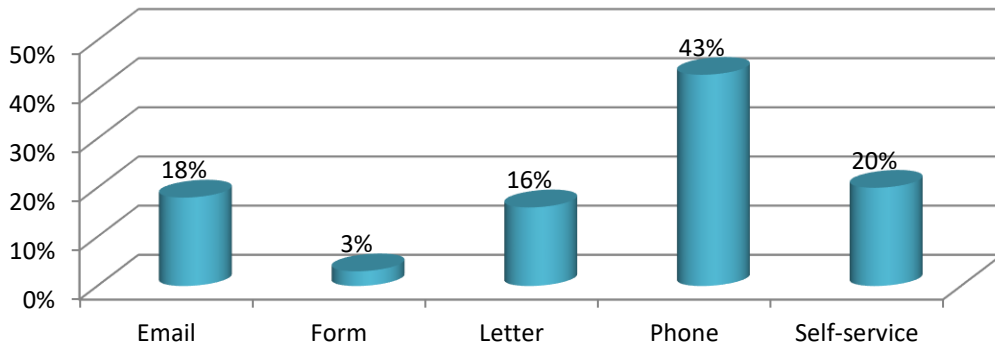
3.3 Customer Profiles

Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to the customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the sensitive nature of the issues raised did not lend themselves to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:



Complaints by channel



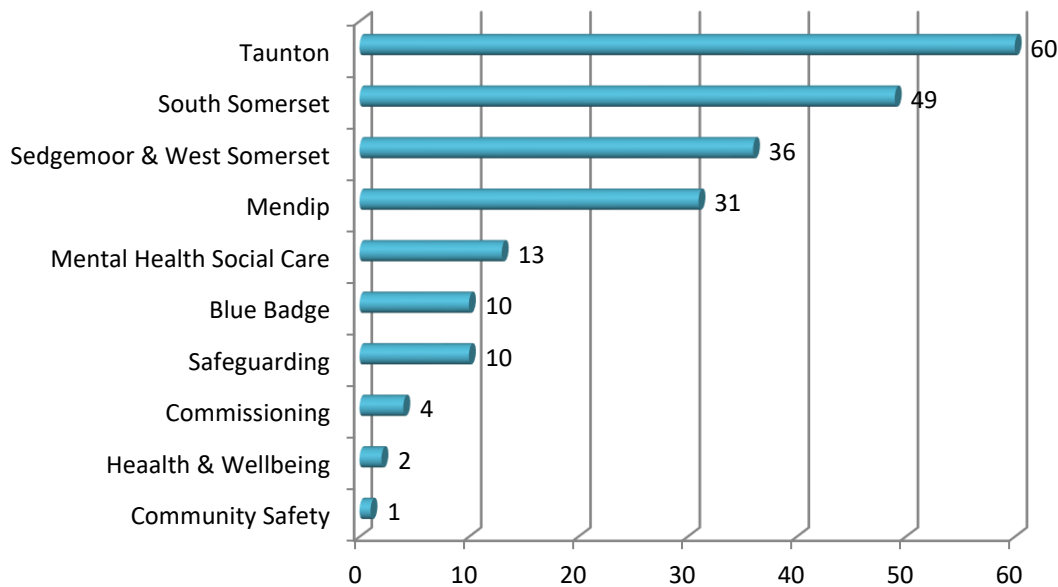
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	49%	43%	-6%
Email	14%	18%	+4%
Letter	19%	16%	-3%
Self-Service	17%	20%	+3%
Form	1%	3%	+2%

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

3.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across adult services of the 216 complaints received during 2018/19.

Number of complaints



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 178 stage 1 complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Blue Badge	8 working days
Mendip	12 working days
Sedgemoor & West Somerset	15 working days
Community Safety	17 working days
Taunton	20 working days
Safeguarding	29 working days
Mental Health Social Care	31 working days
Commissioning	33 working days
South Somerset	37 working days

3.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for resolved adult services complaints and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (incl. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	11	6%
Amount of information given	Information	4	4%
Quality of information/advice		4	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	3	6%
Decision		8	
Quality of service	Service Quality	13	15%
Quality of 3 rd party services		13	
Health & Safety	Health & Safety	1	1%
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	27	31%
Timeliness of doing something		15	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		11	
Other service failure cause		2	
Communication by service	Communication	19	19%
Timeliness of communication		8	
Other communication cause		7	
Staff conduct	Staff Conduct	4	12%
Assistance/help from staff		3	
Staff rudeness		3	
Staff behaviour		11	
Amount of financial support given	Financial	4	6%
Payments or disputed charges		5	
Payment not received		2	
		178	100%

3.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 216 complaints received about adult services in 2018/19, 23 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 6 cases to stage 2 of the complaints process and 17 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 10% of cases received.

Of the 6 cases which have escalated to stage 2, 1 case was resolved in year, with the others still in progress. The resolved case concerned complaint regarding the communication and support provided to a customer following a hospital discharge. The customer was unhappy with the original response so escalated the complaint. However, when offered the opportunity to meet with an appropriate manager at stage 2, the customer withdrew the escalation.

Of the cases referred to the Ombudsman, 5 have been resolved in year.

LGSCO case 1

The complainant's representative complained that the SCC had not engaged with the local district council in order to endorse a change in the housing band for his clients. Following receipt of evidence that SCC had indeed done so, the Ombudsman decided not to further investigate.

LGSCO case 2

The LGSCO were contacted by an advocacy charity. The advocate complained about the Council's application of both the DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) and complaints processes in relation to a specific customer. The advocate did not supply consent from the customer and on further enquiry, the Ombudsman was not able to secure this consent and therefore closed the case.

LGSCO Case 3

The customer complained that ASC had failed to properly update its care assessment following the outcome of a previous complaint. The Ombudsman agreed that the decision regarding eligibility was not expressed with sufficient clarity and asked that this be redone, and guidance updated. These actions were subsequently implemented. £250 was paid to the customer for time and trouble.

LGSCO Case 4

The customer complained that the council wrongly assessed his mother-in-law's contribution towards her care costs. The Ombudsman found no fault in the way the Council calculated the customer's contribution to her day care but did find fault in the Council not deducting the customer's contribution to respite care and in not properly agreeing the 'top-up' with the complainant. The Ombudsman's decision was that the customer should return wrongly made payments for day care and that the Council would take no further payments for the respite care.

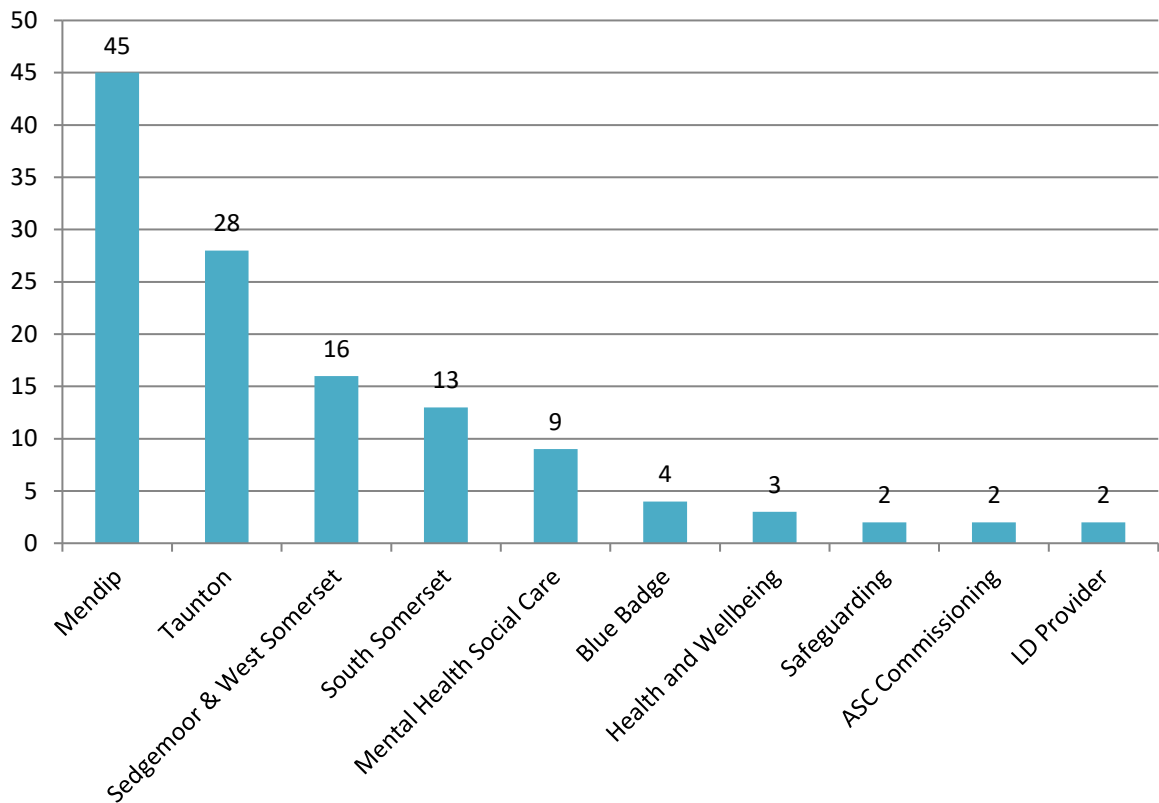
LGSCO Case 5

The customers complained that their needs had changed since their last assessment, but the evidence seen by the Council were not in terms of eligible needs. The Ombudsman did not find fault in this case, but the Council did, in any case, offer a review of needs.

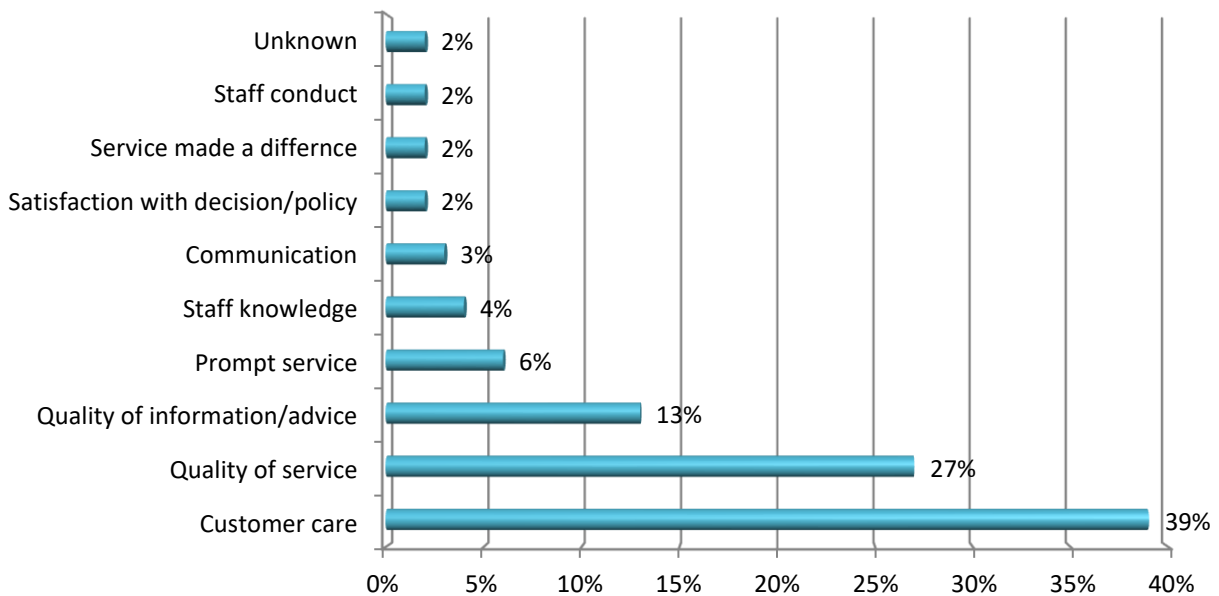
3.7 Compliments

There were 124 compliments recorded for adult services in 2018/19, an increase of 49% on the previous year. The charts below shows the service split for 2018/19 compliments.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:



3.8 Other Feedback

6 general comments about adult services were received during the year and were routed to appropriate managers.

24 enquiries relating to adult services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for member enquiries regarding adult services in 2018/19 was 32 working days.

4. Detailed Data - Economic & Community Infrastructure

4.1 Volumes and Comparisons

The table below shows the volume of ECI feedback received across the last 3 years.

Feedback Type	1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017	1 April 2017 – 31 March 2018	1 April 2018 – 31 March 2019
ECI Complaints	196	275	349
ECI Compliments	261	273	188
ECI Comments	51	60	104
ECI Member Enquiries	2	113	82
Total Adults Feedback	510	721	723

4.2 Resolution and Outcomes

A total of 349 complaints about ECI services were received in 2018/19. The table below shows the in-year resolution status of those complaints.

Resolution	Number	%
Stage 1 – resolved in year	320	92%
Stage 1 – Still open at end of year	18	5%
Stage 2 – resolved in year	3	1%
Stage 2 – Still open at end of year	0	0%
LGO – resolved in year	4	1%
LGO – Still open at end of year	4	1%
	349	

The vast majority of complaints resolved in year continue to be resolved at stage 1 of the complaints process. The table below shows the average resolution times for ECI services stage 1 complaints over the past 3 years.

1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019
15 working days	16 working days	13 working days

For the 18 stage 1 ECI complaints that were received in 2018/19 but not closed in year, the average number of working days open as at 31st March is 40. This is broken down as follows:

Working days open	Cases
< 10	3

10 – 20	4
21 – 30	2
31 – 40	4
41 – 50	3
51 – 60	0
61 – 70	0
71 – 80	0
81 – 90	0
91 – 100	1
> 100	1
	18

The table below shows the outcomes for the 320 stage 1 ECI complaints received and resolved in year, with previous year comparisons.

Outcomes	1 st April 2016 – 31 st March 2017	1 st April 2017 – 31 st March 2018	1 st April 2018 – 31 st March 2019		
	%	%	Cases	%	+/-
Upheld	17%	16%	24	8%	-8%
Not Upheld	33%	32%	90	28%	-4%
Partly Upheld	26%	8%	42	13%	+5%
Resolved Upon Receipt	19%	19%	25	8%	-11%
Withdrawn/Rejected	5%	25%	139	43%	+18%
	100%	100%	320	100%	

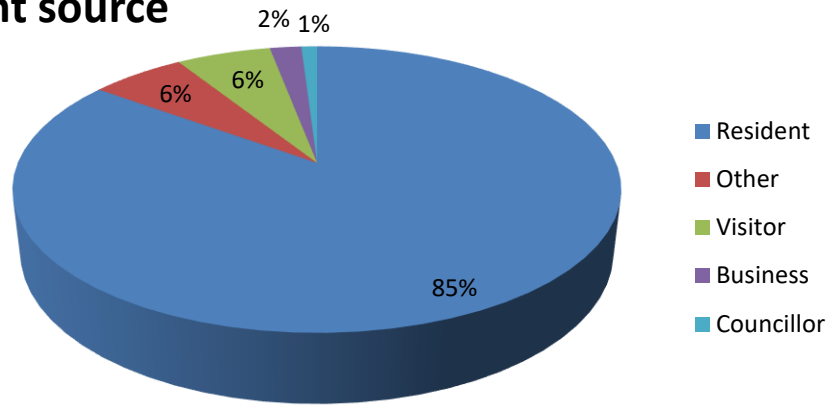
ECI often have a large number of rejected/withdrawn complaints and this is largely due to the fact that customers often voice a request for service as a complaint. For example, a customer might say “I want to complaint about a pot hole in my street”. If this is the first time the defect has been reported, we would not progress under the complaints process but as a request for service (as the Council must be given the opportunity to put things right). This year there has been an increase which is in part due to a change in the winter gritting routes (with both first-time service requests and lobbying against the decision sometimes being incorrectly logged as complaints).

4.3 Customer Profiles

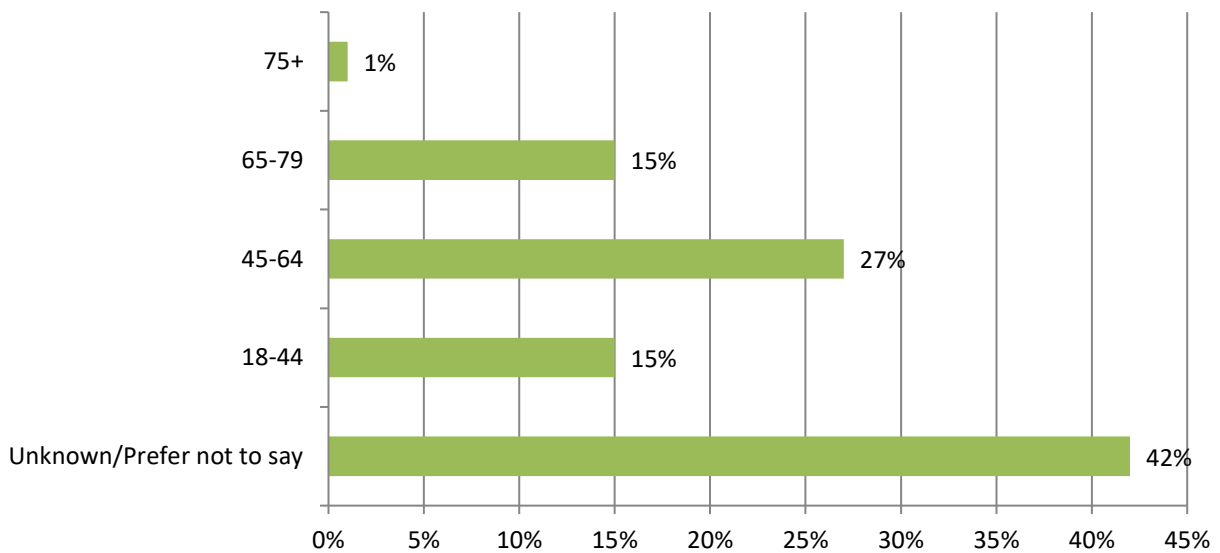
Collecting ‘customer profile’ information such as the age, ethnicity or capacity (e.g. the connection a customer has with the service they are complaining about) is not always easy and records are therefore often incomplete. This might be due to customer omitting the data from their complaint (e.g. when sending a letter or submitting a complaint online), because the customer does not want to share that information or simply because the nature of the issues or interaction did not lend itself to the collection of such data. Given this, the information below provides some insight but should be used with caution.

The graph below shows the capacity in which the complainant is raising issues:

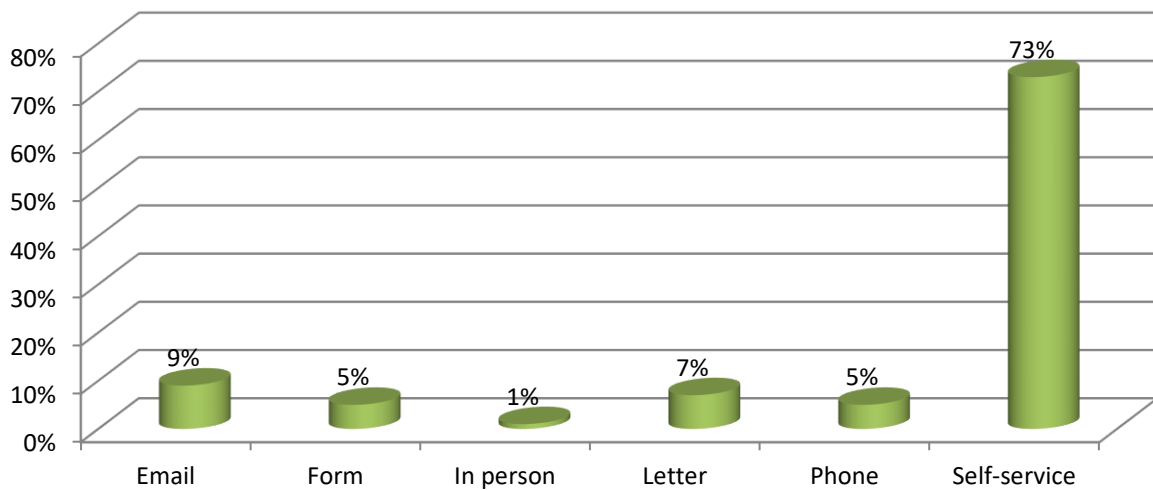
Complaint source



Age of complainant



Complaints by channel



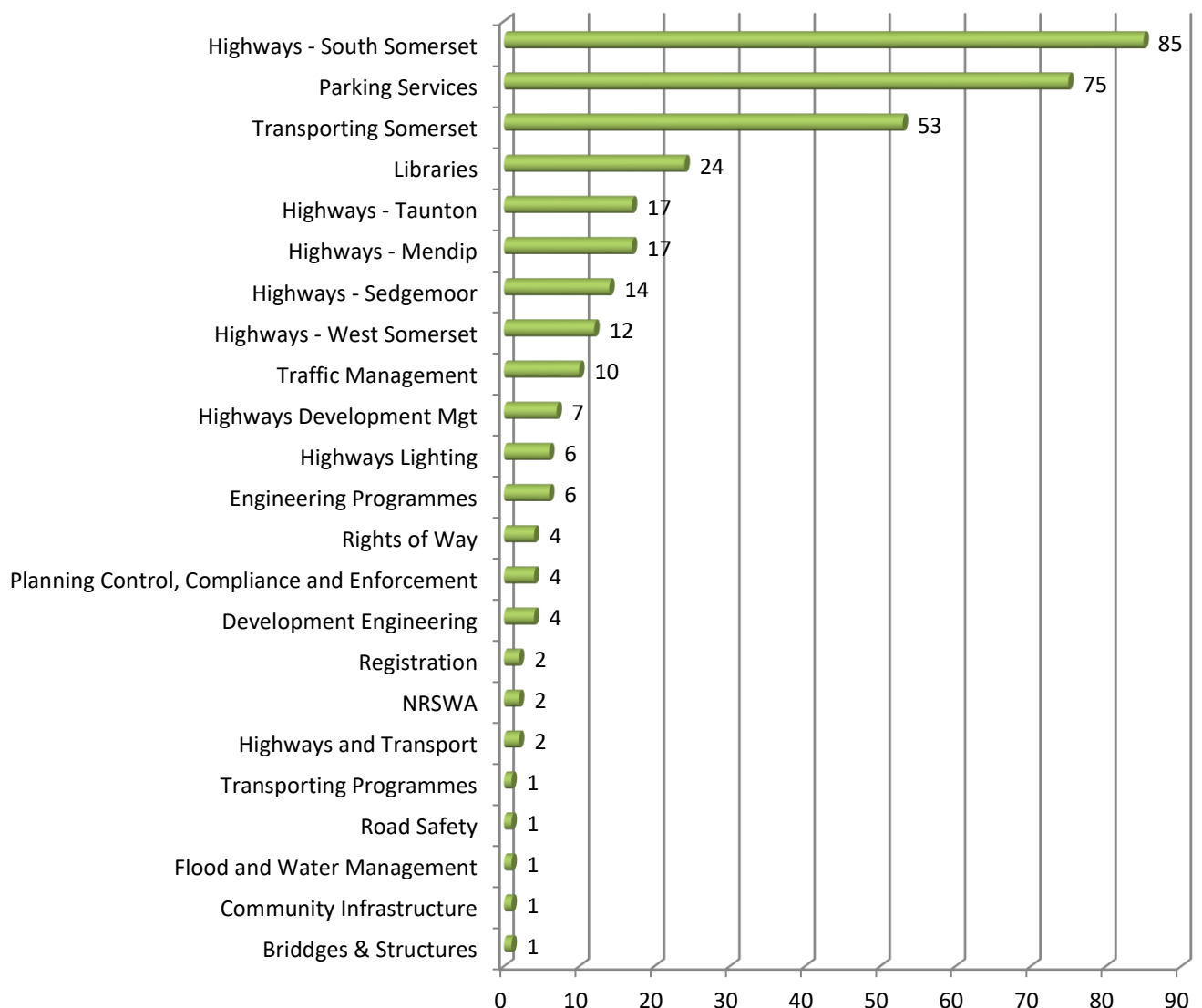
Contact Channel Used	1 Apr 2017 – 31 Mar 2018	1 Apr 2018 – 31 Mar 2019	+/-
Phone	18%	5%	-13%
Email	15%	9%	-6%
Letter	6%	7%	+1%
Self-Service	51%	73%	+22%
Form	9%	5%	-4%
In Person	1%	1%	Neu

There was insufficient data collected regarding disability and ethnicity to present any meaningful analysis for the year.

4.4 Complaints by Service Area

The chart below shows the distribution across all ECI services of the 349 complaints received during 2018/19.

Number of complaints



The table below shows the average resolution times per service for the 320 ECI complaints received and resolved in year.

Service Area	Average Resolution Time
Road Safety	2 working days
Highways Lighting	5 working days
Development Engineering	5 working days
Bridges and Structures	6 working days
Parking Services	8 working days
Highways – South Somerset	9 working days
Traffic Management	9 working days
Highways – Taunton	10 working days
Highways and Transport	10 working days
Highways – Sedgemoor	11 working days
Community Infrastructure	12 working days
Transporting Somerset	14 working days
Engineering Programmes	15 working days
Highways - Mendip	18 working days
Libraries	18 working days
Registration	20 working days
NRSWA	22 working days
Highways – West Somerset	25 working days
Rights of Way	26 working days
Planning Control, Compliance & Enforcement	34 working days
Transporting Programmes	52 working days
Highways Development Management	60 working days

4.5 Reasons for Complaints

The table below shows the detailed primary causes for all 320 resolved stage 1 complaints about ECI services and their broader categorisation.

Primary Cause	Category	Number	%
Unknown (incl. rejected/withdrawn)	N/A	141	44%
Amount of information given	Information	3	1%
Quality of information/advice		1	
Policy or procedure	Policies & Procedures	29	16%
Legal or regulatory cause		4	
Implementation of policy and procedures		10	
Decision		7	
Quality of service	Service Quality	26	10%
Quality of 3 rd party services		7	
Failure to deliver a service	Service Provision	17	11%
Timeliness of doing something		2	
Cancellation or withdrawal of service		9	
Other service failure cause		6	
Communication by service	Communication	4	6%
Timeliness of communication		11	
Other communication cause		5	

Assistance/help from staff	Staff Conduct	1	10%
Staff behaviour		17	
Staff rudeness		10	
Other staff conduct cause		3	
Discrimination	Discrimination	2	0.5%
Privacy and Confidentiality	Confidentiality	1	0.5%
Amount of charge	Financial	1	1%
Other payment or disputed charge cause		3	
		320	100%

4.6 Escalated Complaints

Of the 349 complaints received about ECI services in 2018/19, 11 have escalated beyond stage 1 of the complaints process - 3 cases to stage 2 and 8 cases to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. This represents 3% of cases received.

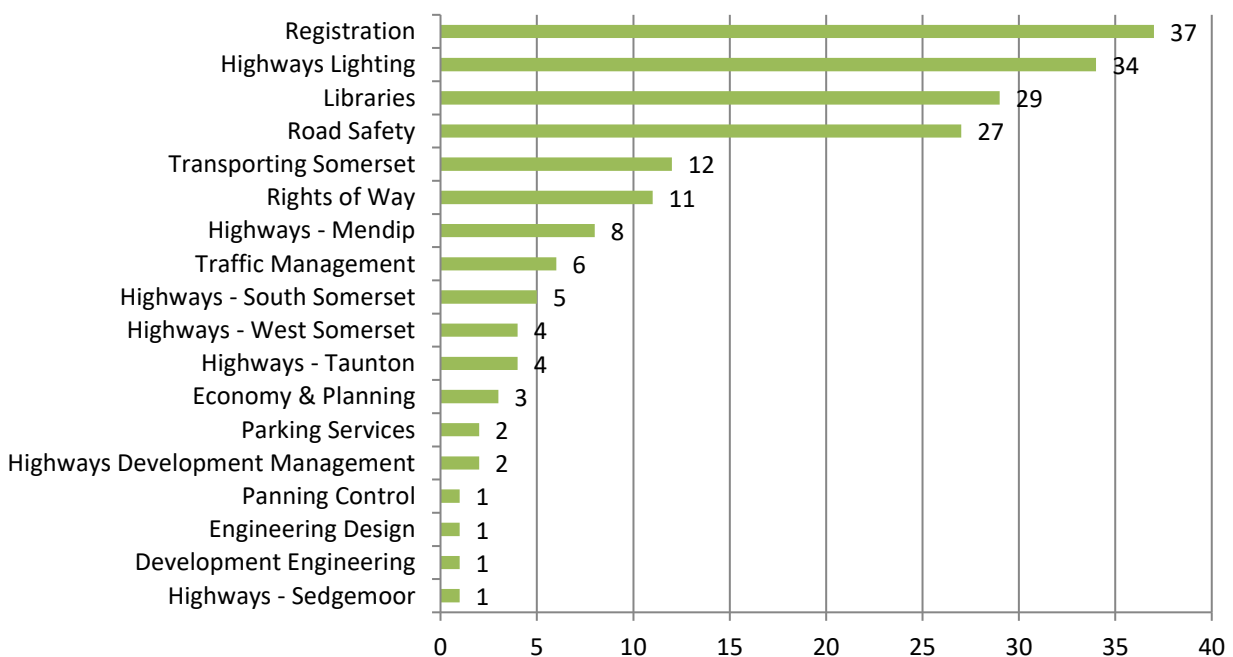
All 3 cases investigated at stage 2 of the complaints process were resolved in year and not upheld. Two cases related to parking services and the other to Transporting Somerset.

Of the 8 cases referred to the LGSCO, 4 have been resolved in year and 4 remain open at the close. Of the 4 cases that have been resolved, the LGSCO decided not to investigate after their initial enquiries for 3 and did not uphold the 4th.

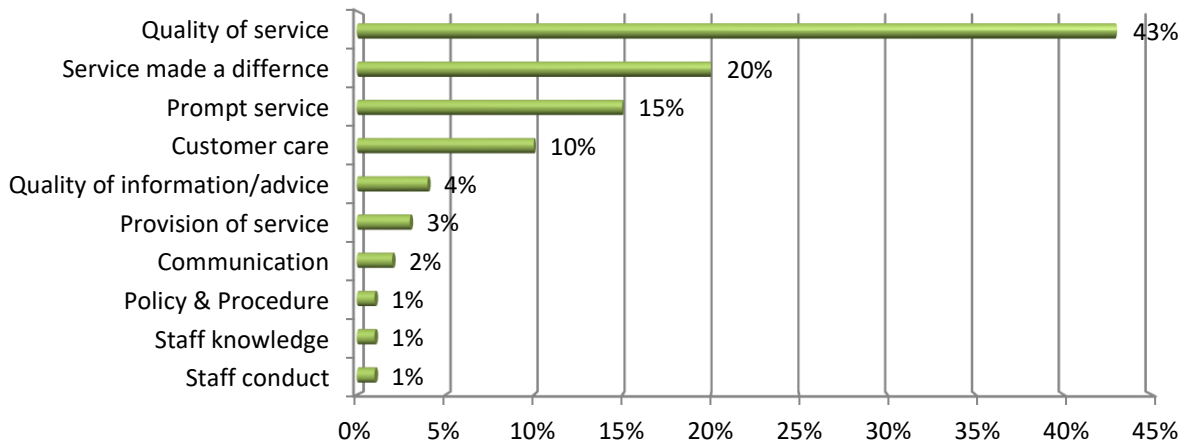
4.7 Compliments

ECI received 188 compliments in 2018/19. The chart below shows the service split.

Compliments by service



Reasons for compliments



Here are some things that customers said:

I joined a book club which meets within the library upon retiring. At that time, I felt I might become somewhat isolated as my husband passed away very shortly thereafter. The book club was a wonderful addition to my life keeping me involved socially and intellectually with new friends and ideas.

I must commend X, she was kind and helpful and made the whole process of registering the death much more bearable.

Thank you for successfully shielding the street light...it has made a massive difference

I am very glad to see that the Council is moving ahead with the TRO for St James St, Taunton, to prohibit motor vehicles and allow cycling. It is a long overdue and badly needed move towards a more progressive approach to transport and the urban environment.

Yesterday I was taken from Yeovil to Bournemouth Hospital...he was courteous, polite and very cheerful...his driving was excellent, and he kept me informed of our progress at all times. I suffered no anxiety about being late or abandoned and he made sure I was clear and happy about all the arrangements.

My son attended the bikeability held at Crewkerne last week. He keeps coming out with different bits that he learnt on the course ...I went out on the bikes last night around our town and was very impressed by his riding ...I feel he is more confident and knows how to ride correctly.

4.8 Other Feedback

104 general comments about ECI services were received during the year. The comments are quite wide ranging and include observations about the convenience of bus specific bus routes, suggestions for minor improvements to facilities at registrar offices, comments on the font and readability of text on parking tickets and views on the Drag Queen event held at the Taunton Library. All comments are assigned to the appropriate service manager for consideration.

82 enquiries relating to ECI services were received from Members of Parliament and/or local Councillors. Member Enquiries can be general in nature but usually result from a constituent approaching their representative for assistance in pursuing a complaint or issue. The average resolution time for received and resolved member enquiries regarding ECI services in 2018/19 was 25 working days.