Shropshire Council

Customer Feedback Annual Report

Shropshire Council

2025/26

Feedback and Insight Team, Shropshire Council
August 2026

www.shropshire.gov.uk
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Contents

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1. Introduction

Shropshire Council's annual customer feedback report presents an overview of the formal feedback received, and responded to, by Shropshire Council between 1 April 2025 and 31 March 2026. The report includes performance data for complaints and compliments and other feedback formally reported to the council's Feedback and Insight Team. The Chief Executive's PA Team are responsible for feedback processes including Councillor and MP Enquiries and this data is not included within this report. The annual customer feedback report is made available to members of the public, councillors and council staff. The report complements the quarterly reporting and regular service-based monitoring reporting that takes place during the year.

Customer Feedback reporting is an important way of gathering real-time insight into organisational performance, it highlights what is working well and where there are problems or areas of organisational pressure, gaps in provision and increased demand. Customer Feedback reporting amplifies the voice of the resident and allows both understanding of individual concerns and where there are patterns and trends. The success of any organisation relies on this work to understand the views of people using services, identifying learning and actions designed to prevent further complaints and to generate overall improvement.

This report also covers additional reporting requirements set out by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman within the Complaints Handling Code published in 2024. The Complaint Handling Code ('the Code'), sets out guidance for a process for organisations that will allow them to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. The Code works in line with existing statutory complaint processes including The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 and Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009.

Complaints containing an element of social care fall under the statutory guidelines. These are classed as statutory complaints for either adult or children's services. The remainder of complaints are corporate complaints. Corporate complaints relate to administration or other types of services that do not provide social care. These are handled under the Council's corporate complaints procedure, set locally. You can find out more on Shropshire Council's website.

Annual reports are also prepared for Adult Services and Children's Services allowing for a more detailed consideration of feedback for those service areas. Those reports are also published on Shropshire Council's website and are used to support key performance and inspection processes. The Ombudsman highlights that "*High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain*." It is important to consider performance more widely and this report aims to provide a full view to aid understanding.

Definitions

Complaint: A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual or group of individuals. Family members and advocates may make a complaint on behalf of one of our customers. We will ask for consent to ensure that the complaint is not being made against the customer's wishes.

Service request: A request that the organisation provides or improves a service, fixes a problem or reconsiders a decision.

Compliment: Many people get in touch with a compliment when the information or support they have received has exceeded their expectations. It is helpful to learn when a service has been provided well or when a member of staff has done a great job. We record unsolicited compliments (we don't formally record positive feedback generated through feedback forms or between staff).

2. The Corporate Complaints Process

Feedback Received
Shropshire Council encourages users of our services, their family members and carers to highlight any concerns so that they may be addressed. If problems cannot be resolved and the customer wishes to make a complaint, staff members can offer advice on how to make a complaint. Support is also available from complaints officers based within Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team.

Telephone: 0345 678 9000
Email: complaints@shropshire.gov.uk
Website: https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/feedback/
Online: Log into the My Shropshire portal

Acknowledgment
Complaints will be acknowledged within 5 working days of being received and we let the complainant know how their complaint will be handled.

STAGE 1
An appropriate Investigating Officer will be allocated to the case and asked to investigate the complaint. This is usually a manager within the service area the complaint relates to. The complainant will be provided with a written response within 10 working days of acknowledgement. In some complex cases it may take longer and an additional 10 days is set as an extension period. We let the customer know if this extra time is needed and why. The Investigating Officer will write to explain the outcome of their investigation, any learning or actions and information outlining how to progress the complaint if the customer is not satisfied with the outcome.

STAGE 2 - Review
The complaint will be reviewed by a more senior manager within the service the complaint relates to. Very occasionally another appropriate senior member of staff or independent investigator will be asked to consider a stage 2 complaint. They will review the Stage 1 complaint and decide if there is more the service can do to address the concerns raised. The stage 2 investigation letter will offer findings from the stage 2 complaint and form the organisation's final response. Information about the final stage of the complaint process will be provided (Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman).

Ombudsman If a complaint cannot be resolved locally it can be investigated by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGO). Responses are often complex, lengthy and require a large volume of appendices to be collated, catalogued and returned to the LGO. Complainants can request to go to the Ombudsman without a stage 2 complaint if they choose to although they may be referred back to complete the local complaint process.

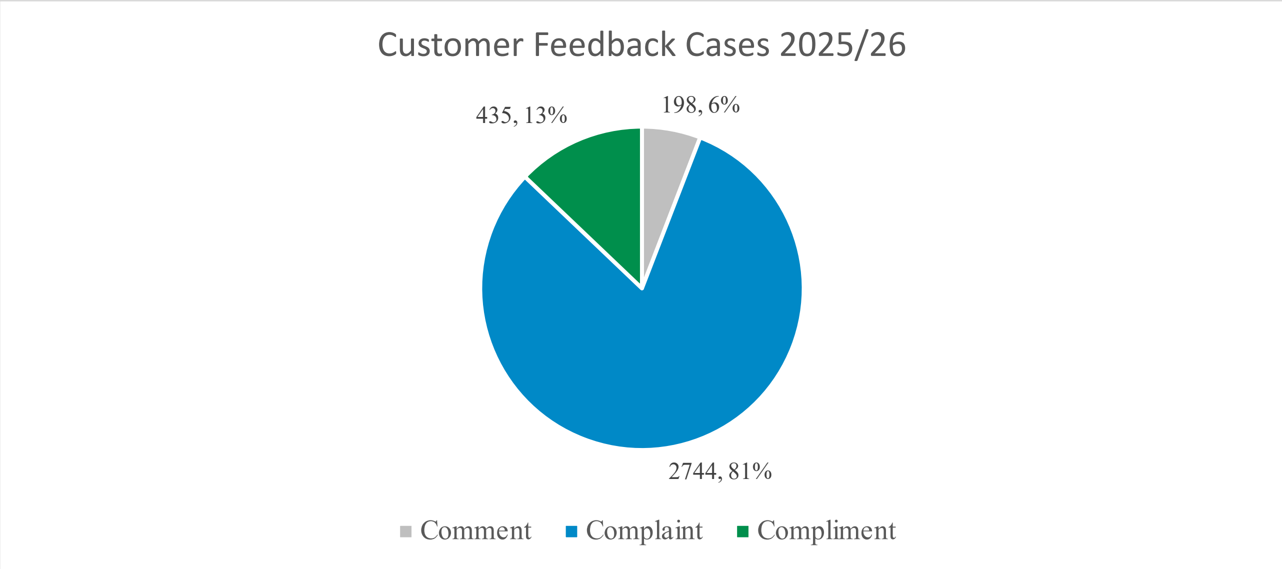
The Feedback and Insight Team coordinates the complaints process, recording and allocating complaints for investigation, monitoring response dates and overseeing performance. We cannot promise to get the result complainants want, but we do work to advice all services that complaints must be dealt with in line with the complaints procedures. We aim to keep customers informed of what is happening and the progress being made.

3. Customer Feedback 2025/26

Customer Feedback - Overall Analysis

It is helpful to look at customer feedback as a whole each year, to view the patterns and trends within the data and understand how feedback is changing. Within the year 2025/26 Shropshire Council received and recorded 3,377 cases of formal feedback. There were:

- 2,744 initial complaint cases
- 198 comments
- 435 compliments

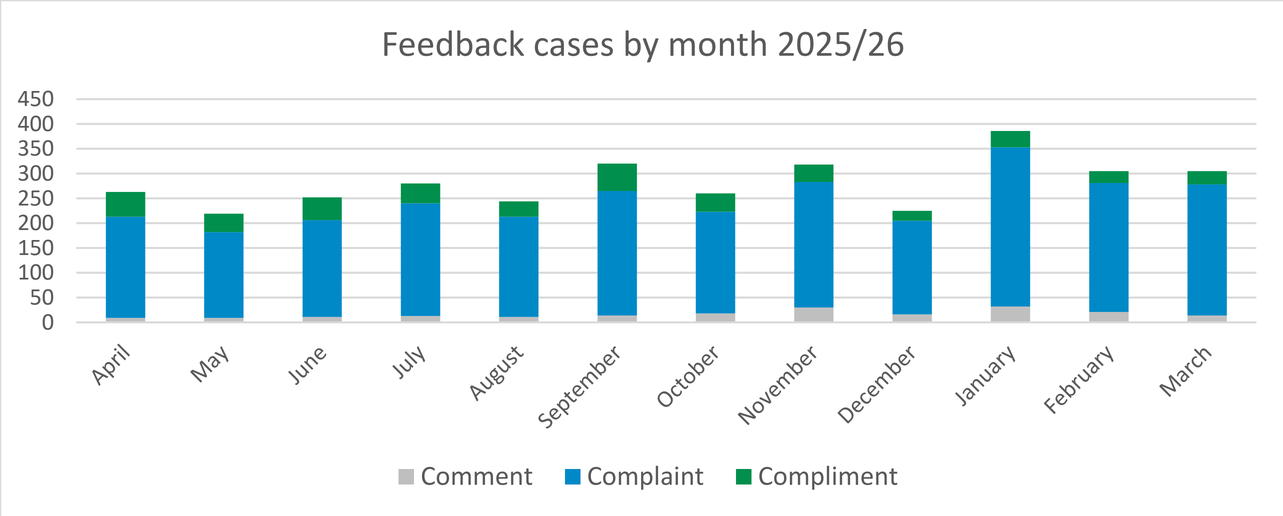


Comments and other enquiries formed 6% of all feedback cases and 13% of all customer feedback cases were compliments. The 2,744 complaint cases formed 81% of all formal feedback and resulted in 1,083 complaint investigations. Not all complaints cases will result in an investigation. There are a wide range of reasons a complaint may be closed before investigation such as it was a service request, anonymous, outside of the Council's jurisdiction, redirected to another process such as an appeal or claim, withdrawn or early resolved.

The 1,083 complaint investigations were handled under the different statutory and corporate complaints processes. There were:

- 859 Corporate complaints
- 161 Adult Services statutory complaints (including provider complaints and multi-agency complaints)
- 63 Children's Services statutory complaints

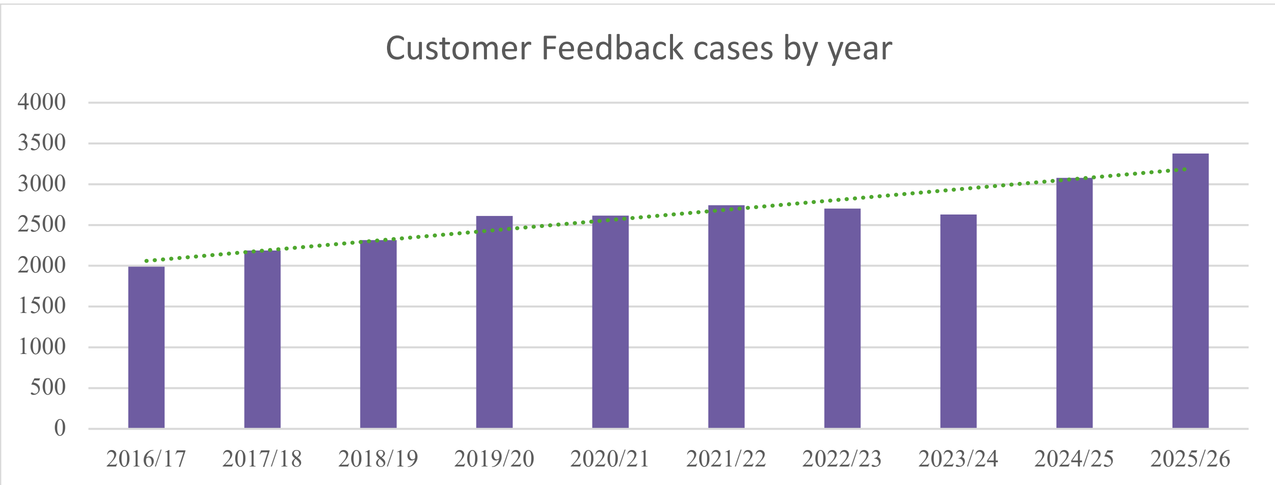
Feedback levels can vary over the year with slight fluctuations influenced by changes in weather conditions (e.g. heavy rain causing flooding, snow and ice impacting highways) or other factors such as council decisions (e.g. council tax rises). In 2025/26 there was a significant peak in January 2025/26. This was caused by a range of factors including weather and the outcome of the council's budget consultation.



Over the year, the monthly average case numbers were 281 customer feedback cases; more than the previous year (257) and the year before (219). Customer feedback cases were relatively steady across the year with slight decreases in May and December. January (386), September (320) and November (318) saw the greatest number of feedback cases, marking similar patterns to the previous year. Looking across the years, September is often a busy month.

Performance data is considered by quarter. In 2025/26 quarter 1 (April to the end of June) saw the smallest quarter total with a steady increase through the year to 996 in quarter 4. The pattern is showing a steady upward trend overall but there was a significant increase between quarters 3 and 4 in 2025/26.

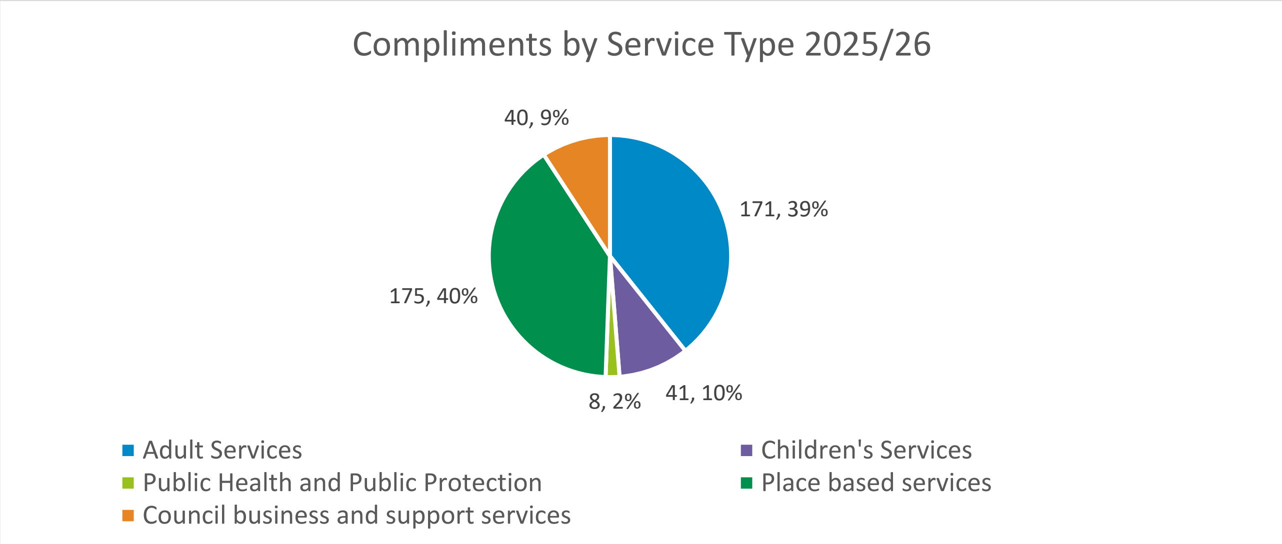
Overall customer feedback case volumes have increased over recent years. The 2023/24 financial year suggested a plateauing with numbers relatively stable for the previous 3 years but 2025/26 has again seen another increase. There has been a 70% increase in customer feedback from 2016/17 and the chart below shows the upward trend line for customer feedback. There has been a 9.7% increase in all cases from 2024/25 to 2025/26. Due to budget pressures the resources allocated to manage customer feedback have not increased in line with growing demand. Research with 8 other similar local authorities highlights that caseload sizes were generally much larger in Shropshire with significantly more cases managed per person locally.

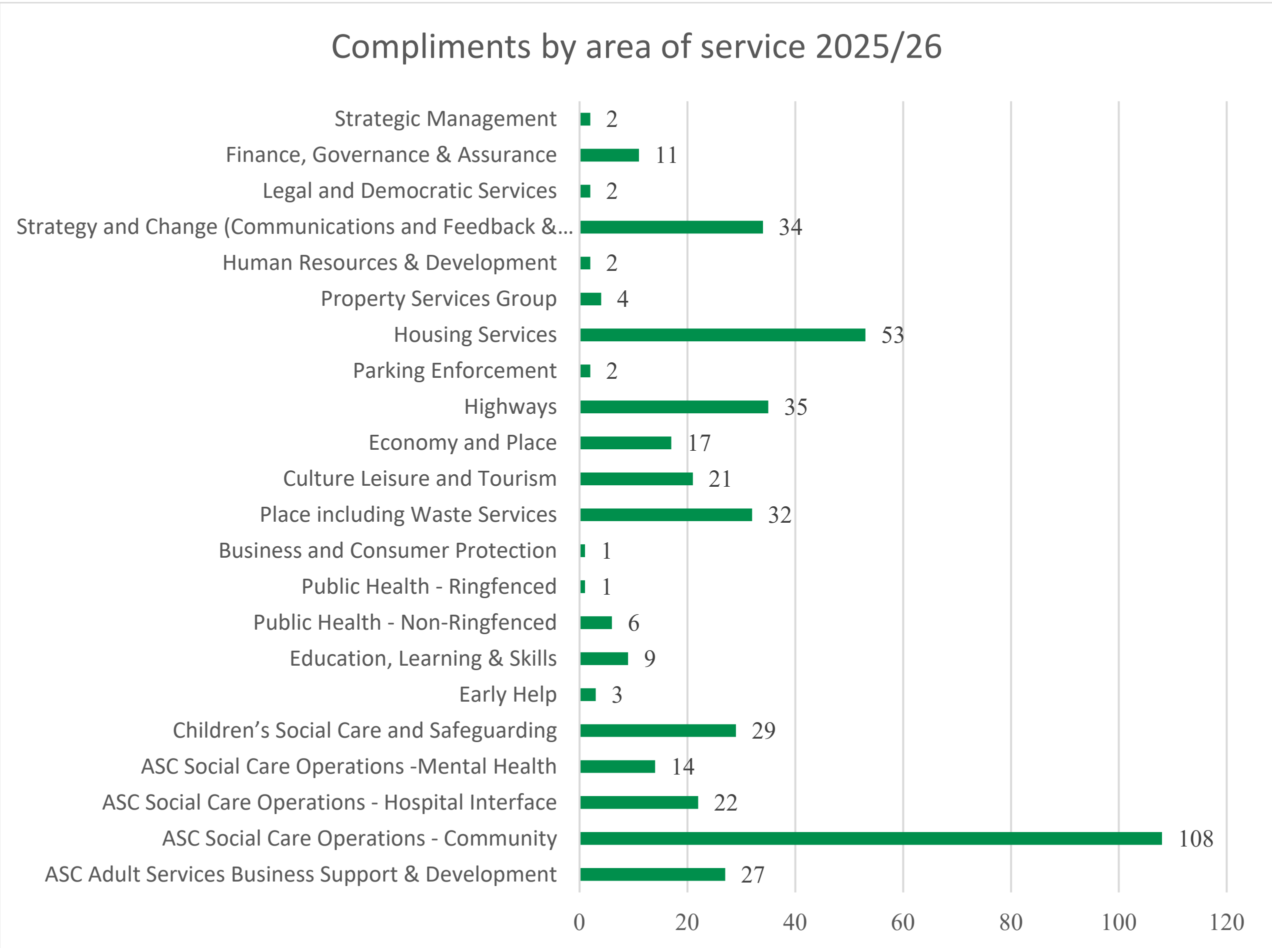


Work takes place to monitor the proportion of complaints within annual customer feedback totals. Over previous years there had not been any dramatic change and the proportion fluctuated slightly between 40% and 44%. However, from 2023/24 complaints started to dominate feedback and the proportion rose to 74% of all customer feedback cases. That proportion increased again in the last year with 2025/26 seeing complaints now forming 81% of all feedback raised.

Compliments

A closer look at compliments shows that overall place-based services receive 40% of compliments and social care (combining children's and adult services receive 49% of compliments, the remainder of compliments are for council business support services and Public Health and Public Protection. Considering the breakdown by service area it is possible to see that Adult Social Care (Care and Wellbeing) and Housing Services received the largest number of compliments. Reporting is against service themes rather than structures.





Case level exclusions

Within the last few years considerable effort has been made to assess and ‘triage’ feedback prior to implementing the complaints process (where the process of incoming feedback makes that possible e.g. it is not possible through the portal online customer recording). This has avoided certain issues becoming complaints when they are a request for a service or can be remedied quickly, such as a request to cut back foliage or replace a streetlight. The Ombudsman uses guidance to emphasise that local authorities should provide a clear distinction between service requests and formal complaints (see definitions on page 3).

Over recent years more people are asking for a complaint rather than requesting a service as a first step. This may be influenced by the complaints process being easy to access and well-advertised and due to the preference people have to use email. The Ombudsman has suggested that local authorities look closely at this issue to ensue that complaints processes are not being over-used when service request processes should be in place and easily accessed.

Complaints should be made when there are concerns about the quality of service or other action taken by the council and not before services have had the opportunity to respond, particularly if they have not previously been aware of an issue. An effective complaints process requires support across the organisation to manage incoming issues and enquiries effectively.

Action is required to improve this work within Shropshire Council due to the high volumes of enquiries being raised as complaints when they do not meet the definition of a complaint and significant numbers of people making complaints anonymously so that they cannot be investigated. There will always be a need to early close some complaints at case level but in 2025/26 32% of complaints raised at case level should not have been directed to the complaint processes. When considering reasons for closure of complaints at case level 41% were closed as service requests.

In line with the new requirement by the Ombudsman that annual reports should include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept the tables below have been provided for more information.

Cases not accepted as formal complaints for investigation

Early Closure Reason	Count	%
Immediate Resolution	131	14.8
Call Abandoned	1	0.1
Created in Error	14	1.6
Anonymous Case - Cannot investigate	402	45.5
No Further Action Required	15	1.7
No Reply from Customer	18	2.0
Customer Withdraws Complaint	16	1.8
Details Not Provided/ Insufficient Information	4	0.5
Failed to Provide Consent	9	1.0
Housing Benefit Appeal	10	1.1
Planning Permission Appeal	1	0.1
Disabled Badges Appeal	4	0.5
Penalty Charge Notice	9	1.0
Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures	6	0.7
Appeal Against Court Rulings	1	0.1
Insurance Claim	88	10.0
Outside Timeframe/Old (12 months)	15	1.7
Other Organisation to Respond	17	1.9
Outside Jurisdiction	122	13.8
Total	**883**	**100**

Complaints do not always result in a complete investigation and outcome. Once a complaint case is explored in more detail, it is possible that a different course of action is required (e.g. an insurance claim or appeals process), or once the complaint is more fully understood it may be concluded that the complainant is merely asking for a simple remedial action to resolve a concern rather than wishing to proceed through a formal complaint investigation (a request for a service). 14.8% resulted in immediate resolution.

Of the 2,744 complaints cases, 883 had an early closure reason allocated to indicate that the complaint did not result in a full investigation. Reasons for early closure may be that the complainant did not want to provide contact details or details to allow an investigation to proceed, the issue may not have been concerning a council or a commissioned service, or a more appropriate process may have been available (such as an appeal). Of the early closures, 402 cases (45.5%) had to be early closed because the complainant chose not to provide contact details (anonymous complaints cannot be investigated). 13.8% were outside of the council's jurisdiction and 10% were insurance claims.

Case level complaint outcomes

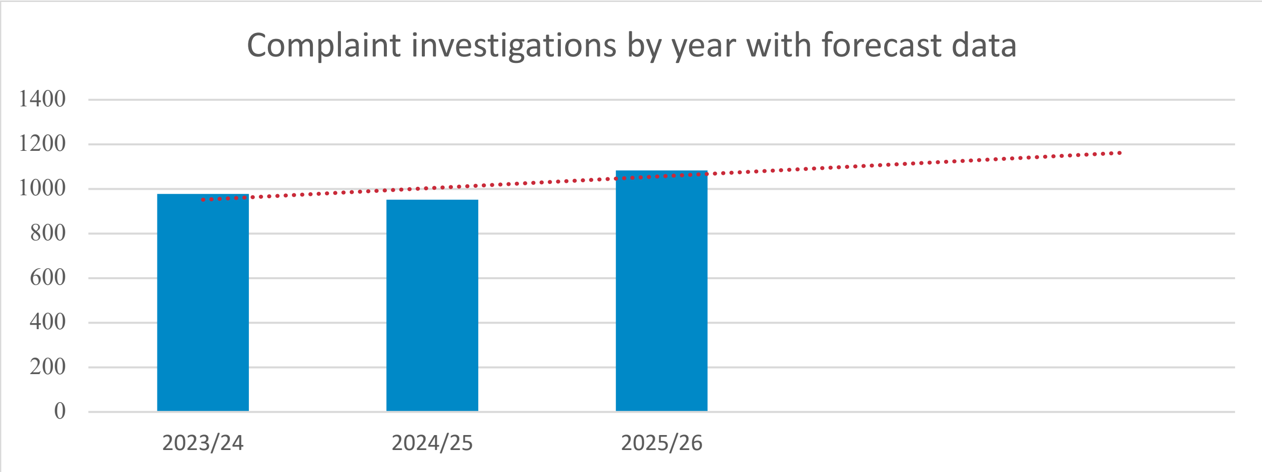
Closure reason at case level	Count	%
No Finding	16	1
Not Upheld	310	11
Partially Upheld	173	6
Service Request not Complaint	1120	41
Upheld	166	6
Withdrawn	38	1
Not recorded (e.g. early closed/excluded before case completed)	921	34
Total	**2744**	**100**

Complaint Investigations

Complaints (and some comments) are explored at greater depth than other types of feedback and may result in investigations. There may be multiple investigations for each complaint case, or a complaint case may be closed before it reaches investigation stage (for example it may be excluded or early closed for the reasons described in the previous section). In some cases a complaint may refer to the services provided by more than one council department, in which case there will be more than one investigation. Stage 1 investigations are led by officers (usually team or service managers) with a detailed knowledge of the service area. In 2024/25 there were 2,386 complaints cases and 952 complaint investigations. In 2025/26 that increased to 2,744 complaint cases and 1,083 complaint investigations.

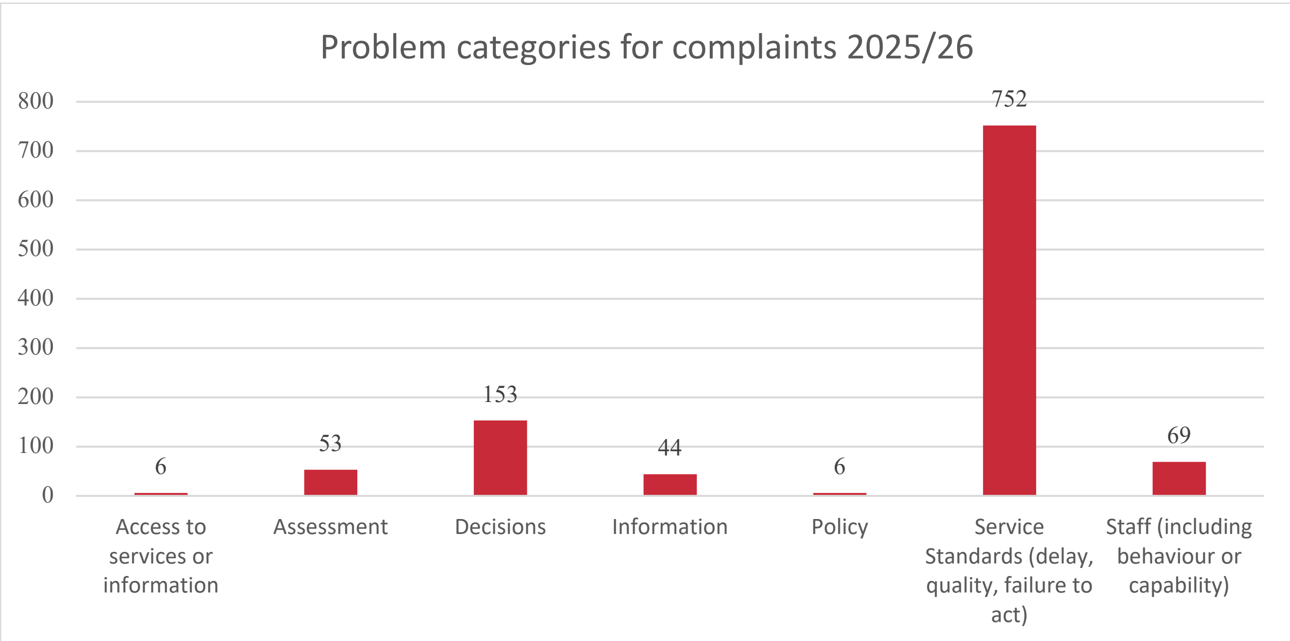
The performance measures Shropshire Council uses to monitor complaints are largely based on complaints investigations. It is very important to consider the number of complaint investigations Shropshire Council undertakes each year. Investigations can involve considerable staff time with coordination from the complaint officer (complaint handler), investigation time from the person leading the complaint, and other officer time attending complaint interviews, compiling records etc. from 2024/25 to 2025/26 complaint investigations increased by 14%. Early indications suggest increases will continue into 2026/27 and that the next year may see further increases (as shown in the following chart).

Understanding the reasons for increases in the number of complaint investigations can help Shropshire Council to take action and mitigate risk by working to make improvements in service delivery where possible.



The complaint investigation data collected highlights the reasons for complaints. ‘Service standards’ was the main category under which complaints were made in 2025/26 (69%). Within ‘service standards’ there are a number of sub-categories and analysis highlights that ‘service standards – failure to provide a service/take action’, ‘service standards – inappropriate/incorrect action’ and ‘service standards – delays’ were the dominant sub-categories. ‘Decisions’ was the second main category under which complaints were recorded (14%).

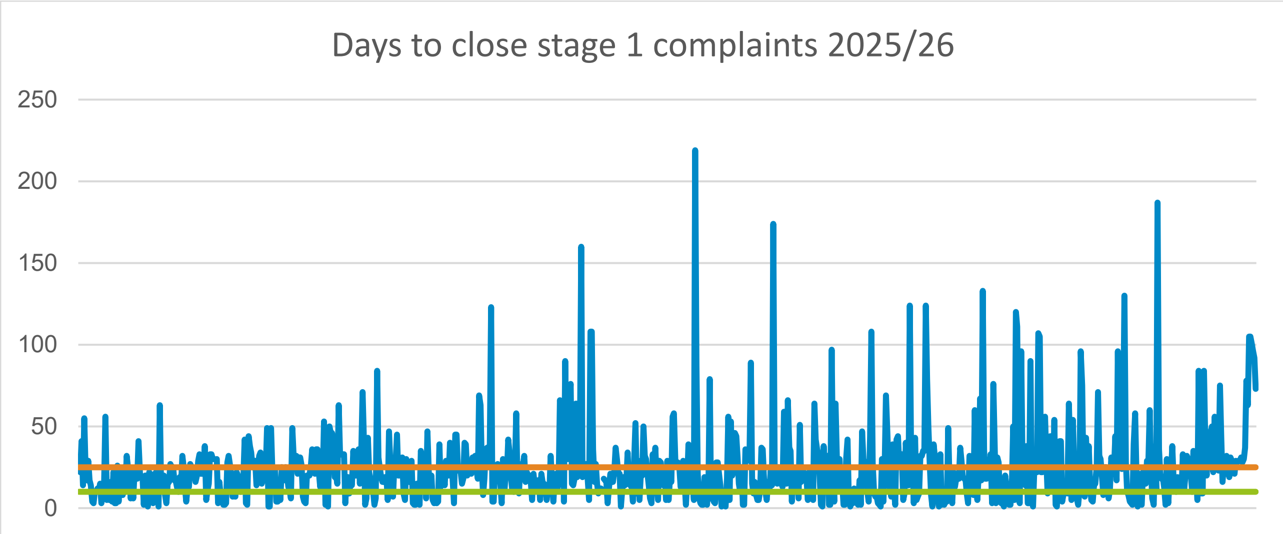
Complaints under the category decisions are usually made because someone is dissatisfied with a decision made (only 2 complaints related to a decision not taken). Complaints related to decisions seem to have been growing over the last few years, across multiple departments.



During 2025/26 Shropshire Council took an average of 25 working days to respond to stage 1 complaints. This has been the dominant performance issue over the last 2 years. Although the average has reduced, suggesting some improvement, this is due to very short response times within some service areas, there are still too many cases exceeding the timescales. Quarterly performance reporting has been focusing on the average time taken to respond to stage 1 complaints. The Ombudsman introduced a 10-day complaint timescale for stage 1 complaints and Shropshire Council has now moved to that new timescale (the previous timescale was 30 working days).

Excluding Adult Statutory complaints (where a maximum of 65 working days is set out within national guidance and regulations), stage 1 complaints took at average of 24 working days to complete. Children's statutory complaints and corporate complaints now both have a 10 day timescale. Of those, 232 (31%) stage 1 complaints were completed within 10 working days and 507 (69%) exceeded the new timescale. It is expected that this performance will improve in the next year now that new timescale is fully implemented. 76% of stage 1 complaints were completed within the previous 30 working day timescale. Days to close will remain a key measure within ongoing performance monitoring. Against the new 15 working days Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 45% of corporate stage 1 cases were completed within 15 working days.

The aim in 2026/27 will be to see the red line in the chart below (the average) drop to align with the green line (the 10 working day target).



Green line = days to close timescale, Orange line = average days to close performance

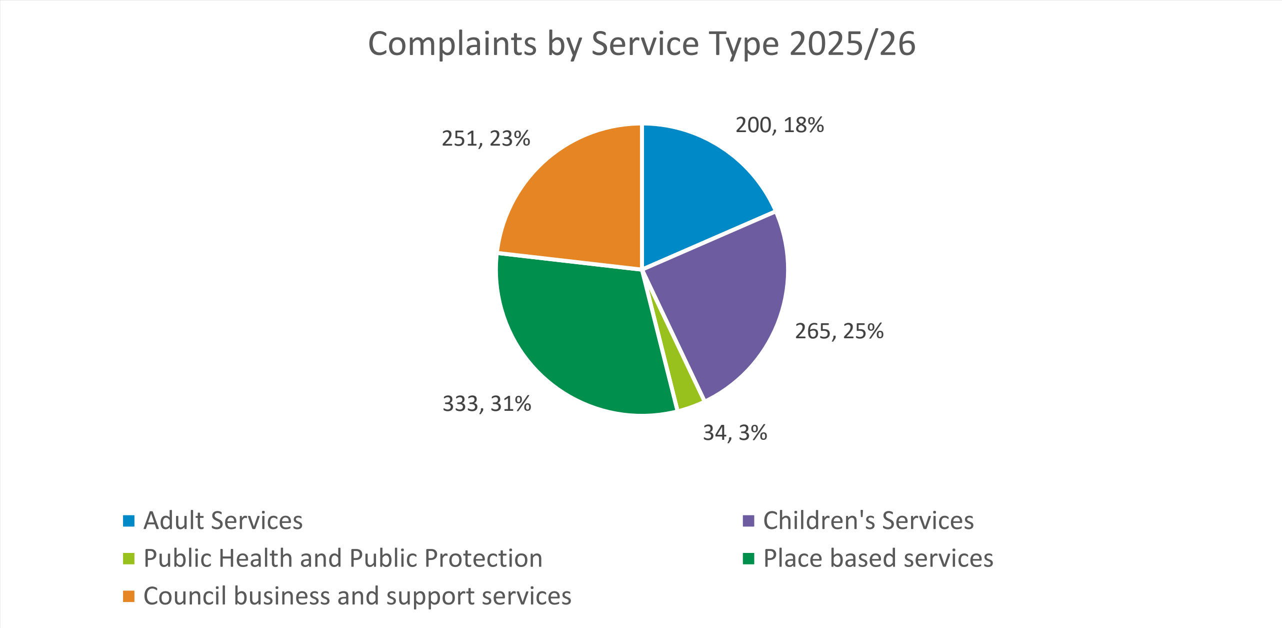
The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman has implemented a new complaint handling code for corporate complaints (excluding adult and children's social care statutory complaints). The timescales are shown below.

Process	Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales	Extension periods
Stage 1 corporate acknowledgement	5 working days	NA
Stage 1 corporate investigation response	10 working days	10 working days
Stage 2 corporate acknowledgement	5 working days	NA
Stage 2 corporate response	20 working days	20 working days

One of the challenges meeting new timescales is increased complexity. Unfortunately, complexity is not something that can be easily measured or reported on with currently available data. One indicator of complexity that can be reported is the number of investigations raised for each complainant during the year (complaints may be added to over time or additional new complaints made as a complaint is responded to).

The data shows that, in 2025/26 there were 215 customers with 2 or 3 complaint investigations within the year (23% of customers). 23 customers made 4 or 5 complaints within the year (2%) and 1% made 6 or more complaints within the year. There has also been a significant increase in use of the Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers' Register. In 2023/24 9 customers were contacted under the procedure, in 2024/25 that increased to 26 and in 2025/26 31 customers were listed within the register. This is usually as a result of abusive, threatening and unreasonable contact with members of staff.

Some types of service are more likely to result in complaints than others and the chart below highlights complaints by service type. Place-based services received 31% of complaints (often service delivered to every household such as roads, waste etc.). Adult Services received 18% of complaints and council business and support services saw 23% in 2025/26. Children's Services have seen significant increases within the last 2 years and now receive 25% of complaints.



Data for Adult Services and Children's services is explored in more detail throughout the year and within the annual reports for these services, but the table below shows the split by type of complaint. Please note that Shropshire Council's Ombudsman data will not match the Ombudsman's reporting data due to a delay between a complainant notifying the council of an Ombudsman case and the investigation commencing. Ombudsman data is shown later within the report. The data in the table below includes those Ombudsman cases known in year (fewer than the total referred to the Ombudsman and reported).

Complaints by type and stage

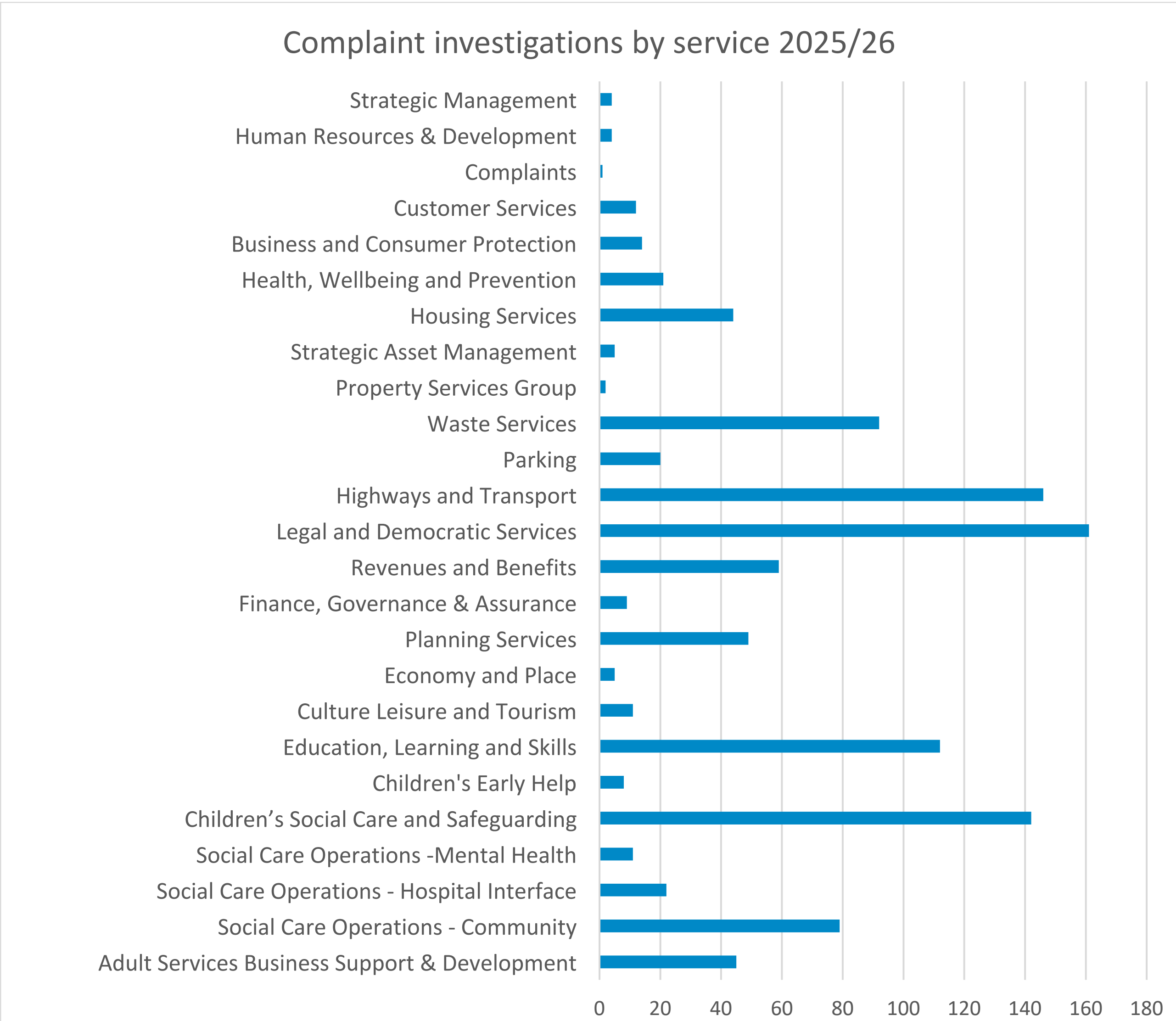
Complaint Type	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total
Adult - Statutory	136	NA	NA	12	148
Adult - Provider	13	NA	NA	Included above	13
Adult - Corporate	5	3	NA	1	9
Child - Statutory	52	10	1	0	63
Child - Corporate	198	35	NA	7	240
Corporate - Council	492	69	NA	46	607
Corporate - Provider	3	0	NA	Included above	3
Total	**899**	**117**	**1**	**66**	**1083**

Note: Adult statutory cases do not have a stage 2 and 3. Corporate cases do not have a stage 3.

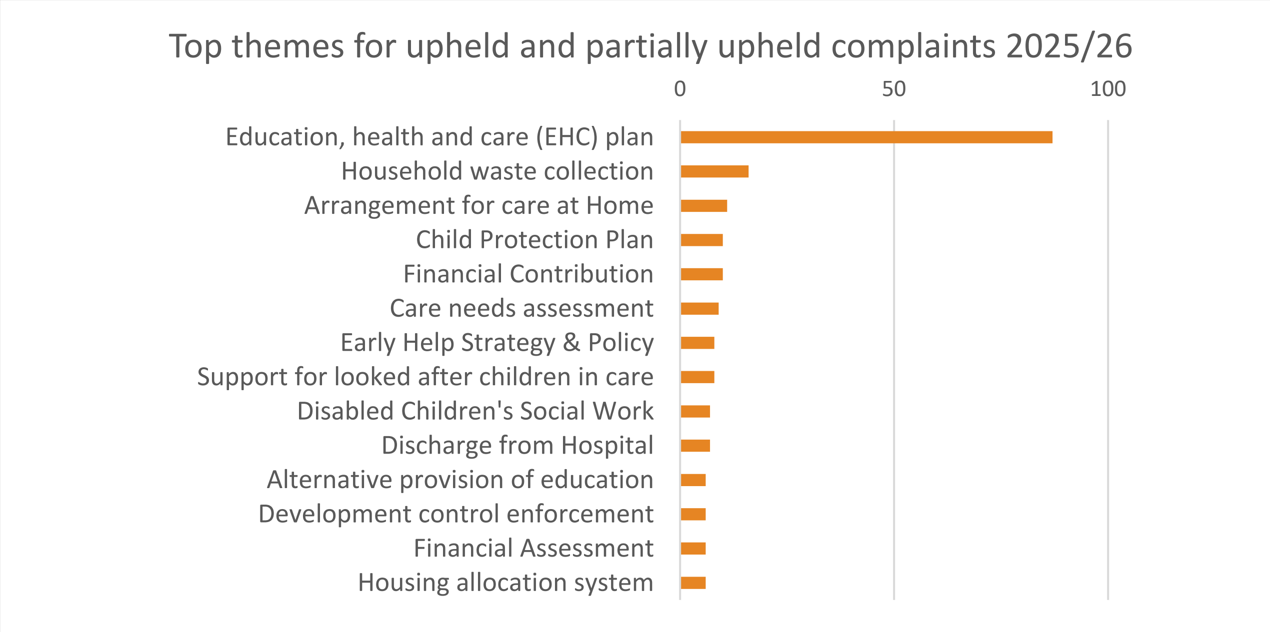
Highways and Transport complaints traditionally form a large proportion of all complaints and in 2025/26 formed 14% of all Shropshire Council's complaints (the same as last year which was an increase from 12% in 2023/24 but an improvement on the 19% in 2022/23 and 27% in 2021/22). Waste services complaints have also fluctuated slightly over the years from 14% in 2022/23 to 6% in 2023/24, 9% in 2024/25 and remaining at 9% in 2025/26. Revenues and Benefits received a significant proportion of complaints at 5% (the same proportion as last year). These are services used by all residents. Planning Services complaints formed 5% (again, the same proportion as the previous year).

Legal and governance services was allocated 161 complaints, 15% of all complaints but this is due to the fact that stage 2 corporate complaints have increased in volume and were responded to by members of staff within that area. This will change in 2026/27 with service areas responsible for responding to their own stage 2 corporate complaints. Please note that the complaints are not complaints about the services delivered by Legal Services.

Considering detailed data by service it is worth noting that some service areas with higher volumes of complaints reflect the national picture across other local authorities. Children's social work case management, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and adult social care complaints are among areas of service nationally where there are growing demands and pressures leading to complaints. Some of the reasons for this are linked to national economic and social changes and cost of living pressures. The chart below displays numbers of complaints by service (services are grouped into these areas for ease of reporting since there is currently no facility to report against the council's structure due to ongoing restructuring).

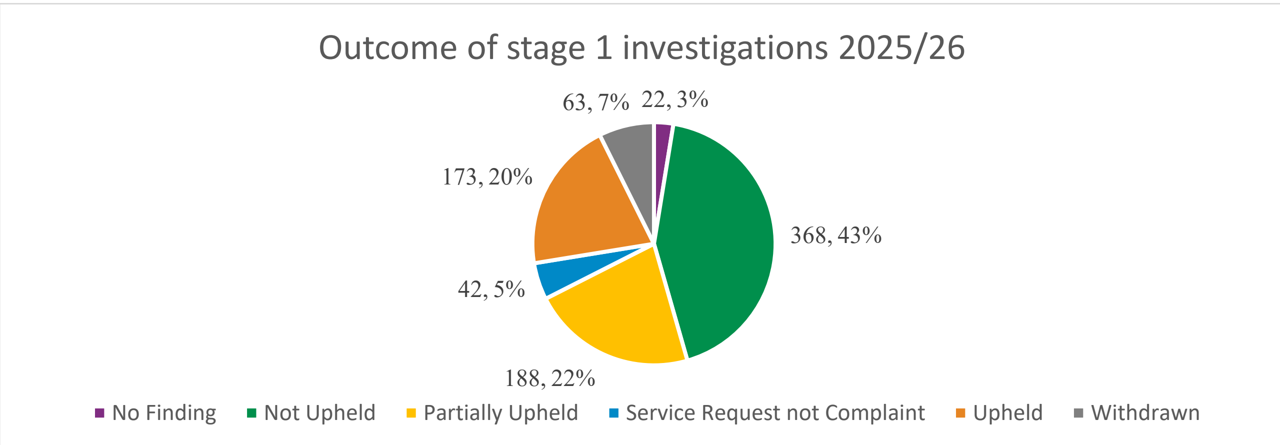


The top themes for upheld and partly upheld complaints are shown in the following chart and show that complaints relating to Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans, household waste collection, arrangement for care at home, Child Protection Plans and Financial Contributions were the themes more frequently leading to findings of some fault.



When considering complaints performance, the outcome is very important. The data for 2025/26 shows that:

- At the end of the 12-months 2025/26, 856 complaints were opened and closed at stage 1.
- Of the closed stage 1 complaints 20% were upheld (173 complaints), 22% were partially upheld and 43% were not upheld.
- Considering the complaints that were upheld (all stages closed within the year), 12% were with Highways and Transport (a significant improvement compared to last year). 35% were for Education, Learning and Skills with the vast majority related to Special Educational Needs and Disability (the provision of Education Health and Care Plans EHCPs), 15% Adult Social Care, 9% were with Children's Social Care (including Early Help) and 9% for Waste Management.
- The three dominant problem categories within upheld complaints are 'Service standards – failure to provide a service/take action', 'Service standards – delays', and 'Service standards – inappropriate/incorrect action'. Work by the Feedback and Insight Team is undertaken to keep complainants informed of any delays and progress, but often concerns cannot be addressed without more detailed and specialist knowledge from service areas.
- 3% of stage 1 complaints investigations resulted in no finding. A complaints investigator may find that not enough evidence or information is available to draw a conclusion, or they may be unable to obtain enough information from the complainant to fully investigate. Occasionally it may be a sign of failure to investigate. The proportion of 'no finding' outcomes was previously a problem, but performance has improved and been consistent for the last two years (there has been a slight increase from 2% in the previous year).



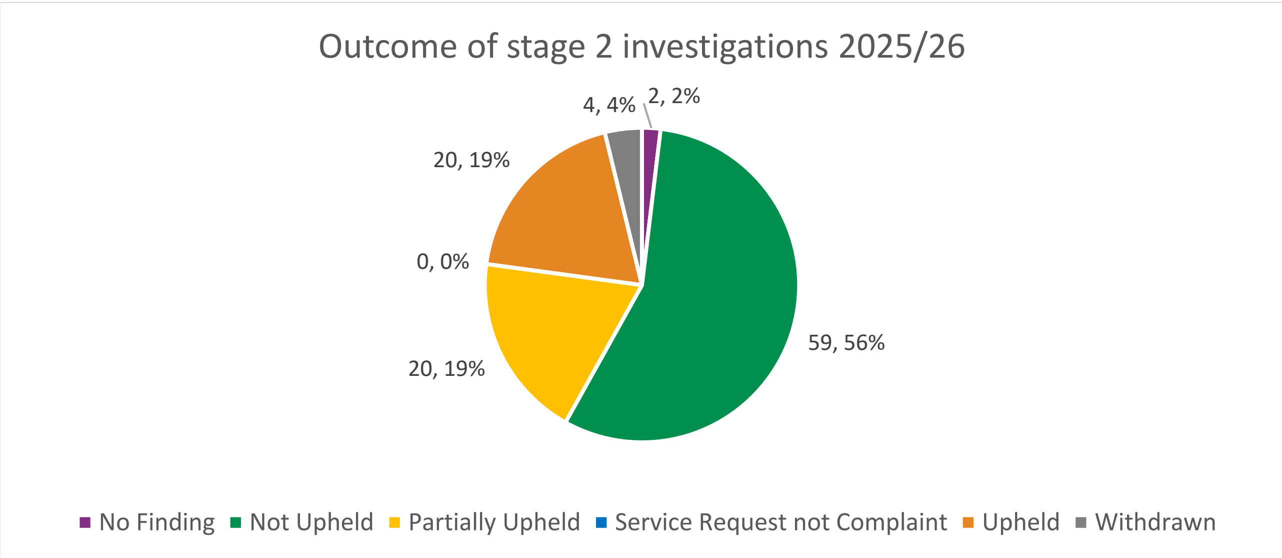
The next section of the report considers the progression of complaints beyond stage 1.

4. Progression of Complaints

Effective stage 1 complaint handling can reduce the number of stage 2 complaints. It is important to understand how many complaints progress beyond stage 1 and this is a measure included within regular performance reporting. During 2021/22 only a small proportion of all the complaints Shropshire Council received progressed beyond stage 1. Since then the number and proportion of cases progressing beyond stage 1 has increased. In 2021/22 99 cases progressed beyond stage 1; in 2022/23 the number was similar at 95 but in 2023/24 129 cases progressed. In 2024/25 this rose again to 144 and again in 2025/26 to 184. From this pattern ongoing increases are expected.

Occasionally some complaints may progress prematurely to the Ombudsman without a stage 2 investigation, and these will be referred back where appropriate. The table below shows the number of complaints investigations beyond stage 1 and the chart below highlights the outcome of those complaints at stage 2 for all cases closed. Numbers at the Ombudsman stage will differ from the Ombudsman provided data in the report due to the way the Ombudsman shares information (cases not investigated may not be reported to the council) and the difference in the dates reported to each organisation.

Stage 2	Stage 3 (children's statutory)	Ombudsman (known to Shropshire Council before LGSCO reporting)	Total investigations beyond stage 1
117	1	66	184



Shropshire Council adopted the new stage 2 timescale for the implemendation date of April 2026. Therefore this report does not cover the new KPI for stage 2 complaints completed within 15 working days. None of the stage 2 cases in 2025/26 were completed within 15 working days (the previous timescale was 30 working days and limited staffing capacity was applied to the process).

The Shropshire annual report from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman highlighted that 107 complaints were received by the Ombudsman for Shropshire Council in 2025/26 and 83 cases were considered/decided (15 of those with a full investigation and outcome). This total will include complaints received by Shropshire Council in previous financial years, so the data is not comparable with local data covered in this report (looking at cases received within the financial year). As highlighted in 2024/25 it is now also possible that insufficient staffing and excessive caseloads have impacted reporting.

Of the 15 cases investigated with outcomes, 9 were upheld, 6 were not upheld. Many of the total 83 considered resulted in other actions such as referring back for local resolution, offering advice, or closure after initial enquiries. The Ombudsman reports Shropshire Council's upheld rate at 60%. The LGO upheld rate for similar local authorities is reported as 85%. Available data from the Ombudsman is used within a separate, performance report to track annual performance over the years and for benchmarking with the local authority family group.

Ombudsman Complaints – Number Received and Number Upheld

Category	Number received	Number upheld
Adult Care Services	29	5
Benefits & Tax	6	0
Corporate & Other Services	4	0
Education & Children's Services	31	3
Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	13	0
Highways & Transport	6	0
Housing	4	0
Planning & Development	13	1
Other	1	0
Grand Total	**107**	**9**

Outcome of Decisions Made

				Investigation Outcomes			
Advice given	Closed after initial enquiries	Incomplete/ Invalid	Referred back for local resolution	Not Upheld	Upheld	Upheld rate (%)	Grand Total
1	45	5	17	6	9	60	83

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations was 100% in 2025/26 but compliance for 2 cases was late. The rate of complaints per 100,000 population is 2.7% for Shropshire Council in 2025/26 against an average of 5.6% for all authorities.

The Ombudsman has introduced a new standard set of performance measures for local authorities to enable improved information and benchmarking beyond the Ombudsman level data available currently.

Appendix 1 displays the current Ombudsman performance measures and annual letters (the guidance requires these letters to be published locally). Appendix 2 highlights findings and recommendations made by the Ombudsman for upheld cases. All recommendations are monitored and actioned by the Shropshire Council service area responsible for the complaint, and in many cases overseen by the service area's Service Director.

Public Reports
There were no public reports during the financial year 2025/26.

5. Annual Comparisons

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<tr><th></th><th>2023/24</th><th>2024/25</th><th>2025/26</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Number of compliments – slightly below average

The number of compliments in 2025/26 has fallen very slightly since the previous year. The pattern seen within the data is that there are small decreases each year.</td><td>475</td><td>448</td><td>435</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Performance is similar to the previous year.</td></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>2023/24</th><th>2024/25</th><th>2025/26</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Complaints investigations – increased

The number of complaint investigations recorded by Shropshire Council totalled 1083 in 2025/26, 952 in 2024/25, 978 in 2023/24. Overall, following improvement in the last few years compared to higher volumes in 2021/22 and 2021/23, Shropshire Council is now seeing steady increases in complaints numbers at both case level and investigation level. Work has been taking place to triage cases and ensure service requests are not taken forward as complaints prematurely. The lack of resources to raise and manage investigations should be considered a risk with caseloads significantly exceeding other local authority averages.</td><td>978</td><td>952</td><td>1083</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Complaint investigations have increased in number. The Ombudsman suggests that more complaints can be a sign of an accessible complaints system. This data needs to be viewed with the other data in this report.</td></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>2023/24</th><th>2024/25</th><th>2025/26</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Days to close – Average days to close has increased

The average number of working days taken to respond to a stage 1 complaint was 31 working days in 2023/24. Performance improved in 2024/25 to an average of 23 working days and in 2025/26 the average was 25 working days. A new 10 working days timescale is now in place (with a KPI of 15 working days to include the acknowledgement timescale). Improvement is needed to achieve this new national target for corporate complaints.</td><td>31 working days</td><td>23 working days</td><td>25 working days</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Average performance has not improved since 2024/25 but should show improvement in 2026/27 due to the introduction of new timescale.</td></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>2023/24</th><th>2024/25</th><th>2025/26</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Outcome at stage 1 – Reduction in proportion upheld

When considering the proportion of complaints upheld, performance has improved with fewer complaints upheld. It would be a concern if performance monitoring highlighted too few cases being upheld (it is important that Shropshire Council accepts where things have gone wrong and strives for improvement). As highlighted earlier in the report, there are some services experiencing pressure and seeing increased findings of fault.</td><td>27%</td><td>22%</td><td>20%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Some ongoing improvement since 2023/24.</td></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>2023/24</th><th>2024/25</th><th>2025/26</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Complaints progressing beyond Stage 1 – Similar

In 2019/20 2.7% of cases progressed to stage 2 or the Local Government Ombudsman (47) and this has increased considerably over recent years with 18% cases escalating beyond stage 1 in 2025/26. That doesn’t include cases where an additional stage 1 response is required. The Ombudsman upheld rate was 80% in 2022/23 and remained stable in 2023/24 at 79%. There has been an improvement in 2024/25 and in 2025/26 (60% for both years).</td><td>15.0%</td><td>19.6%</td><td>18.0%</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Complaints cases have become increasingly complex and time consuming and the data for escalated cases helps illustrate this increase.</td></tr>
</table>

6. Key Performance Indicators

	2025/26	See page
1a. Number of complaints received		
Complaint numbers Complaint case numbers are increasing each year. There has been a 42% increase in 2 years since 2023/24. The percentage increase between 2024/25 and 2025/26 was 15%. Further increases in 2026/27 will start to see significant impacts on the council's ability to manage complaints processes without investment. This data is for all types of complaint.	2,744	3
1b. Percentage of complaint cases excluded from the system		
Cases excluded 883 complaint cases were excluded with an early closure reason (all types). A large proportion were anonymous or should have been handled as service requests or under other processes or by other organisations.	32%	8 and 9
2a. Percentage of complaints responded to within 15 working days		
Stage 1 – responded to within 15 working days (Corporate)	45%	11
Stage 2 – responded to within 15 working days (Corporate)	0%	15
3. Outcomes		
Stage 1		
Upheld	20%	14
Partially upheld	22%	
Not upheld	43%	
Withdrawn or closed without a finding	10%	
Resolved (where a service is provided as an outcome)	5%	
Stage 2		
Upheld	19%	15
Partially upheld	19%	
Not upheld	56%	
Withdrawn or closed without a finding	6%	
Resolved	0%	
4. Learning from complaints and remedies		
4a. Percentage of accepted complaints where a remedy is provided These are referred to as improvement actions within the current system.	27%	21
4b. Summary of service improvements made as a result of learning from complaints by service area. Work still required in this area. IT system changes are needed to allow clearer reporting and the way of working across the organisation needs to alter to enable reporting of action following complaint outcomes and decisions.	-	-

5. Example Compliments

Shropshire Council received 435 compliments during 2025/26. Examples are included below. Receiving a compliment can make a big difference to a member of staff working hard to provide support for others or deliver services as effectively as possible. Although compliments are not given the same attention as complaints, they are used within the Council to understand where things are working well and to recognise the additional efforts made by individual members of staff.

"I would like to pass on our thanks to the Bridgnorth Household Recycling Centre staff. We hit a pothole on Saturday and sadly, this caused damage to our car tyre. We made it to the HRC site and staff there kindly assisted us to change our tyre, for the spare. Without their support we wouldn't have been able to do it on our own. We are very grateful to them for their time"

Compliment for a Civil Enforcement Officer. *"I come from N Herts and have just been to Ludlow. I parked in the castle car park and your civilian enforcement officer was so kind and helpful that I want to say thank you. This officer was the epitome of what we said a civilian enforcement officer should be: polite, helpful and good at his job. Please pass on my thanks."*

Compliment for Street Scene Officer. *"I would like to say that I have lived here since 1989. Today I went to thank the Gentleman who was cutting the verges outside my home. I told him the first cut 2/3 weeks ago and today's cut was the best and tidiest since living here. I really appreciate someone taking such pride in his work."*

Compliment for a revenues officer. *"I would just like to say that the help I have received over the phone has been brilliant. The staff I have spoken to have been very friendly and very helpful, which has made me feel reassured. Nothing has been too much trouble for them in helping me sort out my issue. The staff are a credit to Shropshire Council Benefits Office."*

Compliment for environmental health officer. "*During the opening of my first food business, I had the pleasure of working with [name removed]. He was incredibly helpful and supportive throughout the process — a true professional who made a real difference. His guidance made things much easier and left a lasting impression, so I wanted to pass on my appreciation."*

"The North West Start Team provided End of Life Care to my husband. At all times their care to him and our family was wonderful...full of compassion and dignity…The personal care that my husband received was of an exceptional high standard…Without doubt every single one of them is a credit to your service. Could you please forward our sincere thanks to the North West Team."

Compliment for ICT Services: *"Thanks for going above and beyond during a power cut, by standing in deep snow in the woods with a mobile router and his laptop at 7am to ensure all school closures were updated early enough for residents to check."*

Compliment for Social Worker Children's Case Management: *"[Name removed] has been working with me and my family for a couple of months now, from the very beginning he has been very kind and friendly, very helpful, supportive and very understanding. I feel he has worked so hard and his support and guidance has really been amazing. Any help me and my family have needed he has been able to provide with the best of his ability. I couldn't thank him enough… for all he has done…"*

6. Example Complaints

Shropshire Council received 2,744 complaints during the year 2025/26 and carried out 1083 investigations. Some example complaints have been included below to highlight the type of feedback Shropshire Council receives. These examples were not all upheld. Some complaints arise from a lack of understanding of the service Shropshire Council can provide. Where necessary wording within the examples has been removed within to ensure anonymity. The next section of this report looks more closely at learning and the actions taken following complaint investigations.

Complaint for Planning Services: The customers are raising their concerns regarding a planning application. The customers believe the report failed to reflect the full number of objections submitted, particularly those received during an approved consultation extension. They believe this omission may have influenced the decision-making process and prevented the application from being escalated to committee review. Overall, they believe the *"report reflects a failure to acknowledge valid public concerns, includes factual omissions, and demonstrates a lack of accountability in the decision-making process."*

Complaint for Election Services: The customer has not received his postal vote and is dissatisfied with the council's previous response. He states that none of his original questions were answered. The customer also disputes the claim that a previous reply was sent to him, requests confirmation on whether his vote was marked as issued or returned and submits a Freedom of Information request.

Complaint for Council Tax: The customer is complaining about the failure to respond to her application for a single person council tax discount. The customer submitted a form to request the discount on 15/1/25 but did not receive a response. The customer states the delay has caused worry and financial hardship.

Complaint for Waste Services: "*I ordered a replacement green bin because my existing bin has split. I was expecting it to have been delivered by now but it has NOT been delivered. Your website shows my request is "COMPLETED" but I have NOT received the replacement bin. Please note that some of your records still insist is calling my property "House name removed". This is incorrect, it is simply [removed]. The name is not on the Land Registry records, neither is it part of the postal address. Please ensure that ALL your records are updated.*"

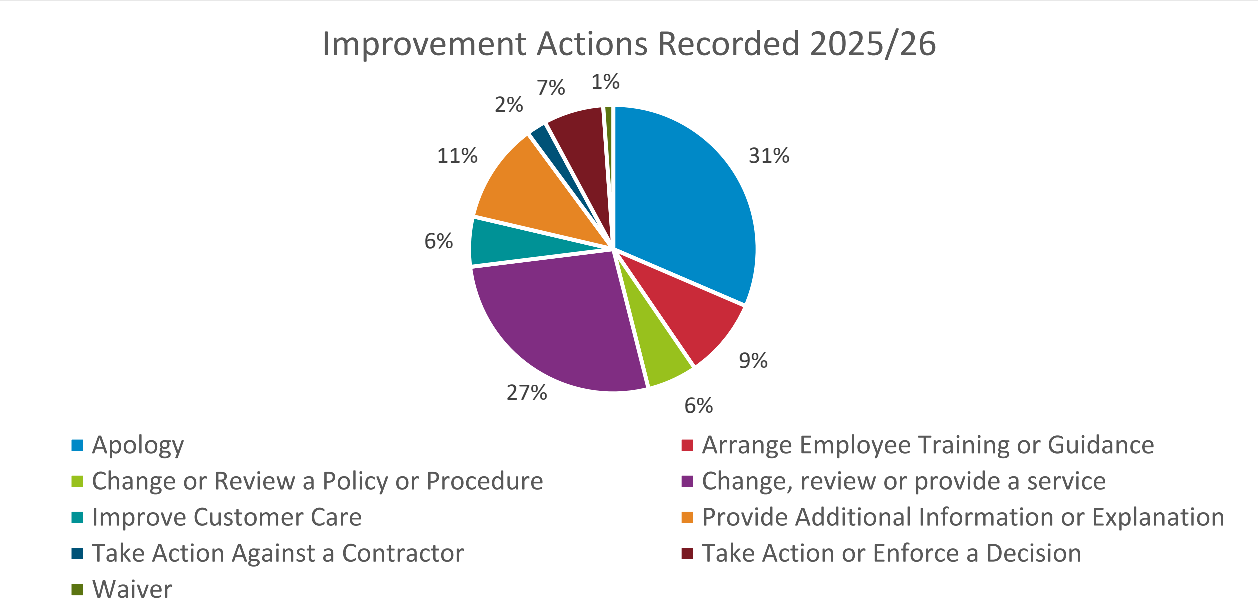
"I would like to make an official complaint about the EHCP process as I have been waiting for my daughters EHCP since January. I am calling every day. I have a child out of school and with a serious mental health issue."

Complaint for Street Lighting: The customer feels that the prolonged presence of the flags risks being perceived as politically or racially motivated. This perception has caused distress within the customer's family…The customer believes the flags are sending a divisive message and appeals for immediate action to remove the flags to ensure her family can visit without fear.

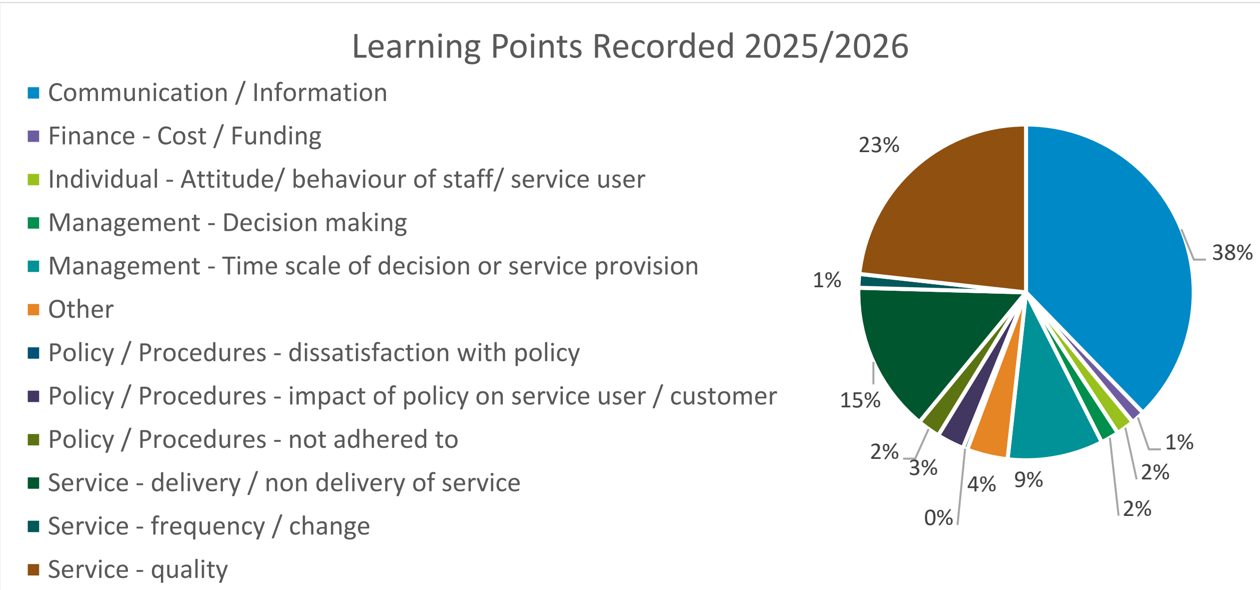
Complaint for Housing and Social Care: The customer reports being left without hot water after his boiler was condemned due to a carbon monoxide leak, despite being a vulnerable person with [removed] and mental health conditions. He raises concerns about [name removed], stating she failed to assist with essential tasks such as council tax, benefits, and HomePoint registration. He also reports that she suggested he forgo his accessibility needs and informed him that she was taking leave "as she felt like it," despite an urgent housing issue. No cover was arranged, which he found unacceptable.

7. Learning and Actions

Shropshire Council recorded learning, action or outcome notes against 1054 complaints in 2025/26 (and 282, 27%, of those included detailed actions or learning). Actions and lessons are usually made when complaints are upheld or partly upheld. If only a small proportion of complaint investigations result in a finding of fault there will be fewer remedial actions or learning. However, this recording of learning and actions should be an area for ongoing improvement (currently around 70% of all partly upheld or upheld closed cases have learning recorded). This is referred to in the recommendations. The charts below highlight the primary action and learning point recorded.



Of the actions that were recorded against complaints closed 31% were to provide an apology, 27% were to change, review or provide a service, and 11% of actions included the provision of additional information or explanation.



38% of learning related to communication or provision of information. Communication is consistently a dominant theme. More effective communication at an earlier stage can prevent the development of a formal complaint. Service quality, non-delivery of a service, and timescales were also main categories in 2025/26.

8. Example Learning and Actions

The recording of learning is strongly encouraged following the completion of a complaint investigation. Acknowledging and acting on learning from complaints can avoid any mistakes from being repeated and lead to ongoing improvement. Examples are shown below to highlight the type of learning and actions recorded such as:

- Training for members of staff
- Improvements in communication
- Taking action to provide information or to change the way information is presented
- Making changes to working practices and processes followed

Wording within the examples has been altered slightly for simplicity and to ensure confidentiality.

A complaint relating to bin lorries turning on a private driveway. "*We recognise the importance of respecting private property and will ensure that this revised approach is communicated clearly to all relevant personnel. We also acknowledge that clearer communication and earlier engagement with you may have helped to prevent this situation from escalating.*"

The complaint relates to paperwork being returned damaged. "I *have spoken to the member of staff involved. I have provided some retraining, so they are clear what is expected of them. I feel confident this won't occur again. The member of staff involved is sorry for the impact of their actions and is now aware of the impact of poor document handling. We both share our apologies.*"

"Your complaint has identified that a time delay and miscommunication from the wider service was not best practice and has been addressed through communication with the relevant service areas to ensure expectations around private fostering are clear for all applicants from the onset to prevent delays in the future."

The complaint relates to failure of Shropshire Council to arrange for pension payments to be paid. *"Over holiday periods and staff absences central team in-boxes and agreed communication channels must be used. Direct contact with individuals can be the cause of delay if they are absent."*

Following an incident at the Waste Recycling Centre and an unhelpful member of staff "*I have now put steps in place to provide refresher training in effective communication with staff colleagues and carried out a review of internal processes.*"

Complaint about behaviour from a Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO). *"Having explained why the PCN was issued and having made a lawful request for you to hand over the blue badge, the CEO should have let you drive away without hinderance and report the incident/offence to management for consideration of whether further action was required. This will be raised with the CEO in question and the rest of the team to ensure a consistent approach, in dealing with these matters, occurs in the future."*

"Disabled passengers may require additional time and support when boarding or validating tickets. Service providers are expected to communicate clearly and patiently, recognising that not all disabilities are visible. The behaviour described suggests that the driver did not fully meet these expectations, and the operator has been instructed to take action to address this."

"Firstly, please accept my apologies that you did not receive a call back as requested and for the delay in replying to you. This has highlighted some improvements that can be made within the Revenues & Benefits Service, which will be addressed following a review of your case."

Following a complaint about a domiciliary care package for an elderly relative. *"It is acknowledged that enhanced communication between the family and the care provider would further support the effective delivery of care; particularly medication management and care call times could be better improved to support nutritional needs and routine. Both of which have been raised with the domiciliary care provider."*

9. Ombudsman's Code: Self-Assessment

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code has been applied from 1st April 2026. It should be noted that the proposals do not cover statutory complaints processes for social care (children's statutory complaints process and adult statutory complaints process). The aim of the planned changes will be to create a consistent approach to complaints across councils and housing providers to give the public greater clarity of what to expect when making a complaint.

The table below sets out the Code timescales compared with the old council procedure.

Process	Shropshire Council's current corporate complaints timescales	Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code timescales
Stage 1 investigation acknowledgement	5 working days	5 working days
Stage 1 investigation response	30 working days	10 working days
Stage 1 investigation extension	Not applicable – as soon as possible	10 working days
Stage 2 review acknowledgement	5 working days	5 working days
Stage 2 review response	30 working days	20 working days
Stage 2 review extension	Not applicable – as soon as possible	20 working days

Included within requirements are:

- An annual report (to include a list of content including the annual letter from the Ombudsman).
- Completion of an annual self-assessment against the Code. This should set out how well the organisation is performing against the Code (e.g. timescales), information of improvements implemented, records of quality checks, exclusions and feedback from staff. If the failure to meet an expectation only relates to one service area or department this should be made clear.

In October 2025 Cabinet agreed that a "best endeavours" approach using existing resources should be adopted towards Code implementation. Unfortunately, complaint volumes have further increased, and this has meant full implementation has been challenging without additional capacity. A 12-month post has now been agreed for a temporary period to assist with implementation from 2026/27. The post will add capacity into the team from November 2026 for a year.

Despite the challenges some progress has been achieved as shown in the self-assessment below (this can be compared to the self-assessment within the annual report 2024/25). As shown in the self-assessment there are only 2 items of non-compliance. Where requirements are not marked green to show full implementation, most are showing partial implementation (yellow) because progress has been made.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
1. Definition of a service request and complaint		
1.1 Adopt a shared understanding of what constitutes a service request and what constitutes a complaint. (1.2 to 1.4 set out definitions). This should be set out within the complaints policy.	Compliant	An updated complaints procedure has been developed.
1.5 A complaint that is submitted via a third party or representative should still be handled in line with the organisation's complaints policy.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
1.6 Organisations should recognise the difference between a service request and a complaint**.** This should be set out in their complaints policy.	Partly compliant	New definitions have been adopted but too many service requests are being directed through the complaint process.
1.7 Organisations should have the opportunity to deal with a service request before a complaint is made. A complaint may be raised when the individual expresses dissatisfaction with the response to their service request, even if the handling of the service request remains ongoing.	Compliant	This is in place.
1.8 Service requests should be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly.	Partly compliant	This is an organisational issue beyond complaints processes.
2. Exclusions		
2.1 and 2.4 If the organisation decides not to accept a complaint, it should be able to evidence its reasoning and communicate to the complainant. Each complaint should be considered on its own merits.	Compliant	Changes were not required.
2.2 Organisations should accept complaints referred to them within 12 months of the issue occurring, or the individual becoming aware of the issue. Discretion may be applied in some circumstances.	Compliant	Changes were not required.
2.3 Exclusions should be set out within the complaints policy/procedure.	Compliant	Changes have been implemented.
2.4 and 2.5 If an organisation decides not to accept a complaint, an explanation should be provided to the individual. Organisations should not take a blanket approach to excluding complaints; they should consider the individual circumstances of each complaint.	Compliant	Changes were not required.
3. Accessibility and awareness		
3.1A Organisations should make it easy for individuals to complain by providing different channels through which they can make a complaint.	Compliant	This was in place before the Code and continues.
3.1B Organisations must consider their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and anticipate the needs and reasonable adjustments of individuals who may need to access the complaints process.	Compliant	This appears to be in line with current practice although clear guidance would be helpful.
3.2 Individuals should be able to raise their complaints in any way and with any member of staff. All staff should be aware of the complaints process and be able to pass details of the complaint to the appropriate person within the organisation.	Partly compliant	More work is required in this area.
3.3 High volumes of complaints should not be seen as a negative, as they can be indicative of a well-publicised and accessible complaints process. Low complaint volumes are potentially a sign that individuals are unable to complain.	Compliant	This is communicated in current performance reporting.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
3.4 Organisations should make their complaint policy available in a clear and accessible format.	Compliant	Available.
3.5 The policy should include details about the Ombudsman and the Code.	Compliant	Information included.
3.6 Organisations should give individuals the opportunity to have a suitable representative deal with their complaint on their behalf, and to be represented or accompanied at any meeting with the organisation.	Compliant	Representation and consent are explained within the procedure.
3.7 Organisations should provide individuals with information on their right to access the Ombudsman service.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
3.8 Where an organisation asks for feedback about its services through a survey, it should provide details of how individuals can complain.	Compliant	Feedback and Insight Team led surveys and consultations include this information.
4. Complaint handling resources		
4.1 Organisations should have designated, sufficient resource assigned to take responsibility for complaint handling, including liaison with the relevant Ombudsman and ensuring complaints are reported to the governing body (or equivalent).	Partly compliant	Clarification of the Ombudsman's expectation of 'sufficient' would be helpful.
4.2 Anyone responding to a complaint should have access to staff at all levels to facilitate the prompt resolution of complaints. They should also have the authority and autonomy to act to resolve disputes promptly and fairly.	Compliant	Staff at all levels are engaged in the complaint process.
4.3 Organisations are expected to prioritise complaint handling and a culture of learning from complaints. All relevant staff should be suitably trained in the importance of complaint handling. It is important that complaints are seen as a core service and resourced accordingly	Partly compliant	A training programme has not been implemented, although a workshop session was held for all Senior Leaders so expectations are clear.
5. The complaint handling process		
5.1 Organisations should have a single policy for dealing with complaints covered by the Code.	Compliant	Updated policy has been developed.
5.2 Organisations should not have extra named stages (such as 'stage 0' or 'informal complaint') as this causes unnecessary confusion.	Compliant	In place.
5.3 When an individual expresses dissatisfaction that could meet the criteria for a complaint as set out in section 1 of the Code, they should be given the opportunity to make a complaint.	Partly compliant	A review is recommended.
5.4 The person responding to the complaint should: • clarify with the individual any aspects of the complaint they are unclear about; • deal with complaints on their merits, act independently, and have an open mind; • give the individual a fair chance to set out their position; • take measures to address any actual or perceived conflict of interest; and • consider all relevant information and evidence carefully.	Compliant	This is in line with current good practice but will need to be included in staff training.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
5.5 Where a response to a complaint will fall outside the timescales set out in this Code the organisation should inform the individual of when the response will be provided and the reason(s) for the delay.	Partly compliant	Apologies are sent for the delay. Investigators do not always provide a new timescale when cases are overdue.
5.6 Organisations should keep a record of any reasonable adjustments agreed. Any agreed reasonable adjustments should be kept under active review.	Not compliant	The current IT system does not allow this recording. A note will be included within the folder for the complaint.
5.7 Organisations should not refuse to escalate a complaint through all stages of the complaints procedure unless there are valid reasons to do so. Organisations should clearly set out these reasons, and they should align with the approach to exclusions set out in section 2 of the Code.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
5.8 A full record should be kept of the complaint, and the outcomes at each stage. This should include the original complaint and the date received, all correspondence with the individual, correspondence with other parties, and any relevant supporting documentation such as reports. This should be retained in line with the organisation's data retention policies.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
5.9 and 6.10 Organisations should have systems in place to ensure that a complaint can be remedied at any stage of its complaints process. Individuals should not have to escalate a complaint in order to get an appropriate remedy.	Partly compliant	Recommended for review.
5.10 and 5.11 Organisations should have policies and procedures in place for managing unacceptable behaviour from individuals and/or their representatives. Organisations should be able to evidence reasons for putting any restrictions in place and should keep an individual's restrictions under regular review. Restrictions should be proportionate and have regard for the Equalities Act 2010.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
6. Complaints stages		
6.1 Organisations should have processes in place to consider which complaints can be responded to as early as possible, and which require further consideration. Organisations should consider factors such as the complexity of the complaint and whether the individual is vulnerable or at risk. Most stage 1 complaints can be resolved promptly, and an explanation, apology or resolution provided.	Partly compliant	The challenge is achieving any resolution or prioritisation consistently across service areas.
6.2 Complaints should be acknowledged and logged at stage 1 of the complaint procedure within five working days of the complaint being received.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
6.3 Organisations should provide a full response to stage 1 complaints **within 10 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.	Partly compliant	Timescale in place but performance remains an issue.
6.4 and 6.5 Any extension should be no more than 10 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual. When an organisation informs an individual about an extension to these timescales, they should be provided with the details of the relevant Ombudsman.	Compliant	Extension period included within the procedure.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
6.6 A complaint response should be provided to the individual when the answer to the complaint is known, not when the outstanding actions required to address the issue are completed. Outstanding actions should still be tracked and actioned promptly, with appropriate updates provided to the individual.	Partly compliant	Responses are provided when the answer is known but the central team do not have the level of resources required track and report all actions.
6.7 Organisations should address all points raised in the complaint and provide clear reasons for any decisions, referencing the relevant policy, law and good practice where appropriate. Organisations should be clear which aspects of the complaint they are, and are not, responsible for and clarify any areas where this is not clear.	Partly compliant	Complaint investigators do not always reference relevant policies within responses and do not always make responsibilities clear.
6.8 At the conclusion of stage 1 organisations should provide details of how to escalate the matter to stage 2 if the individual is not satisfied with the response.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
6.9 Where individuals raise additional complaints during stage 1, these should be incorporated into the stage 1 response if they are related, and the stage 1 response has not been provided. Where the stage 1 response has been provided, the new issues are unrelated to the issues already being considered, or it would unreasonably delay the response, the new issues should be logged as a new complaint.	Compliant	
6.11 If all or part of the complaint is not resolved to the individual's satisfaction at stage 1, it should be progressed to stage 2 of the organisation's procedure. Stage 2 is the organisation's final response.	Compliant	The procedure reflects this requirement.
6.12 Requests for stage 2 should be acknowledged and logged at stage 2 of the complaints procedure within five working days of the escalation request being received.	Compliant	Timescale in place.
6.13 Individuals should not be required to explain their reasons for requesting a stage 2 consideration. Organisations should make reasonable efforts to understand why an individual remains unhappy as part of its stage 2 response.	Compliant	Although sometimes it is helpful to seek views of complainants to add clarity for an investigation.
6.14 The person considering the complaint at stage 2 should not be the same person that considered the complaint at stage 1.	Compliant	The procedure and supporting guidance reflect this requirement.
6.15 Organisations should issue a final response to the stage 2 **within 20 working days** of the complaint being acknowledged.	Compliant	Implemented.
6.16 Any extension should be no more than 20 working days without good reason, and the reason(s) should be clearly explained to the individual.	Compliant	Timescales in place.
6.18 and 6.19 Organisations should confirm the following in writing to the individual at the completion of stage 2 in clear, plain language: • the complaint stage; • the organisation's understanding of the complaint; • the decision on the complaint; • the reasons for any decisions made;	Compliant	Templates cover these elements of a response.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
• details of any remedy offered to put things right; • details of any outstanding actions; and • details of how to escalate the matter to the Ombudsman if the individual remains dissatisfied. Stage 2 should be the organisation's final response and should involve all suitable staff members needed to issue such a response.		
6.21 Where an organisation's complaint response is handled by a third party (e.g. a contractor) or independent adjudicator at any stage, it should form part of the two stage complaints process set out in this Code. Individuals should not be expected to go through two complaints processes.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
6.22 Organisations are responsible for ensuring that any third parties handle complaints in line with the Code.	Partly compliant	Additional activity will be required to communicate new expectations and monitor compliance.
7. Putting things right		
7.1 Where something has gone wrong an organisation should acknowledge this and set out the actions it has already taken, or intends to take, to put things right.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice.
7.2 and 7.3 Any remedy offered should reflect the impact on the individual as a result of any fault identified. The remedy offer should clearly set out what will happen and by when and be followed through to completion.	Partly compliant	Further work is required.
7.4 and 7.5 If a proposed remedy cannot be delivered the individual should be informed of the reasons for this, provided with details of any alternative remedy and reminded of their right to complain to the Ombudsman. Organisations should take account of the good practice guides when deciding on appropriate remedies.	Partly compliant	A guidance document has been produced but there are challenges in this area and further work is required.
8. Performance reporting and self-assessment		
8.1 Organisations should produce an annual complaints performance and service improvement report for scrutiny.	Compliant	Changes to the annual report have been incorporated.
• an annual self-assessment against this Code to ensure its complaint handling policy remains in line with its requirements.	Compliant	This self-assessment
• a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the organisation's complaint handling performance. This should also include a summary of the types of complaints the organisation has refused to accept;	Compliant	Included within this report
• any findings of non-compliance with this Code;	Partly compliant	Could be improved.
• the service improvements made as a result of the learning from complaints;	Partly compliant	Limited examples only.
• the annual letter about the organisation's performance from the Ombudsman;	Compliant	Included as Appendix 1
• any other relevant reports or publications produced by the Ombudsman in relation to the work of the organisation.	Compliant	Summarised within the report.

Code section	Compliance?	Comments
8.2 The annual complaints performance and service improvement report should be reported through the organisation's governance arrangements and published on the section of its website relating to complaints. The response to the report from the relevant governance arrangement should be published alongside this.	Compliant	This is in line with current practice other than publishing the response to the report within the report on the complaints webpages.
8.3 Organisations should also carry out a self-assessment following a significant restructure, merger and/or change in procedures.	Compliant	The self-assessment is produced but significant work is required.
9. Scrutiny & oversight: continuous learning and improvement		
9.1 Organisations should look beyond the circumstances of the individual complaint and consider whether service improvements can be made as a result of any learning from the complaint.	Partly compliant	This is hard to assess for the whole organisation and varies service to service.
9.2 A positive complaint handling culture is important to the effectiveness with which organisations resolve disputes. Organisations should use complaints as a source of intelligence to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.	Partly compliant	Improvement is required to make improvements in some areas and achieve greater consistency across the organisation.
9.3 Organisations should report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' panels, staff and relevant committees.	Not compliant	Complaints reports were previously shared with the Making it Real Board but there are no current arrangements.
9.4 The organisation should appoint a suitably senior person to oversee its complaint handling performance. This person should assess any themes or trends to identify potential systemic issues, serious risks, or policies and procedures that require revision.	Partly compliant	The Complaints Monitoring Officer is a senior role. The Complaints Manager role needs review following organisational changes.
9.5, 9.6 and 9.7 The 'Member responsible for complaints' should receive regular information on complaints performance (including the annual report) and have access to staff. As a minimum, the Member should receive: • regular updates on the volume, categories, and outcomes of complaints, alongside complaint handling performance • regular reviews of issues and trends arising from complaint handling; and • the annual complaints performance and service improvement report.	Compliant	Reporting to the lead member is in place and quarterly reports have been/will be provided.
9.8 Organisations should have a standard objective in relation to complaint handling for all relevant employees or third parties (includes taking responsibility, collaboration across departments and acting within professional standards).	Compliant	Complaint handling is now consistently referred to within job description templates for managers and within model contracts for third party providers. Expectations are also set out within the council's Improvement Plan.

10. Progress Update

Key actions and achievements over the last 12 months are summarised against a brief description of the recommendations made last year. Some of the recommendations require ongoing organisational action across services and are beyond the direct influence of the Feedback and Insight Team.

	Action Last Year	Progress Made
1	**Provide a more detailed report covering the LGSCO Complaint Handling Code:** Due to the resource implications of the new Code, a more detailed report and action plan may need to be presented to Shropshire Council's Leadership Board (delivery dependent on a Cabinet decision in July 2025).	**Completed:** A report was presented to Shropshire Council's Cabinet for the meeting on 15th October 2025. Since that time a detailed Code implementation plan has been in place and whilst rising demand and staff absences have impacted delivery, progress has been made.
2	**Review Shropshire Council's corporate complaints procedure:** Regardless of the Ombudsman Code decision there is a need to review Shropshire Council's corporate complaints procedure to strengthen the sections on exclusions, remedies and reasonable adjustments.	**Completed:** The Council's corporate complaints procedure has been reviewed and changed to bring it in line with the Complaint Handling Code. Exclusions have been strengthened and other references added. Separate guidance is available for remedies and reasonable adjustments.
3	**Develop guidance on remedies:** There is a growing expectation by the Local Government and Social care Ombudsman that more complaints should be remedied at the local level and that all local authorities should have a local remedies policy in line with the national document provided by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.	**Completed:** Staff guidance is now available within a comprehensive document (Preventing and Resolving Complaints) designed to align with national guidance from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman whilst providing a local context and advice to Shropshire Council staff and managers.
4	**Develop guidance on reasonable adjustments:** Complaints work in 2024/25 has highlighted that there is a need to remind all staff of their responsibilities to offer reasonable adjustments. Recording and reporting of the reasonable adjustments offered as part of the complaints process will also be required.	**Some progress:** Work has started on a new guidance document for staff, but this is currently in draft format and will need further engagement within the organisation before publication.
5	**Third Party Complaints:** As part of Shropshire Council's response to the Ombudsman's Code, consideration will need to be given concerning complaint handling arrangements with third party providers and how additional training and actions could be resourced. 'Managing complaints in contracted and commissioned services: a good practice guide' has been produced by the Ombudsman for local implementation.	**Delayed:** Significant changes within the council's commissioning services have delayed work in this area. The Feedback and Insight Team Leader shared an action plan with managers within the Commissioning service setting out required actions, but further meetings are required to obtain support for implementation.

	Action Last Year	Progress Made
6	**Staff Training and Feedback Culture:** Foster a positive complaint handling culture among staff and individuals, as envisioned by the Ombudsman's Code, to encourage constructive feedback and learning from complaints. Implement staff training and remind staff to also report formal feedback centrally so that Shropshire Council has a view of both positive feedback and complaints.	**Some progress:** Increased demand and staff absences have meant there has not been capacity within the Feedback and Insight Team to deliver organisational wide training. 3 training sessions have been delivered to members of the council's Senior Leaders Forum and to all stage 2 complaint handlers. An online training course is needed to complete this action in full and support is needed to generate a positive complaint handling culture.
7	**Engagement and Surveys:** The Ombudsman has included a request within the Code for local authorities to report back on wider learning and improvements from complaints to stakeholders, such as citizens' panels, staff and relevant committees. It also asks that service feedback surveys provide details of how individuals can complain. Shropshire Council will need to consider how these new requirements may be resourced and implemented.	**Partly implemented:** Shropshire Council has made changes to the core wording within surveys and consultations delivered by the council's Feedback and Insight Team. Where surveys are externally commissioned or delivered without support from the central team this wording may not be included. Shropshire Council does not currently operate a citizen's panel and public feedback opportunities are currently limited.
8	**Focus on service request responses:** Too many cases are being raised as complaints rather than addressed as service requests. Shropshire Council needs to adopt a focus on resolving requests for services promptly as a way of reducing the number of complaints received by the organisation. It should also be noted that the Ombudsman's Code recommends new reporting of service request data. Input of Customer Services will be required.	**Limited progress:** This remains one of the most challenging areas of delivery. Many residents prefer contacting the council by email rather than using online forms and phonelines. A significant number of enquiries are made to the complaints officers with comments that a complaint is being made because it is more convenient. This is in need of significant organisational attention and review during 2026/27.
9	**Focus on Response Quality:** Without significant change the Feedback and Insight Team is not large enough to quality check all complaints and checks should not be required if all complaints investigators are committed to producing good quality stage 1 responses. Work is recommended to find ways of improving quality. Investigators will need to be reminded of the importance of referring to policies, law, good practice and ensuring clear communication relating to responsibilities.	**Progress made:** 2025/26 has seen some positive improvement within complaint response quality. There are still some areas of the council where further improvement is required and expected standards are not yet being delivered. Services where improvement has been made have achieved results through a stronger focus on compliance, use of templates, understanding of good practice and stage 1 improvements.
10	**Continue to Focus on Response Times:** Continue efforts to reduce the average response time for stage 1 complaints and significantly reduce the number of complaints being responded to out of timescale (this will be more challenging if a decision is made to implement the shorter timescales set out within the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code).	**Further work required:** Shropshire Council's compliance with the 10 day stage 1 response timeframe (15 days with acknowledgement) and 20 day stage 2 timescale (25 days with acknowledgement) is not yet adequate. Too many extension requests are being made. Some services do perform well.

	Action Last Year	Progress Made
11	**Complaint Progression:** A focus should be on trying to reverse the annual increases in the proportion of complaints escalating beyond stage 1. Stage 2 complaints have increased significantly in the last year. This focus will link to quality and remedies.	**Further work required:** The number of cases progressing to stage 2 or beyond has increased again. This is partly due to the budget pressures faced by local authorities and unpopular decisions and service changes, but more could be done to respond promptly and comprehensively at stage 1 to reduce escalations.
12	**Complaint Prioritisation:** Currently there is little evidence that complaints are prioritised against other cases or against each other depending on complexity, urgency and impact. All service areas are asked to consider the suggestion by the Ombudsman that prioritisation is necessary and design a system appropriate to the service (a blanket council-wide approach would be exceptionally challenging due to the significant differences in requirements, statutory functions, pressures and levels of resources).	**Further work required:** This Ombudsman recommendation is exceptionally challenging to achieve without IT system changes. In addition, shorter 10 day timescales also make significant prioritisation challenging since the prioritisation of more recent high risk or urgent complaints could negatively impact the achievement of timescales for open complaints. It may be helpful to research how effectively other local authorities have managed this recommendation.
13	**Learning and actions:** The evidencing of learning and actions within complaint responses needs to be improved to allow for robust recording and reporting.	**Further work required:** Progress may have been achieved within some teams with pockets of good practice, but this is not yet consistently in place across the whole organisation.
14	**Implementation of new national performance measures:** Shropshire Council can improve access to benchmarking data by applying the new key performance indicators recommended for use by all local authorities.	**Implemented:** Shropshire Council has included the new national KPIs within its quarterly reporting in 2025/26. A section is also included within this annual report to show the summary for 2025/26. Some refinement may be possible as these KPIs become embedded and work continues.
15	**New structures:** Shropshire Council's complaints system does not currently allow reporting against new council structures. Significant work is required to ensure quarterly data and 2025/26 annual data is aligned to new structures and enables appropriate team and service area reporting.	**Delayed:** Ongoing restructuring has delayed work to build new structures into the complaint handling system.
14	**Changing Customer Behaviours:** Although use of the Unreasonably Persistent and Vexatious Customers Procedure has increased, this in itself, does not resolve the growing trend of customer harassment and abuse towards members of staff and its impact. A more strategic cross-council approach is recommended to review and respond to this growing issue.	**Not progressed:** Challenging customer behaviours and abuse towards staff members has increased considerably in the last year and must remain a high priority. This is covered within the recommendations below.

11. Conclusions

Customer feedback remains an important source of insight for Shropshire Council, highlighting both the areas where services are working well and the areas where residents experience delay, communication difficulties, or dissatisfaction with service standards. The 2025/26 data shows continued pressure on the complaints process, with overall feedback volumes, complaint cases and complaint investigations all increasing. This reflects both the accessibility of the complaints process and the wider operational pressures experienced across council services.

The report shows some positive areas of performance, including a reduction in the proportion of stage 1 complaints upheld and a 100% compliance rate with Ombudsman recommendations. Compliments also continue to provide important recognition of good practice and the efforts made by staff across the organisation. However, the data also highlights clear areas requiring further improvement. These include response times, the proportion of complaints exceeding the new Complaint Handling Code timescales, complaint progression beyond stage 1, recording of learning and actions, and the need to strengthen oversight of agreed remedies and Ombudsman recommendations.

A significant proportion of complaints continue to relate to service standards, particularly failure to provide a service, delays, and incorrect or inappropriate action. Communication remains a consistent theme in complaint learning, reinforcing the importance of clear, timely and accurate information for residents. The volume of service requests being directed through the complaints process also suggests that further work is needed to ensure residents are supported through the right route at the earliest opportunity.

The introduction of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code has created clearer expectations for local authorities and has helped identify where Shropshire Council's current arrangements are working well and where further development is required. The self-assessment shows that progress has been made, but also that implementation remains challenging within existing resources and against a backdrop of increasing demand, organisational change and service pressures.

Overall, the findings of this report indicate that complaint handling should remain a priority within the Council's wider performance, governance and improvement arrangements. Continued focus will be needed on improving timeliness, response quality, learning from complaints, remedy tracking, service request handling and staff awareness. Addressing these areas will support better outcomes for residents, reduce avoidable escalation, and strengthen the Council's ability to use customer feedback as a driver for service improvement.

The next section of the report considers progress since the recommendations made in 2024/25 and section 13 outlines recommendations for the year ahead.

12. Recommendations

The following recommendations for the year ahead are designed to allow for ongoing improvement in the application of Shropshire Council's complaints procedures and in the work of Shropshire Council to obtain and respond to customer feedback. The recommendations also cover work to further strengthen Shropshire Council's compliance with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. It should be noted that recommendations will require resourcing and cannot be delivered within the existing level of resources allocated to complaints handling.

1. **Strengthen implementation of the Complaint Handling Code**
   Shropshire Council should continue work to implement the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, with clear ownership, progress monitoring and escalation of any areas where compliance cannot be achieved within existing resources.

2. **Review complaint handling capacity and resilience**
   The Council should review the resources required to manage increasing complaint volumes, shorter corporate timescales, Ombudsman expectations and wider reporting requirements, recognising the risk created by growing demand and limited complaint handling capacity. There is a need to try to maximise the effectiveness of complaint allocation and to improve timescale compliance. This will reduce time spent updating complainants, following up on late responses and issuing reminders to investigators.

3. **Improve the distinction between service requests and complaints and council processes**
   The Council should strengthen arrangements for identifying and responding to service requests at the earliest opportunity, reducing the number of issues entering the formal complaints process where a service request response would be more appropriate. Improved service communication with residents and prompt responses at an informal stage (pre-complaint) would have a positive impact. Work should also be undertaken by the wider organisation to improve recording, monitoring and reporting of service requests, in line with Ombudsman expectations and to support earlier resolution of resident concerns. Consideration of digital solutions could also be part of the response to this recommendation.

4. **Improve stage 1 response times**
   Services should continue focused work to reduce stage 1 response times and requests for extension periods and improve compliance with the 10 working day Complaint Handling Code timescale, with regular monitoring of overdue cases and clearer escalation where delays occur.

5. **Strengthen stage 2 complaint arrangements**
   The Council should monitor the impact of the move to service-led stage 2 responses, ensuring responses are completed to time, evidence-based, of consistent quality and robust enough to reduce the number of cases escalating to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

6. **Strengthen recording of remedies, learning and actions**
   Services should improve the consistency and quality of recorded learning and actions following upheld and partly upheld complaints, so that the Council can better demonstrate how complaints lead to service improvement. It is also important that the council improves the way it considers remedy when fault is identified at stages 1 or 2. The Ombudsman places a growing emphasis on remedy payments for identified fault/impact/harm and the council needs to take a fair, balanced and robust approach to ensure a fair approach for all local residents.

7. **Increase staff awareness and training**
   A programme of complaint handling guidance and training should be developed for staff and managers involved in complaint responses, covering the Complaint Handling Code, remedies, reasonable adjustments, response quality, timescales and learning from complaints. This has

been a recommendation for the last few years but a lack of investment and staff capacity within the Feedback and Insight Team has prevented delivery.

8. **Respond to Ombudsman concerns about timeliness**
   Specific action should be taken to ensure requests for information from the Ombudsman are responded to within required timescales, particularly in service areas where late responses have been identified. Service Managers and Service Directors will need to be reminded of their responsibility to respond promptly to all requests relating to Ombudsman cases.

9. **Review arrangements for reasonable adjustments**
   The Council should improve guidance and recording arrangements for reasonable adjustments within the complaints process, ensuring adjustments can be recorded and kept under review where required. This will require IT system changes and internal communication.

10. **Strengthen arrangements with third party providers**
    The Council should review how complaints about commissioned or contracted services are handled, ensuring third party providers understand and comply with the Complaint Handling Code and local complaint handling expectations. Ongoing communication work with commissioned providers will be an important part of this action.

11. **Improve reporting of complaint learning to stakeholders**
    The Council should consider how wider learning from complaints can be shared with staff, members, relevant committees and resident/customer engagement groups to support transparency and service improvement. Communication with residents is an important cross-cutting learning point and improvement in a range of areas is anticipated to have a positive impact on future performance.

12. **Review governance and senior oversight arrangements**
    The Council should review senior officer oversight of complaint handling, including the role of the Complaints Manager and Complaints Monitoring Officer, to ensure clear accountability following organisational changes.

13. **Improve reporting against service structures**
    Further work should be undertaken to align complaint reporting with current council structures, allowing services and senior leaders to understand complaint trends, risks and performance at the appropriate level.

14. **Review response to unreasonable or abusive behaviour**
    The Council should develop a more strategic approach to managing persistent, unreasonable or abusive contact, balancing staff wellbeing, resident rights, equality considerations and the need to maintain access to services.

Appendix 1 Ombudsman Letters 2025/26

20 May 2026

By email

Mrs Miles
Chief Executive
Shropshire Council

Dear Mrs Miles

Annual Review letter 2025-26
I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2026.

We recognise that local authorities continue to face significant pressures in delivering services to their communities. We hope the data and insight we share with you each year remains a useful tool for reflection and continuous improvement. Please consider it as part of your corporate governance processes.

Your annual statistics are available here.

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

We will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 15 July 2026.

Supporting complaint and service improvement
We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our Complaint Handling Code, in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact training@lgo.org.uk for more information.

Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published in July 2026, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. Clarke

Amerdeep Clarke
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Complaint overview

Reporting year 2025 / 2026 Update results

Between 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, we dealt with 83 complaints. Of these, 23 were not for us or not ready for us to investigate. We assessed and closed 45 complaints. We investigated 15 complaints.

You can search the decisions behind these statistics and read our annual letters to this council.

83	23	45	15
Complaints dealt with	**Not for us**	**Assessed and closed**	**Investigated**

More about this data

Complaints upheld

We investigated **15** complaints and upheld **9**.

60% of complaints we investigated were upheld.

This compares to an average of **85%** in similar authorities.

Adjusted for Shropshire Council's population, this is 2.7 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

The average for authorities of this type is 5.6 upheld decisions per 100,000 residents.

View upheld decisions

Satisfactory remedies provided by the Council

In **2** out of **9** upheld cases we found the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman.

22% satisfactory remedy rate.

This compares to an average of **13%** in similar authorities.

View satisfactory remedy decisions

Compliance with Ombudsman recommendations

7
out of
7

We recorded compliance outcomes in **7** cases.
In **7** cases we were satisfied with the actions taken.

100% compliance rate with recommendations.

This compares to an average of **100%** in similar authorities.

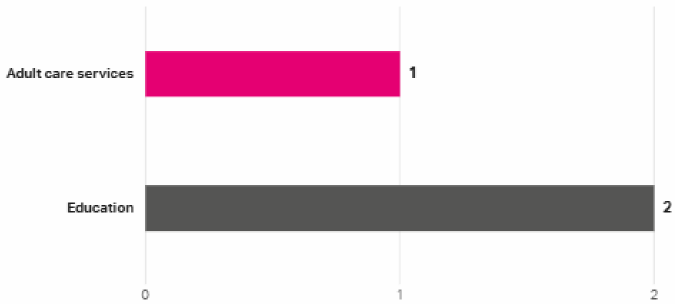
In **5** out of **7** cases compliance with recommendations was **on time**.

71% timely compliance rate.

This compares to an average of **77%** in similar organisations.

Service improvements

View as Chart | Table



3 cases with service improvements recorded in this period.

Service improvements are actions councils agree to take to address faults identified in our investigations which help prevent similar problems affecting other people.

View service improvements

Annual total Current year

Reports

Reports are issued where there is significant injustice, systemic issues, or important learning for councils.

▸ Why we publish investigation reports

3

Reports published about Shropshire Council in the last 10 years

View all

8 July 2026

By email

Mrs Miles
Chief Executive
Shropshire Council

Dear Mrs Miles

Annual Review Letter 2025–26

I wrote to you in May with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2026. In that letter, I explained that where we had concerns about your organisation's complaint handling, or to highlight exceptional performance, I would write again, and I have set out our experience of your organisation's complaint handling below.

As a reminder, your annual statistics are available here.

In addition, you can find details of the decisions we have made about your organisation, read the reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your organisation has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

This letter will be published on our website on 15 July 2026.

Your organisation's performance

There were several occasions during the year when our investigations were delayed by your Council's failure to respond in a timely way to our requests for information. Of seven enquiries made, five were received outside the 20-day deadline, with an average response time of 38 days. In one case, the delay was such that we took the unusual step of threatening to issue a witness summons before the information was provided.

Delays were most evident in Children's and Education Services, where three of four enquiries were late. Late responses prevent us from progressing investigations and add to the frustration and distress experienced by complainants. In cases that involve ongoing relationships and service provision, like Children's and Education Services, delays can further undermine already fragile relationships.

We also identified delays in implementing agreed recommendations. In two of seven cases remedies were not completed within the agreed timescales. These included straightforward actions such as issuing an apology and making a payment, and the delays caused unnecessary frustration for complainants. Service improvement actions were similarly affected. Where proposed timescales are not achievable, this should be raised at the draft decision stage. While we aim to set realistic deadlines, we cannot accept open-ended timescales given the ongoing risk of recurrence.

Please take action to ensure responses to our requests for information are provided promptly and that there is effective oversight of agreed recommendations, so they are delivered without delay. This is straightforward to do. If we can provide support, please let me know.

Supporting complaints and service improvement

We remain committed to supporting the sector to embed effective systems of redress. Where authorities are navigating reorganisation and devolution, we are ready to help ensure that robust complaint handling is built into new arrangements from the outset. Please do get in touch if your organisation would benefit from our advice and guidance.

Our [Complaint Handling Code](), in force since April 2025, is now applied in our casework and offers structure and support to your local complaint system. Our training programme provides a flexible, expert-led route to building complaints capability across your teams, with courses open for individual delegates to book. Contact training@lgo.org.uk for more information.

Our Annual Review of Local Government Complaints will be published next week, setting out the national picture of complaints, trends across service areas, and emerging systemic issues. We encourage you to read it alongside your own organisation's data.

Yours sincerely,

A. K. Clarke

Amerdeep Clarke
Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Appendix 2 Ombudsman Recommendations 2025/26

This table covers all complaints that were **upheld** by the Ombudsman during 2025/26.

Category	Decided date	Ombudsman recommendation	Agreed action	Completed date
Education & Children's Services	12/05/2025	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial redress: Loss of service	Remedy payments were made in line with Ombudsman recommendations for the loss of service provision and delay.	27/05/2025
Planning & Development	19/05/2025	Apology	No fault was found within the services provided by building control but the service was found at fault for failing to respond to a complaint and a financial remedy was awarded as a result of lack of communication with the customer.	26/05/2025
Adult Care Services	04/06/2025	No further action organisation already remedied	The Ombudsman found that the apology that the council had issued for delay in decision making and poor communication regarding changes in provision was adequate and no further action was required.	Not applicable
Adult Care Services	13/06/2025	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Procedure or policy change/review	The Ombudsman found evidence of insufficient care and support being provided to safeguard an adult. The Council apologised, made a remedy payment and undertook a review. Learning included the need to improve handover processes when members of staff leave.	07/09/2025
Adult Care Services	19/06/2025	Apology, Provide information/advice to person affected	Fault was found in record keeping and explanations provided by relating to financial assessment and Care Act assessments. An apology was provided with corrected information related to care charges.	13/07/2025
Adult Care Services	04/08/2025	Financial Redress: Quantifiable Loss, Provide information/advice to person affected, Provide training and/or guidance	An error led to duplicate charges for care. The council agreed to address the issue with the care provider and refund payments to ensure the fault was corrected.	22/10/2025
Adult Care Services	03/09/2025	Injustice remedied during organisations complaint processes	The Ombudsman did not investigate the complaint because it was identified that the council had already taken appropriate action in response to the complaint including an apology concerning the acceptance of power of attorney.	Not applicable
Education & Children's Services	04/02/2026	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Financial redress: Loss of service, Procedure or policy change/review	The Ombudsman found that a lack of monitoring had taken place concerning a child absent from school and this had delayed return to school and appropriate personalised support. An apology and remedy payment were provided.	25/03/2026
Education & Children's Services	03/03/2026	Apology, Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble, Provide training and/or guidance, Improvement Plan	The Ombudsman found fault in delays within the provision of an Education, Health and Care Plan and delayed decision making relating to alternative provision. An apology, remedy payment and action plan were put in place to resolve the complaint.	09/06/2026