	<p><b>One Council Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee</b> 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2011</p> <p><b>Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships &amp; Improvement</b></p>
For Information	Wards Affected: ALL
<p align="center"><b>Report Title: Annual Complaints Report 2010/2011</b></p>	

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of complaints received and investigated by the Council under the Corporate Complaints procedure and by the Local Government Ombudsman. Depending on their nature, some adults' and children's social care complaints come under the corporate procedure while others are subject to separate procedures governed by legislation. Complaints that were dealt with under the separate statutory procedures are the subject of the two further annual reports attached as appendices A and B.

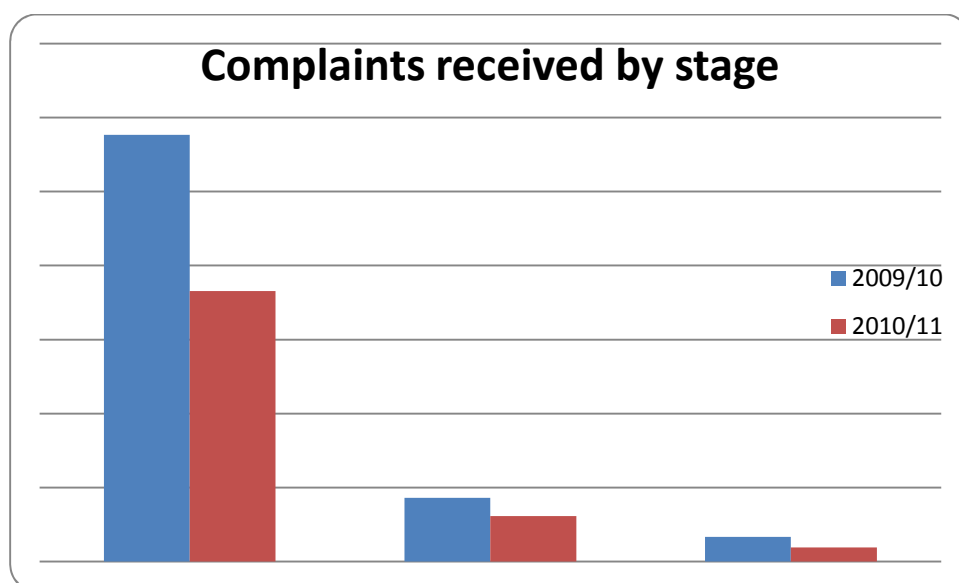
## 1.2 Headlines

- Complaints received fell by 36% compared with 2009/10
- Stage 2 and 3 complaints fell by 28% and 42% respectively
- In only 6% of Ombudsman investigations were we asked to take any action to resolve the complaint. This compares with a London average of 21% and a national average of 27%.
- Compensation paid went down from £158k to £95k which represents a 40% reduction compared with last year

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 This report is for information only.

### 3.0 Complaints considered under the Corporate Complaints procedure



3.1 Table 1 - Complaints received broken down by stage and service area

	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3		Total	
	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11	09/10	10/11
Housing	257	239	81	44	37	30	375	313
Community Care	40	13	2	2	3	1	45	16
BHP	848	672	181	143	55	40	1084	855
Rev & Bens	826	263	70	47	30	3	926	313
E & NS	690	405	83	46	35	15	808	466
C & F	168	170	10	6	4	3	182	179
CCE*	55*	19	4*	2	1*	1	60*	22
Regeneration & Major Projects	N/A	48	N/A	19	N/A	4	N/A	71
Total	2884	1829	431	309	167	97	3482	2235

\* CCE – Customer & Community Engagement - complaints in connection with the One Stop Shop/Contact Centre are included under this heading.

- 3.2 The volume of stage 1 complaints fell by 36% in comparison with 2009/10. There were significant reductions in Revenues & Benefits, E & NS and BHP. Historically these services account for two-thirds and of the Council's complaints. The most notable reduction was in the Revenues & Benefits division where volumes fell by 70%. The improvements to the benefits service relating to processing times and customer services which took effect in 2010 are likely to have been a significant factor.
- 3.3 BHP complaints fell by 21% percent. This figure is partly down to an improved repairs appointment system introduced during the year.
- 3.4 E&NS complaints fell by over 30% (once the impact of Planning complaints being transferred to Regeneration is taken into account). Much of the reduction relates to Streetcare and sports services which according to the department is due to more effective working with and monitoring of contractors .

### 3.5 Escalated complaints

The volume of Stage 2 and 3 complaints fell by 28% and 42% respectively. Of particular note was the 46% reduction in Housing stage 2 complaints and the 90% reduction in Revenues & Benefits stage 3 complaints. The low level of escalated complaints represents a significant efficiency saving in terms of management time and associated costs and highlights how effective the Council now is at investigating and resolving matters at the earliest stage.

### 3.6 What was the outcome of investigations?

Table 2 - Percentage of complaints that were fully or partly upheld

	Stage 1		Stage 2		Stage 3	
	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
Housing	21	24	24	34	32	27
Community Care	33	91	33	0	39	100
BHP	69	60	66	66	45	18
Rev & Bens	49	45	45	31	62	26
E & NS	50	53	45	47	5	7
Regeneration & Major Projects	N/A	10	N/A	19	N/A	25
C & F	57	63	50	40	50	50

- 3.7 The relatively high percentage of complaints fully or partly upheld at stage 1 is a healthy indication of departments' willingness to recognise faults within their respective services. The stage 2 & 3 figures need to be seen in the context of the low numbers involved. For example the outcomes at stage 3 in relation to Children & Families and Community Care represent only 4 complaints.

### 3.8 How quickly did we reply to complaints?

The Council has a target of replying to 85% of all complaints within the relevant timescale. The table below shows the percentage of complaints responded to within target at stages 1 & 2. The relatively small numbers of complaints dealt with at Stage 3 make comparison between service areas of limited value and have therefore not been included.

Table 3 - Percentage of responses completed on time

	Stage 1 Within 15 working days		Stage 2 Within 20 working days	
	2009/10	2010/11	2009/10	2010/11
Housing	74	77	64	66
Community Care	50	37	100	0
BHP	94	94	86	90
Revenues and Benefits	84	94	76	92
E&NS	79	76	68	81
Children & Families	60	78	31	40
Regen & Major Projects	n/a	65	n/a	67
CCE	95	100	100	100

- 3.9 BHP's performance continued to be impressive, especially when bearing in mind the large volume of complaints dealt with. Revenues & Benefits performance improved significantly although this should be seen in the context of the greatly reduced numbers they had to investigate.

### **3.10 Complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman**

- 3.11 The Ombudsman accepted 79 complaints for investigation, 5 more than the previous year. A further 37 were referred back to the Council to be dealt with under our complaints procedure.

- 3.12 Continuing the trend of recent years, just over 30% came within BHP's remit and in the main were repairs or estate management related. Environment & Neighbourhood Services accounted for 25% (Streetcare, Environmental Health & Parking Enforcement) with the remainder made up by Planning and Revenues & Benefits. Investigations relating to Children & Families and Adult Social Care are covered in the appendices attached to this report.

### **3.13 What did the Ombudsman decide?**

- 3.14 The Ombudsman made 72 decisions in connection with complaints they investigated. In only 4 cases (6% of all decisions) was the Council asked to take some form of action in order to resolve the complaint. These are known as *local settlements*. In the remaining 68 cases the Ombudsman decided either that the Council had done nothing wrong or had remedied the matter before the complaint reached them or that the issue was outside of their remit.

- 3.15 Brent achieved the lowest local settlement rate of any London Borough and one of the lowest figures nationally. The London average was 21% with our immediate neighbours – Barnet, Ealing and Harrow – scoring 25%, 28% and 20% respectively. Nationally, the local settlement average was 27%. The only Councils to achieve lower local settlement rates than Brent's were district or rural borough Councils who were the subject of very few Ombudsman investigations. The Ombudsman's results help demonstrate the effectiveness of our positive approach to accepting, investigating and being prepared to resolve issues in-house so far as possible.

- 3.16 One local settlement related to a fraud investigation carried out by Audit & Investigation. The Ombudsman criticised the Council for the time it took to inform the alleged fraudster that we were not going to prosecute. One complaint concerned a parking ticket where the Council agreed to waive the charge when new evidence was brought to light through the Ombudsman investigation. One related to adult social care and concerned a delay in providing aids and adaptations to a disabled person and the other concerned a Children & Families complaint about funding additional training for the carers of a disabled child.

### **3.17 What did we pay out in compensation?**

The total amount paid in compensation was just over £95k which represents a reduction of 40% in comparison with 2009/10. Children & Families and adult social care accounted for most of the reduction.

- 3.18 The Council's policy on compensation is closely modelled on guidance provided by the Ombudsman. Compensation is normally awarded in respect of complaints where upon investigation it is found that the Council's incorrect actions or failure to act or delay in acting has resulted in the person being seriously affected. For example the person may have incurred costs and/or suffered financial hardship

because of our mistake or they may have experienced significant distress and inconvenience.

- 3.19 Compensation awarded in appropriate complaints makes good business sense for the Council because it reduces the likelihood of a complaint escalating and therefore avoids the cost and reputational damage associated with escalated complaints and the intervention of the Ombudsman.

- 3.20 Table 4 - Compensation paid in connection with complaints investigated

Compensation	Year	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Ombudsman	Total
Housing	2009/10	1,470	4,818	8,880	350	15,518
	2010/11	3,035	7,550	2,085	850	13,520
Comm Care	2009/10	24,673	1,500	0	500	25,273
	2010/11	11,000	0	0	0	11,000
BHP	2009/10	26,558	15,010	7,360	170	49,098
	2010/11	25,026	16,056	10,370	50	51,452
Rev & Bens	2009/10	7,594	6,360	5,399	350	19,703
	2010/11	2,235	3,222	1,700	50	7,207
E & NS	2009/10	535	955	400	0	1,890
	2010/11	185	655	600	0	1,440
C & F	2009/10	23,538	20,472	0	0	44,010
	2010/11	6,532	3,500	500	0	10,532
CCE (OSS)	2009/10	610	275	212	0	1097
	2010/11	170	0	0	0	170
Total All services	2009/10	84,978	49,390	22,251	1,370	157,989
	2010/11	48,183	30,983	15,255	950	95,371

- 3.21 **Service improvements arising from complaints**

- 3.22 Complaints provide a valuable window on service delivery and a number of service improvements were identified during the year. Examples include:

- Children & Families have introduced more robust procedures to flag up when the professional qualifications of contract social workers are due to lapse
- Liaison meetings were introduced between Streetcare and Transportation to aid more joined up working
- Procedures were introduced to ensure that Hillside Housing Trust tenants were able to access the housing transfers system
- Procedures relating to street trading enforcement were reviewed to improve the clarity of information provided to the public

- 3.23 **Developments in complaint handling**

*Impact of Council restructure*

- 3.24 As part of the restructure that took effect from August 2010, complaints staff with the exception of BHP are now managed by the Corporate Complaints Manager. This has enabled a more consistent and corporate approach to complaints management to be established and has contributed to the improvements in the complaints service highlighted in this report.

*Developments in the Local Government Ombudsman service*

- 3.25 The Health Act 2009 extended the LGO's powers to investigate complaints about privately arranged and funded adult social care. These powers came into effect in

October 2010. The Council is not directly involved in these complaints because it is the care provider and *not* the Council that is the subject of the investigation. The Council has however been working with the Ombudsman to disseminate information to the known care provider organisations within the borough.

The Ombudsman was due to take over responsibility for the investigation of complaints about state schools with effect from September 2011. This proposal has now been scrapped as part of the Localism bill.

*Placing the onus on the customer to explain why a further review of their complaint should be carried out*

- 3.26 In the past we have agreed to escalate a complaint – even when there was no apparent basis for undertaking a further investigation. This sometimes resulted in a time consuming and costly review being carried out the result of which was a response largely reiterating the findings from the earlier investigation.

- 3.27 A revised approach and supporting procedure was piloted in BHP with effect from December 2010 which places the onus on the customer to explain *why* they disagree with the findings from the earlier investigation and *what* they consider remains to be investigated. Based on the customer's comments the departmental complaints manager determines whether or not a further investigation will be carried out. The pilot proved effective in terms of reducing the number of escalated complaints and was rolled out to the rest of the Council in June 2011

3.28 **Priorities for 2011/12**

*Preparing to move to a streamlined two -stage complaints procedure from April 2012*

- 3.29 The undertaking to move to a slimmed down two stage complaints procedure was set out in last year's annual report and will be a key priority for the complaints service. A revised process is quicker and simpler for the customer and more cost effective for the Council. Haringey, Islington and Camden have already introduced a two stage process. The marked reduction in complaint volumes generally, and escalated complaints in particular, places the Council in a strong position to remove a stage. A project plan has been developed and is in the process of being implemented by the Corporate Complaints Manager together with the support of colleagues.

*Improving the effectiveness of complaint training*

- 3.31 E-learning packages will be developed to enable staff across the Council to learn the basics of good complaint handling and resolution without having to attend one of the half day class based courses. In addition a more sophisticated post-course evaluation process will be introduced to help identify the tangible benefits that attending one of the training course has had on the individual and the Council as a whole. A training programme specifically for One Stop Shop and Contact Centre staff will be delivered during the year. This will be focused on enhancing the ability of staff to resolve complaints at the first point of contact.

*Future Customer Services Project*

- 3.32 The Corporate Complaints Manager is a member of the project implementation group and will be working with colleagues to ensure that the new service is geared up to resolve as many issues as possible at the first point of contact, thereby avoiding the need to record the issue as a complaint.

3.33 *Improving our procedures for recording and implementing service improvements arising from complaints*

Procedures will be put in place to help establish a consistent approach across the Council to the recording and implementation of service improvements that have been identified through complaint investigations.

**4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The corporate complaints procedure remains a relatively quick, cheap and effective way of resolving grievances, avoiding time-consuming investigations by the Local Government Ombudsman or court proceedings with their attendant high costs.

**5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**6.0 Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 The Council's complaints procedure covers all areas of the Council's service delivery and is available to everyone who lives in, works in or visits the Borough and all service users. Historically the Council has been weak in collecting diversity information from complainants. A customer satisfaction/diversity electronic survey has been introduced which should result in an increase in diversity information. The Complaints Manager is also working with the Diversity Team to explore other methods that can be introduced for capturing this information.

**7.0 Staffing Implications**

- 7.1 There are none at present but complaints handling arrangements will be reviewed in conjunction with the implementation of the two stage complaints procedure.

**Background Papers**

Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review 2010/11  
Adult Social Care complaints Annual Report  
Children & Families Complaints Annual report

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## Appendix A

### CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2010/11

1. The Children Act 1989 and supporting regulations require the Council to produce an annual report on complaints received about statutory children's social care services.
2. This report provides a summary of the number and type of complaints made, response rates, escalation rates, investigation outcomes and service improvements arising from issues highlighted in complaints. Comparative statistical data is also included.
3. Approximately 46% of all Children & Families stage one complaints fell within the statutory children's social care services complaints procedure. Of these three were escalated to stage 2 and one to stage 3. The remaining 54% were dealt with under the Corporate Complaints procedure.
4. Approximately 11% of complaints were made by children and young people. Of the rest most were made by parents, with small numbers made by foster carers, guardians, or other carers.
5. **The number of stage 1 complaints received** remained the same as the previous year [170]. Numbers of complaints in most services remained fairly steady but there were:
  - **fewer complaints about adult education services** – possibly the result of improved exam administration arrangements and telephone answering systems
  - **a significant increase of over 150% in complaints about school admissions** - reflecting the lack of capacity in schools and the department being unable to meet parents' expectations of securing a school place promptly and of choice.
6. **78% of stage 1 complaints were answered on time**, which was a significant improvement on the figure of 61% for 2009/10 and is closer to the corporate target of 85%. Managers within social care have been instrumental in achieving this improvement and are now generally meeting the very short statutory timescale of 10 working days.
7. **Six stage 2 complaints were registered** - three each about social care and education functions. This is a significant decrease in numbers compared to previous years [10 in 2009/10 and 22 in 2008/09] and is an indication of the thoroughness of stage 1 responses. Another reason behind the low levels of escalation concerns the proactive approach taken where a complainant asks to escalate their complaint. Officers offer to meet with the complainant in order to clarify their remaining concerns and ascertain whether they can be resolved without the need for a further investigation. This approach has saved complainants and the Council the considerable costs and delay associated with a further investigation.
8. **Five stage 2 complaints were closed** of which one was fully upheld [delay in finding a school place], one partly upheld [social care services] and three not upheld.
9. **The escalation rate from stage 1 to stage 2 was 3%** - well within the corporate target of 15%
10. **Three stage 3 complaints were received** - the same as in 2009/10. They related to services for a young disabled person about to transfer to adult services, the monitoring of the provision of special educational needs for a child, and to GSCC registration arrangements in respect of an agency social worker.



**11. Reasons given by the complainant for requesting escalation to stage 3 were:**

- failure or delay in providing the desired outcome,
- the department's actions or decision was incorrect, and
- dissatisfaction with the quality of the stage 2 investigation.

**12. There were four main service improvements** arising from complaint investigations during the year, shown below. Managers are also requested to ensure that specific case actions are followed up and learning points from complaints are fed back to staff either individually, or via team meetings, as appropriate.

- Learning points were identified for all social care managers [and Human Resources] to strengthen monitoring of GSCC registration arrangements in respect of agency social workers
- A new process/guidance document was introduced for staff when they are unable to reach agreement with the parent/carer about how a care package for a disabled child should be delivered dissatisfaction with the quality of the stage 2 investigation
- A new protocol was produced to ensure that a school is meeting the requirements of a child's special education needs (SEN) statement in cases when parental concerns are not being resolved through the school's complaints procedure
- A review was undertaken of processes for dealing with in-term school admissions. This comprised rewording letters sent to parents, sending referrals to the education welfare and alternative education services, better liaison with schools, training/information for the admissions and school assessment centre staff.

**13. Compensation** totalling £10,532 was awarded. The equivalent figure in 2009/10 was £44k. Compensation is considered in line with the Ombudsman's remedies guidance. Examples of why compensation was awarded in 2010/11 include:

- reimbursement of savings for two young people previously in care
- distress and time and trouble for having to escalate a complaint about SEN provision
- back-dated payments for a special guardianship allowance
- reimbursement of financial support for a young person leaving care
- compensation for missed schooling and distress and time and trouble

**14. Training for staff** focussed mainly on timeliness of responses but is now moving into improving the quality of complaint investigations and responses. Key complaint issues are also discussed. Training was also provided to foster carers to ensure that they understood the relevant procedures and could support looked after children who wished to make representations or complaints.

**15. Ombudsman cases** – A total of 8 cases were decided by the Ombudsman. Only one case resulted in a local settlement and concerned an ongoing dispute about the funding of additional training for the carers of a disabled child. 6 cases were recorded as outside jurisdiction and one as Ombudsman's discretion.

**Statistical Data & Information 2010/11**

**Table 1 - Numbers of Complaints Received**

Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09
170	169	150	6	10	22	3	3	6

**Table 2 - Types of Complaint – Stage 1**

	10/11	09/10	08/09
Children in care/ leaving care services	36	36	61
Localities (social care referrals and assessment)	36	32	
Disabled children social care services	10	10	20
Other social care support services including child protection and youth offending	10	10	2
Placements (fostering and adoption services}	5	8	4
Early Intervention and children's centres	4	7	7
School admissions	36	14	11
Adult education service	17	30	24
Special educational needs	4	3	3
Other education services including youth services	9	8	7
Services no longer part of C&F	3	11	11
Total	170	169	150

**Table 3 - Percentage of Complaints Responded to within Timescales**

Stage 1 Corporate 15 working days: Statutory 10 working days

Stage 2 Corporate 20 working days: Statutory 25 working days

Stage 3 Corporate 30 working days: Statutory 50 working days

Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09
78%	61%	62%	40%	29%	75%	0%	50%	n/a

**Table 4 - Escalation Rates - Council target = 20%**

Just 3% of stage 1 complaints ended up escalating to Stage 2. The relatively high percentage escalated from Stage 2 to 3 should be seen in the context of the very low number of complaints involved.

Stage 1 to Stage 2				Stage 2 to Stage 3			
10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08
3%	6%	15%	18%	50%	30%	27%	32%

**Table 5 - Outcomes of Closed Complaints**

In percentage terms, 63% of stage 1 complaints were upheld or partly upheld – slightly higher than in previous years (average 58%). At stage 2 the percentage upheld or partly upheld was lower (40%) than previous years and at stage 3 slightly higher at 50%, but it should be noted that the actual numbers of stage 2 and 3 complaints are very small.

	<b>Stage 1</b>			<b>Stage 2</b>			<b>Stage 3</b>		
<b>Out come</b>	10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09	10/11	09/10	08/09
Not Upheld	56	71	57	3	4	4	1	2	4
Partially Upheld	43	43	28	1	6	8	1	2	1
Fully Upheld	51	50	46	1	4	4			1
*Not Pursued	4	2	13		1	1	1		
Total closed	154	166	131	5	15	17	3	4	6

\* includes some complaints resolved by action of Senior Manager / progressed straight to Stage 2

**Table 6 - Children and Young People - Equalities Information**

Two thirds of all complaints in 2010/11 were made by females. It has not been possible to provide ethnicity monitoring information for all complainants but details for the fairly small numbers of young people, generally in the 15-24 age range, who made complaints are given below.

<b>Ethnicity of Child or Young Person</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2008/09</b>
Asian or Asian British	6%	6%	
Black or Black British	50%	69%	75%
Black African	11%	6%	
Mixed/Black and White or Mixed/Other	11%	13%	
White/British	6%	6%	8%
White/Irish	-		8%
White/Other	6%		8%

### **Children and Young People - Advocacy**

Children and young people receiving or requesting social care services are entitled to independent and confidential advocacy support. The Complaints Team explains about advocacy to all young people wishing to make complaints and provide a leaflet.

During 2010/11 18 young people made complaints about social care services and five were supported by advocates. All the young persons' complaints were resolved at stage 1.

### **Information for Children, Young People and their Families**

A new Comments, Complaints and Compliments leaflet was introduced during the year to encourage a more open dialogue with families receiving social care involvement and services. Information about the corporate procedure is available on the Brent Council website.

**Gillian Burrows**  
**Children & Families Complaints Manager**

## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE – ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2010/11**

Various pieces of legislation prescribe how complaints relating to adult social care services should be managed. The legislation also requires the Council to produce an annual report covering social care complaints.

1. This report provides a summary of the number and type of complaints made during the year, response and escalation rates, and the outcomes and service improvements from complaints. Where applicable, comparisons are made with previous years.
2. The Housing & Community Care Complaint Manager is responsible for managing the day to day handling of complaints in accordance with the regulations.
3. The ability to resolve some matters informally within a working day and without recording a formal report is welcome both for the customer and the Council. Within the complaints service we were able to resolve 13 complaints at an early stage. The complaints manager is working with the One Stop Service with the aim of increasing the number of potential complaints resolved at the first point of contact.
4. The introduction in 2009 of a one stage adult social care process has enabled us to adopt an approach taken to managing corporate complaints which centres on undertaking a high quality investigation applying a suitable remedy where necessary. The relevant service manager has responsibility for the investigation and for identifying and implementing service improvements arising from complaints.
5. The number of Statutory Complaints received in the year was 127, which was higher than the previous year (84) however this still remains well below the complaint figures prior to the implementation of the new procedure in April 2009. The main increase in complaints was within the Care Management Review and Access and Assessment teams. This increase was due to a number of complainants disputing the decisions around care packages and poor communication with clients.
6. The number of Corporate Complaints received in the year was 13 - 8 more than the previous year. These mainly concerned applications for Blue Badges.
7. Two corporate complaints reached stage 2. One concerned the blue badge process and one concerned placing a charge on a property for community care charges. Both of these complaints were not upheld. One corporate complaint reached stage 3 and concerned placing a charge on a property and was not upheld.
8. The percentage of complaint responses within timescales was 52%, which represents a 6% improvement on the previous year. Performance in relation to statutory complaints is difficult to measure because the investigation timescale can range from 10 working days to 6 months depending on the complexity and nature of the complaint. This year has seen a change of emphasis in the investigation of complaints in that service managers have taken responsibility for investigations relating to their service area. In the past the investigation had been carried out by the complaint manager or external investigator.
9. As part of the Adult Social Care transformation, there have been a number of vacancies at managerial level during the year which has impacted on performance. Within the new structures of Adult Social Care complaint handling has been built into the role of the Team Managers and as these posts are filled we expect to see an improvement in our performance in responding to complaints.

10. 11 stage 1 corporate complaints were determined. It was concluded that there had been some fault on the part of the department in 10 of these investigations, mainly around the delay in processing Blue Badge applications. No fault was found in respect of the stage 2 and 3 complaints investigated.

11. Of the 97 statutory complaints determined some fault was found in 38% of cases, down from 52% the previous year. The main areas where complaints were upheld were around communication with clients, assessments and reduction in packages, conduct of staff, and delay in services.

**12. Ombudsman Cases** - The Local Government Ombudsman determined 11 complaints about Adult Social Care. Of these 6 complaints were referred back to the Council to be investigated within our own complaint procedure. 4 cases were closed at the Ombudsman's discretion, all these cases had been through the council's own complaint procedure and they were satisfied with the outcome of our investigation. In one case the Ombudsman asked the council to take some action in order to resolve a complaint. This was a challenging case concerning delay in the assessment and provision of equipment.

**13. A number of service improvements** arising from complaint investigations have been identified during the year as shown below.

- Improvements have been made in the recording of decisions taken by the Quality Assurance Meeting, which reviews and agrees changes to care packages, and their communication to staff and service users
- A number of complaints have arisen from incorrect data being used in assessments and we are presently reviewing how we can improve the flow of information from Frameworki, the adult social care database, to Abacus, the finance database
- A number of complaints highlighted staff attitudes towards clients, as a result customer care training will be given for all Adult social care staff during 2011/12
- As a result of issues that arose in a number of residential care charges related complaints an agreement was reached with Legal Services for them to become actively involved at an early stage

**14. A total of £11k was awarded** in respect of complaints where the investigation concluded that the council had been at fault. The previous year's figure was £25k. Reasons for awards included:-

- reimbursement of funding on a care placement
- No explanation being provided to the service user concerning how a charge was arrived at
- poor handling of a request for the supply of aids and adaptations
- delay in dealing with applications for care support

**15. Training** has been focussed on managers who are now responsible for investigating complaints. The training is very hands on and is focussed on equipping managers with the skills required to undertake a professional complaint investigation. The complaint team has provided training courses, attended team meetings and provided one to one support.

**16. Commissioning** – The complaints service is working with the Adult Social Care commissioning team, to ensure that all the contracts tendered reflect the requirement for social care providers to manage complaints to the level expected by the Council.

## Statistical Data & Information Adult Social Care 2010/11

**Table 1 - Numbers of Complaints Received**

	<b>10/11</b>	<b>09/10</b>
Statutory Complaints	<b>127</b>	84
Corporate Complaints:		
Stage 1	<b>13</b>	5
Stage 2	<b>2</b>	3
Stage 3	<b>1</b>	2

**Table 2 – Service Areas to which Complaints related**

	<b>10/11</b>	<b>09/10</b>
Access and Assessment	39	21
Brent Mental Health Service	9	11
Care Management Review	61	22
Community Care Finance	5	12
Commissioning / Contractor	9	9
Learning Disability Team	14	14
Other	3	0
Total	140	89

**Table 3 - Outcomes of complaint investigations**

In percentage terms, 38% of adult social care statutory complaints were upheld or partly upheld – less than last year when the figure was 52%. Of the corporate complaints 91% were upheld or partly upheld these were due to delays in dealing with blue badge applications at the beginning of the year, but the problems were quickly alleviated. Both corporate stage 2 and stage 3 complaints were not upheld.

	Statutory Complaint	Corporate complaints		
		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Fully upheld	13	5		
Partially upheld	24	5		
Not upheld	54	1	2	1
Withdrawn	6			
Total	97	11	2	1

**Martin Beasley**  
**Complaints Manager**  
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