



One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16 October 2012

Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Improvement

Wards Affected :
ALL

Annual Complaints Report 2011/2012

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 adult social care and children and family-related 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 covered in two further annual reports attached as appendices A and B.

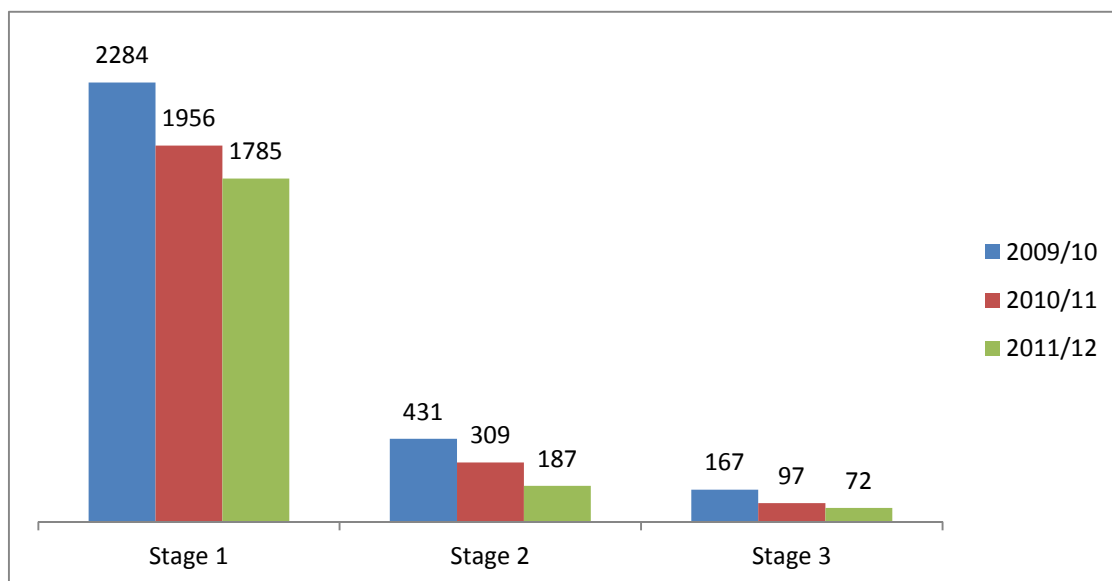
1.2 Headlines

- Stage 1 complaints fell by 9% with the bulk of the reduction attributable to BHP
- Just under 90% of complaints were successfully resolved at the first stage
- Complaints escalated to stages 2 and 3 fell by 39% and 26% respectively in comparison with 2010/11 - BHP led the way with a 50% reduction in escalated complaints
- For the second year running Brent achieved the best results in London and among the best results nationally so far as Local Government Ombudsman complaints were concerned. In only 9 cases – 12% of all cases investigated, did the Ombudsman ask us to take action to resolve the complaint. This compares with a London average of 27% and a national average of 21%.
- Compensation awards went down from £95k to £71k and reduced by half when compared with 2009/10

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 This report is for information only.

3.0 Complaints received over the past three years



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

	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12 *
Adult Social Care	40	140	115	2	2	2	3	1	0
BHP	848	672	540	181	143	74	55	40	21
C&F	168	170	181	10	6	12	4	3	1
E& NS	690	405	410	83	46	36	35	15	19
FCS R&B	826	263	221	70	47	16	30	3	14
FCS other*	55	19	37	4	2	0	1	1	0
RMP HSG	257	239	244	81	44	33	37	30	12
RMP	N/A	48	37	N/A	11	14	N/A	4	5
Total:	2284	1956	1785	431	309	187	167	97	72

*Stage 3 - includes cases where a request for a final investigation was received but subsequently refused on the basis that a further investigation was not warranted

RMP other* - represents the planning service, and other non-housing parts of Regeneration & Major Projects

FCS other* - represents Brent Customer Services

3.2 Stage 1 complaints fell by 9% compared with 2010/11, continuing the trend seen in 2009/10. Most of the reduction was attributable to BHP and Revenues and Benefits whose complaints fell by 20% and 16% respectively.

The reduction in BHP complaints is due to a number of factors, including the introduction of an improved repairs appointment system and a greater emphasis within the organisation on seeking to resolve issues before they result in complaints.

The reduction in Revenues & Benefits complaints is all the more encouraging in view of the changes in the benefits system that started to take effect in the latter part of 2011/12 and which were expected to result in an increase in complaints. The work the benefits service has done to mitigate the impact of the changes on service users has clearly had a positive effect.

3.3 Escalated complaints

Just under 90% of complaints were resolved to the customer's satisfaction insofar as they did not consider it necessary to take the complaint further.

Stage 2 and 3 complaint numbers fell by 38% and 26% respectively compared to 2010/11. Of particular note was the 48% and 47% reduction in BHP stage 2 and stage 3 complaints and the 66% reduction in Revenues & Benefits stage 2 complaints.

The low level of escalated complaints represents a significant efficiency saving in terms of management time and associated costs and is an indication of the improvements made to the quality of investigations and the determination of managers to resolve complaints at the local level whenever possible.

3.4 What was the outcome of investigations?

Table 2 - Percentage of complaints at stages 1 & 2 that were fully or partly upheld

	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12
ASC	33	91	49	33	0	0
BHP	69	60	54	66	66	56
C&F	57	63	48	50	40	27
ENS	50	53	56	45	47	38
FCS R&B	49	45	52	45	31	65
FCS other	55	19	70	4	2	0
RMP HSG	21	24	34	24	34	23
RMP	n/a	10	47	n/a	19	50

Table 2.1 Complaint decisions at Stage 3

Total number of decisions at Stage 3	Fully/partly upheld	Not upheld	Investigation request refused
BHP	21	4	13
C&F	1	0	1
ENS	19	2	8
FCS R&B	14	4	4
RMP HSG	12	6	2
RMP	5	2	3
Totals	72	18	30

3.5 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 and contributes to the low levels of escalation.

Only 25% of stage 3 complaint investigations – just 18 cases, resulted in the complaint being fully or partly upheld. It is worth noting that we turned down the request for a final stage investigation in over 30% of cases. This was because we had concluded that the earlier investigation had properly addressed the issues involved and the customer had been unable to justify why a further review of the complaint should be undertaken.

3.6 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 target 85% Within 15 working days			Stage 2 target 85% Within 20 working days		
	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12
ASC	50	37	62	100	0	0
BHP	94	94	93	86	90	73
C&F	60	78	28	31	40	0
ENS	79	76	63	68	83	52
FCS R&B	84	94	95	76	92	100
FCS other	95	100	100	100	100	n/a
RMP HSG	74	77	74	64	66	20
RMP	n/a	65	65	n/a	67	60

BHP's and Revenues and Benefits performance was impressive, especially when bearing in mind the large volume of complaints dealt with. Poor performance in Adult Social Care and Children & Families is being addressed by complaint officers along with the management teams from the respective departments.

3.7 Compensation awards in connection with complaints

The total amount paid in compensation was just under £71k - £20k less than the previous year and less than half the amount paid out in 2009/10. BHP accounted for the bulk of the reduction. The considerable increase in the Children & Families compensation level at Stage 1 was due to sizeable amounts awarded in two cases: one case concerned a decision to pay a retrospective fostering allowance of £14k, the other case involved a decision to reimburse a foster carer the cost of attending two NVQ courses costing a total of £3k.

The Council's policy on compensation is closely modelled on guidance provided by the Ombudsman. Compensation is awarded in cases 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.

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.

Table 4 - Compensation paid in connection with complaints investigated

	Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12
ASC	24,673	11,000	15165	1,500	0	0	0	0	0
BHP	26,558	25,026	16364	15,010	16,056	13799	7,360	10,370	0
C&F	23,538	6,532	18240	20,472	3,500	0	0	500	0
ENS	535	185	175	955	185	340	400	600	45
FCS R&B	7,594	2,235	650	6,360	3,222	50	5,399	1,700	0
FCS other	610	170	0	275	0	25	212	0	0
RMP HSG	1,470	3,035	1321	4,818	7,550	3176	8,880	2,085	1200
RMP	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	0	n/a	0	250
Total paid:	84978	48183	51915	49390	30513	17390	22251	15255	1495

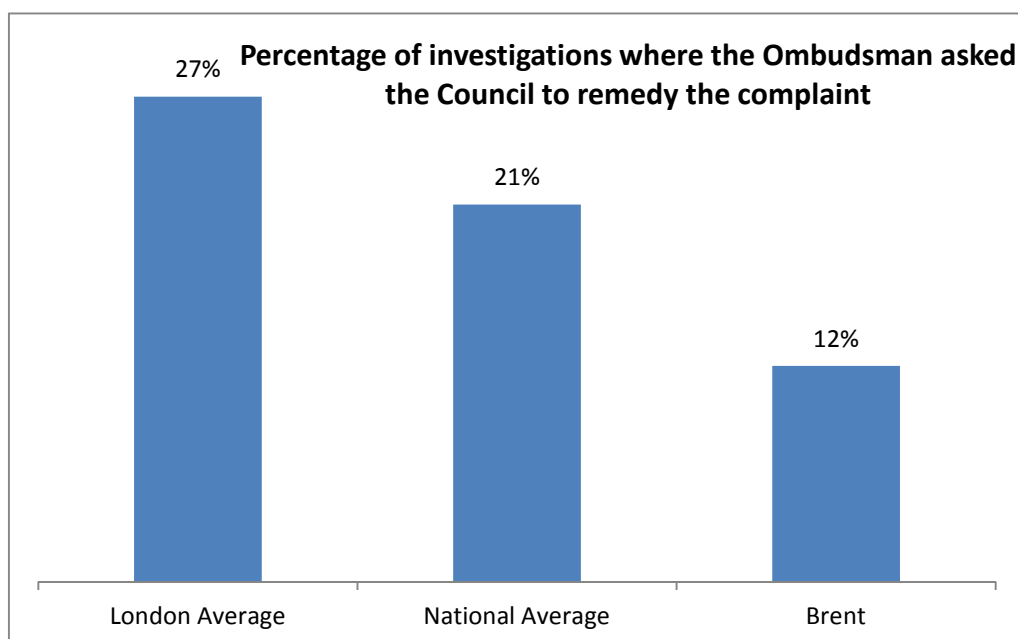
3.8 Complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman

The Ombudsman accepted 65 complaints for investigation, 14 fewer than the previous year. Almost half the cases accepted for investigation had not previously been investigated by the Council. The Ombudsman has the power to investigate a complaint regardless of whether the Council concerned has had the opportunity to resolve the matter through its own complaints process. In theory they are meant to restrict this power to cases where for example the complainant appears to be especially vulnerable or where the matter in question needs a prompt outcome – school admissions for example. In practice there appears to be an element of inconsistency in how the Ombudsman exercises this power – something which the Council's Complaints Manager continues to raise with the Ombudsman.

The complaints were evenly spread across the main areas of the Council with, BHP, Revenues & Benefits and Children & Families having the highest numbers.

3.9 What did the Ombudsman decide?

The Ombudsman made 77 decisions in connection with Brent complaints they investigated. In only 9 cases (12% of all decisions) was the Council asked to take some form of action in order to resolve the complaint. These were formerly classified as 'local settlements'. This represents the lowest settlement rate in London and one of the lowest figures nationally. The London average was 27% with our immediate neighbours – Barnet, Ealing and Harrow – scoring 26%, 22% and 33% respectively. The national average was 21%. None of the complaints where the Ombudsman found some fault had been through the Council's corporate complaints procedure. The Ombudsman's figures are a further indication of the effectiveness of our investigation process as well as our determination to resolve issues in-house so far as is possible.



3.10 What service areas did the cases where the Ombudsman found fault relate to?

Five of the cases relate to Adult Social Care. Details are provided in the Adult Social Care report – Appendix B. One case concerned Audit & Investigation - the Ombudsman criticised the Council for the time it took to inform the person under investigation in a fraud case that we were not going to prosecute.

One case concerned school admissions – this related to the time it took to offer a place to a primary school child. The Ombudsman found that the Council had not properly applied the Fair Access Protocol.

One case concerned Care Planning (Children & Families) – The case involved a reported burglary that allegedly took place at a care facility the Council had placed the young person in. The Ombudsman criticised the Council for not ensuring that it was made clear to young people placed in the facility that personal possessions were not covered by any insurance policy. The Ombudsman asked the Council to pay the complainant £1k to compensate for the items she claimed had been stolen.

Lastly, one case concerned the Housing Resource Centre – the Ombudsman found that the Council had failed to apply the homelessness criteria correctly which resulted in the complainant not being accepted as homeless. The Ombudsman asked the Council to pay the complainant £1k to compensate for the injustice caused.

3.11 Compensation in respect of Ombudsman complaints

	09/10	10/11	11/12
ASC	24673	50	3543
BHP	170	0	0
C&F	0	0	1000
ENS	0	0	0
FCS R&B	350	50	0
FCS other	0	0	250
RMP HSG	350	850	1050
RMP	n/a	0	0

Total paid:	25543	950	5843
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3.12 Service improvements arising from complaints

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

- Improved procedures for dealing with reports of anti-social behaviour involving families housed in bed & breakfast accommodation were developed following an investigation that revealed that there was no consistent approach for dealing with such issues
- A programme to improve customer care in the parking shops and reduce waiting times was introduced following a number of complaints about that service
- Street cleaning resources were reallocated in order to address concerns raised by customers about particular areas
- Information on the Council's website relating to the use of CCTV in parking enforcement was updated after a complaint investigation revealed that the existing information was misleading

- More comprehensive checks were required of Capita's bailiffs following an investigation which concluded that the bailiffs had removed a debtor's car without the necessary proof to demonstrate that the car did in fact belong to the debtor.
- Improved record keeping between the Housing Resource Centre and BHP in connection with the status and condition of vacant properties was developed following an investigation which concluded that that inconsistent record keeping had led to residents being sent to view properties wholly unsuited to them.

Examples of service improvements relating to Adult Social Care and Children & Families are included in appendices A & B.

3.13 **Priorities for 2012/13**

Overseeing the ongoing application of the new two stage complaints procedure

The Council moved from a three stage to a streamlined two stage policy with effect from April 2012. In the run up to its introduction extensive training was carried out across the Council to raise awareness of the revised procedure and a Corporate Investigation Standard was introduced to help raise the quality of complaint investigations. Based on an analysis of complaints dealt with in the first quarter of 2012/13 the revised policy has been well managed by departments with only 6% of complaints escalating beyond the first stage. The Council's complaints manager is continuing to closely monitor the situation to ensure that the policy is being correctly applied across the Council.

Moving all Council complaints to one database

To coincide with introduction of the two stage complaints policy a new complaints database was introduced. All departments will be using the new system by October 2012 with BHP expected to come on board by the end of quarter 3. The new database will assist in the efficient management of complaints and as a web based system supports the Council's channel migration strategy.

Improving complaint response times

Response times in 2011/12 in a number of areas were less than satisfactory. Complaint officers will be working with departmental management teams to address this issue.

Preparing for the change in jurisdiction for Housing Management complaints due to start in April 2013

As a result of the Localism Act housing management complaints – essentially all those dealt with by BHP will move jurisdiction from the Local Government Ombudsman to that of the Independent Housing Ombudsman from April 2013. In addition the complaint needs to have been considered by a Councillor, MP or Tenants Panel before it can be referred to the Housing Ombudsman.

The Council's complaints manager will be working with colleagues to ensure that the necessary arrangements are in place within the Council and BHP to respond to the requirements of the Act.

Introduction of regular management information reports

There has been an inconsistent approach to providing regular information on complaints activity to departmental management teams. The intention is to

introduce a quarterly department-specific report that will give senior managers a better understanding of the complaints activity across their respective service areas.

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. The Complaints Manager is continuing to work with colleagues 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 prior to the move to the Civic Centre.

Background Papers

Local Government Ombudsman's Annual Review 2011/12
Adult Social Care complaints Annual Report 2011/12
Children & Families Complaints Annual report 2011/12

Contact Officers

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Appendix A

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT : 2011/12

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. For the sake of completeness this report also includes information on complaints dealt with under the corporate complaints process – which in the main relates to services provided by Achievement and inclusion.
2. The 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.
3. **A total of 181 stage 1 complaints were received**, just 11 more than the previous year. 124 stage one complaints fell within the statutory complaints procedure with Localities and Care Planning accounting for the majority. A total of 57 corporate complaints were received with two-thirds relating to school admissions. This largely reflects the nature of complaints received in 2010/11. A detailed breakdown is given in appendix A.1.
4. **Complaints that escalated beyond stage 1** - Just 7% of complaints ended up escalating to Stage 2 which is well within the Council target of no more than 15%. Localities (4) and CarePlanning (4) accounted for the majority of stage 2 complaints. One Stage 3 complaint was received relating to a BACES case involving a dispute over fees.

One of the reasons for the low escalation rate is because in the event that service users are dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage 1 investigation, they are given the option of meeting with the relevant service managers in the hope that any remaining concerns can be resolved. In many instances the outstanding issues are successfully resolved thereby saving the costs and resources associated with further investigations.

5. **62% of stage 1 complaints were answered on time**, significantly down on the 78% achieved in 2010/11. The biggest drop in performance was in Achievement & Inclusion which went down from 72% to 39%. A review of the staffing structure meant that fewer managers were available to investigate complaints. The complaints manager is working with the service to explore ways to improve performance.
6. **Outcomes of complaint investigations** – Out of 168 stage 1 investigations completed, 48% resulted in the complaint being upheld or partially upheld. A total of five stage 2 complaint investigations were concluded of which 1 was fully upheld and 4 not upheld. The one stage 3 complaint was not upheld.
7. A total of **8 Ombudsman complaints** were determined. 2 of which required the Council to take action to resolve the complaint. One case concerned school admissions and related to the time it took to offer a place to a primary school child. The Ombudsman found that the Council had not applied the Fair Access Protocol.

The other case concerned Care Planning (Children & Families) – The case involved a reported burglary that allegedly took place at a care facility the Council had placed the young person in. The Ombudsman criticised the Council for not ensuring that it was made clear to young people placed in the facility that personal possessions were not covered by any insurance policy. The Ombudsman asked the Council to pay the complainant £1k to compensate for the items she claimed had been stolen.

8. There were a number of **service improvements arising from complaint**

investigations. Examples are given below:

- A briefing on the complaints process was delivered to foster carers which also gave them the opportunity to provide feedback on the service from their perspective
- The wording on the decision letter used to inform parents of the department's decision in connection with applications requesting support for a disabled child has been amended to encourage the parent/carer to contact the team if dissatisfied with the decision rather than to be automatically signposted to the complaints procedure
- Insurance related information provided to young people moving into semi-independent accommodation has been reviewed

9. **Compensation** totalling £19k as paid out – inclusive of £1k relating to an Ombudsman complaint. Examples of why compensation was awarded include:

- reimbursement of NVQ related costs incurred by a foster carer
- a payment to a young person in semi-independent housing who allegedly sustained a theft of personal items
- retrospective payment of a fostering allowance

11. **Training** focussed mainly on equipping staff with the skills required to undertake a quality complaint investigation and write an effective response. 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.

12. **Priorities for 2012/13:**

- working with DMT and other managers to improve response times
- conduct a series of team workshops to raise awareness and understanding of the complaints process at the local level
- Deliver further investigation skills training to build capacity within the department
- Produce regular (quarterly) complaint management information reports for DMT summarising key issues

Appendix A.1 : Management Information

Numbers of Complaints Received

Stage 1			Stage 2			Stage 3		
09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12	09/10	10/11	11/12
169	170	181	10	6	12	3	3	1

Types of Complaint – Stage 1

	11/12	10/11	09/10
Children in care/ leaving care services	51	36	36
Localities (social care referrals and assessment)	56	36	32
Disabled children social care services	7	10	10
Other social care support services including child protection and youth offending	1	10	10
Placements (fostering and adoption services}	7	5	8
Early Intervention and children's centres	1	4	7
School admissions	36	36	14
Adult education service	14	17	30
Special educational needs	6	4	3
Other education services including youth services	2	9	8
Services no longer part of C&F		3	11
Total	181	170	169

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		
11/12	10/11	09/10	11/12	10/11	09/10	11/12	10/11	09/10
28%	78%	61%	0%	40%	29%	100%	0%	n/a

Equalities Information

68% of complaints were made by females. Ethnicity information based on those complainants who were prepared to provide it is set out below.

Ethnicity of Child or Young Person	2011/12	2010/11	2009/10
Asian or Asian British	20%	6%	6%
Black or Black British	30%	50%	69%
Black African	20%	11%	6%
Mixed/Black and White or Mixed/Other	15%	11%	13%

White/British	10%	6%	6%
White/Irish	5%		
White/Other	-	6%	

Advocacy information

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.

21 young people made complaints about social care services and five were supported by advocates. All the young persons' complaints were resolved at stage 1.

Phillip Mears
Complaints Manager

Appendix B

ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES - ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2011/12

1. This report provides information on complaints made about Adult Social Services during 2011./12 as required under
 - a. the Health and Social Care (Community Health & Standards) Act 2003 and the Local Authority Social Services Complaints (England) Regulations 2006
 - b. the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) regulations 2009
2. 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 team we were able to resolve 20 complaints at an early stage. The complaints manager is working with customer services to improve our recording of potential complaints resolved at the first point of contact.
3. The complaints team has been working with senior managers to improve the quality of investigations conducted in house and the application of suitable remedies. This approach has meant that we have used external investigators in very few cases – with a consequent saving in charges. In addition it has encouraged managers to take ownership for addressing service failures identified through complaints and for driving through service improvements.
4. **The number of Statutory Complaints received** in the year was 88 - down from 127 the previous year. Some of the decrease can be put down to the new structures within Adult Social Services which have helped improve the way we deal with customers. For example in previous years many complaints were raised by customers who had to wait weeks or even months for an application for a care assessment to be processed. Under the restructure responsibility for undertaking the initial assessment transferred to the call centre which massively reduced waiting times. A further influence on complaint numbers has been the complaint team's approach which has been to encourage teams to seek to resolve issues at the first point of contact before they become complaints.
5. **27 Corporate Complaints were received-** up from 13 the previous year. These mainly concerned applications for Blue Badges and Freedom Passes and reflect the fact that following a review, a number of users lost their right to a Freedom Pass. Secondly following a tightening of antifraud guidelines Blue Badges had to be collected in person instead of being posted.
6. **Two corporate complaints reached stage 2.** One concerned the provision of a Freedom Pass and the other related to communication problems that a service user experienced with Brent Mental Health Service (BMHS). Both of these complaints were not upheld and did not progress to stage 3.
7. **The % of complaint responses within timescale was 28%** - down from 52% in 2010/11. Performance was affected by vacancies that existed during the year as part of the ongoing restructure plus other competing priorities. In response the pool of managers required to investigate complaints has been widened and the department's management team is closely monitoring the situation.
8. **A total of 24 stage 1 corporate complaints were investigated.** 9 investigations concluded that there had been some fault on the part of the department - mainly around the Blue Badge application and collection process.
9. **A total of 73 statutory complaints were investigated** with some fault being found in 40 cases. The main areas where complaints were upheld were around poor communication with clients, delays in assessments, reduction in care packages and conduct of staff, and general service delays.
10. **Of the 10 Cases** determined by the Ombudsman, 5 required the Council had to take action to resolve the complaint. Brief details of the cases involved are below. These complaints had been investigated by the department at stage 1 of the statutory or corporate complaints procedure. The

Ombudsman concluded that either we had failed to apply a remedy or the remedy applied was insufficient to address the injustice the complainant had experienced.

- a) One case involved a service user who had been without a bath for several months after it had been damaged by one of the contractor's staff. The Ombudsman criticised the Council for failing to ensure that the issue was resolved within a reasonable period of time.
- b) In another case the complaint concerned the delay in providing the service user with a specially adapted chair.
- c) One long running issue related to the closure of the day centres. The complaint concerned someone who had campaigned vigorously for centres to stay open. Ombudsman found that the Council had not adequately compensated the complainant for their time and trouble in pursuing the complaint.
- d) A further complaint concerned an unreasonable delay in carrying out a care assessment in connection with the complainant's son. This led to the complainant having to spend time and effort chasing the outstanding assessment.
- e) The final complaint centred on a service user in dispute with the Council over care charge arrears and related matters. The Ombudsman investigation revealed that the Council had been invoicing the complainant's former address for over a year. The Council ended up writing off the outstanding arrears.

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

- Financial assessment forms and associated guidelines have been revised to make the charging criteria clearer
- Significant improvements in working practices and procedures have been adopted by the safeguarding team including a new screening and risk assessment tool
- In response to complaints about the review team a performance plan was developed focusing on improving communication and customer care skills
- An improvement plan was developed to ensure that a cross Council approach was adopted when responding to clients who create problems for themselves and other residents by hoarding items in their homes.

12. **Compensation** was awarded to 13 complainants totalling **£15165**. Compensation is awarded in appropriate cases in line with the Council's Remedies Policy, typically where the service user has suffered a significant injustice because of the Council's (or contractor's) actions or lack of action. Reasons for awards in the 13 cases referred to above included:-

- Delay in the provision of direct payments
- Damage caused by Homecare provider left the service user without a bath for almost a year.
- Compensation was recovered from the contractor
- Faults identified with the consultation process in relation to Stonebridge Day centre
- Poor handling of a request for the supply of aids and adaptations
- Delay in dealing with applications for care support

13. **Training** has been focused on managers who are now responsible for investigating complaints. The training is very hands on and is designed to equip managers with the skills required to undertake professional complaint investigations. One to one support has also been provided when necessary.

14. **Priorities for 2012/13**

- working with DMT and other managers to improve response times
- conduct a series of team workshops to raise awareness and understanding of the complaints process at the local level
- Deliver further investigation skills training to build capacity within the department
- Produce regular (quarterly) complaint management information reports for DMT summarising key issues

Appendix B.1

Management Information

Table 1 - Numbers of Complaints Received

	2011/12	10/11	09/10
Statutory Complaints	88	127	84
Corporate Complaints Stage 1	27	13	5
Stage 2	3	2	3

Table 2 – Service Area Complaints (Inclusive statutory & corporate complaints)

	2011/12	10/11	09/10
Reablement & Safeguarding	36	39	21
Brent Mental Health Service	6	9	11
Support Planning & Review	45	61	22
ASS Finance	9	5	12
Integrated Commissioning	14	9	9
Direct Services	2		
Other	3	3	
Total	115	140	89

Table 3 - Percentage of Complaints Responded to within Timescales

Statutory & Corporate Complaints		
11/12	10/11	09/10
28%	52%	46%

Table 4 - Outcomes of investigations

Some complaints registered in 2011/12 are still live (having entered our monitoring system before 31 March 2012 but not yet concluded) they will be included in the next year's figures). In percentage terms, 49% of complaints investigated were fully or partly upheld.

	Statutory Complaint	Corporate Stage 1	Corporate Stage 2
Fully upheld	19	6	0
Partially upheld	21	3	0
Not upheld	29	13	2
Withdrawn	4	3	0
Total	73	25	2

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Table 5 - Comparative figures with other West London Councils – Figures are presently being sought and of those received are included in the table below:-

London Borough	Total No of complaints received	No of statutory complaints	No of corporate complaints	No of LGO investigations
Barnet	100	96	4	15
Brent	115	88	27	7
Ealing	102	94	8	2
Harrow	92	79	13	2
Hillingdon	69	69	0	7

The fact that we received more complaints than our neighbouring boroughs should be considered in light the stricter application of the fair access to care criteria coupled with our positive approach to welcoming complaints. That said, 115 complaints represent a tiny fraction of the users of the service.

Martin Beasley
Adult Social Care Complaints Manager