



Adult Social Care compliments and complaints: Annual Report 2021-22

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction by a customer about an action, lack of action or standard of service.
- 1.2. When we receive a complaint in Adult Social Care, our aim is to resolve and learn from the issues raised to ensure they do not happen again. Our ambition is to ensure we get things right first time so that customers do not need to make a complaint.
- 1.3. We actively encourage service users and their carers to make complaints as they help us to identify where we are not getting things right and what we need to do to improve services.
- 1.4. Adult Social Care Complaints are managed through a one-stage process. On receipt of a complaint, the service is given the opportunity to reply (**stage one response**) and if the complainant is not satisfied with the response this can be reviewed by the service again (**stage one review**).
- 1.5. The stage one response should normally be sent within **20 working days** of receipt of the complaint. Where necessary, these deadlines may be extended, but all complaints should be investigated and responded to within six months.
- 1.6. All complaints can be escalated by the complainant to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) who will independently review the complaint and determine whether there has been any fault and their recommendations for remedying that fault. The LGSCO will normally only review a complaint after it has been through our full internal process (stage one response and stage one review).
- 1.7. Information about how to make a complaint is available on our website: [adult social services complaints process](#). We also have an [Easy Read version](#) of our complaints process and a [BSL video](#).

2. Summary

- 2.1. In the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, Adult Social Care had contact with 7,164 residents. This includes individual requests for support, short-term or one-off services and long-term support provided at any time in the reporting period.
- 2.2. In the same period, we received **55 individual complaints** which represents less than 1% of the total number of contacts.
- 2.3. This compares to 57 complaints received in 2020-21 and 101 complaints received in 2019-20.
- 2.4. Five complaints were withdrawn, meaning we investigated and responded to **50 individual complaints**.
- 2.5. **64%** of complaints were responded to within agreed timeframes (20 working days). The average time to respond to a complaint was **36 days**. The quickest complaint response was six days and the longest 76 days.
- 2.6. Three complaints are still open and pending a formal response.
- 2.7. Most complaints recorded their primary failure as '**poor quality of service provided**' (24 complaints, or 48% of the total complaints investigated) followed by 10 complaints (20% of total complaints investigated) about a **decision made** - i.e., the outcome of a Care Act Assessment or review, or an Occupational Therapy assessment.
- 2.8. **60%** of complaints were either upheld (20%) or partially upheld (40%). **34%** were not upheld.
- 2.9. Seven complaints were escalated to a **stage one review** (14% of complaints investigated). Of these, three complaints were originally partially upheld and four were not upheld. Following a stage one review, six were partially upheld (+3) and one was not upheld (-3). This means that almost half of complaints reviewed had a change in outcome to partially upheld.
- 2.10. One complaint from this reporting period was escalated to the LGSCO. The outcome of this investigation is still pending.
- 2.11. The services that received the most complaints were the South Locality Community Team (30% of complaints investigated) and the North Locality Community Team (16%). This is to be expected as the main operational teams in Adult Social Care.
- 2.12. Although they received the most complaints, these two teams still only received 23 complaints in the reporting period which suggests that many service users are not aware of their right to complain.

3. Key learnings

- 3.1. A common theme from complaints is about staff failing to share updates or information with service users and their advocates, including when there are changes to a support plan or assessment. To overcome this, Team Managers have been asked to remind staff through team meetings and supervisions about the importance of keeping service users informed.
- 3.2. A similar theme relates to how information is shared with service users and ensuring the information is understood. Again, Team Managers have been asked to raise effective communication skills through team meetings and supervision.
- 3.3. Safeguarding responsibilities have also been highlighted in the reporting period and the duty on our commissioned services to inform us of any potential safeguarding concerns. Our Contracts and Commissioning team needs to remind care agencies of their requirement to report any potential safeguarding issues to us, including when there is potential self-neglect, for example when there are signs of hoarding.
- 3.4. We were increasingly aware of complaints made about the Adult Social Care Front Door; the service that receives and processes all initial requests for support from professionals and residents. Historically, complaints about the front door have been managed by another team, as the service sits within the wider Access Islington service. However, to ensure we are fully aware of all complaints across Adult Social Care, and to create a better user journey for our service users, we recognised the need to bring complaints about the front door under the Adult Social Care complaints process. This learning also aligned with a change in structure to the front door service. We therefore have begun steps to bring complaints about the front door under our remit and will begin managing complaints about the front door in 2022-23.
- 3.5. During the reporting period, we changed the stage one review step of the complaints process. Previously, after a complaint had been investigated by an officer, the complainant was able to request a review of the complaint by another officer. Now, we have replaced this review step with an informal offer that asks the complainant to respond to the officer if they think part of their complaint hasn't been responded to. Crucially, this does not require another manager to be involved. This means the investigator is given a further opportunity to resolve the complaint and can lead to quicker resolution times, as it avoids another manager appraising themselves of the issues. We will keep this step under review.

4. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman

- 4.1. **Four** complaints were escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in the reporting period.
- 4.2. Three of these complaints were investigated by us in the previous reporting period (2020-21) and one was a complaint received in this reporting period.
- 4.3. Three of the complaints have concluded their LGSCO investigation and one is still pending a decision.
- 4.4. Of the three with a decision, two were upheld with recommendations made and one was not upheld.
- 4.5. The upheld complaints were remedied through compensation payments totalling £550.

5. Compliments

- 5.1. In the reporting period, Adult Social Care received **35 compliments** from service users or their families.
- 5.2. The service that received the most compliments was the **North Locality Community Team** (8) followed by the **Community Placement Review team** (6) and the **Sensory Team** (6).
- 5.3. Here is a sample of compliments received:

5.3.1. From a service user receiving support from the **Community Placement Review team**:

I have really appreciated all your efforts in assisting with sorting out mum's care package amongst other things. It really means a lot to myself and my family that we have people like yourself in our corner.

5.3.2. From a service user in the **North Locality Community Team**:

I would like to convey my appreciation and thanks to X's assigned social worker Y who worked tirelessly to ensure that X's wellbeing and safety were paramount, constantly kept me updated with everything that was going on, always went over and above, even working beyond normal office hours to ensure that X's needs were adhered to. It has been an absolute pleasure to know Y, they are a big asset to social services.

5.3.3. From a service user who received support from the **Direct Payments Team**:

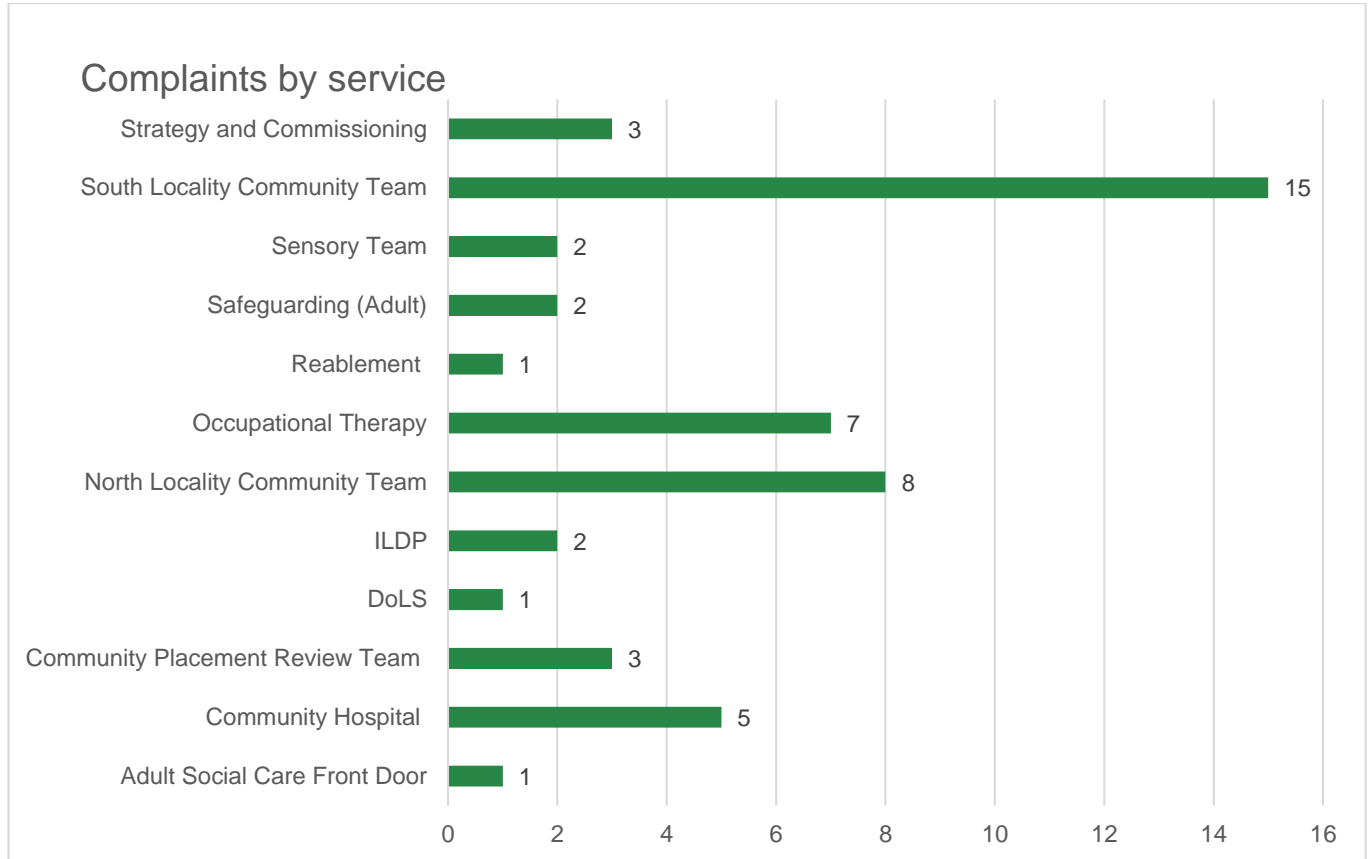
Three years ago, X had a severe stroke and was in hospital for nearly a year. At the time our children were 3 and 6 years old. Throughout this experience, particularly the process of having X back at home and the caring responsibilities that go with that, as well as two small children, the care and support we have continually received from Islington Council has been exemplary. During this time of the pandemic we decided it was best to get X a personal PA instead of using agency carers. I contacted the council because I didn't even know where to start. I was lucky enough to be looked after by Y and Z who have been so supportive, available and patient, I couldn't have asked for more. They have been truly fantastic. I just wanted to say how grateful we are as a family.

5.3.4. From a service user who received support from the **Sensory Team**:

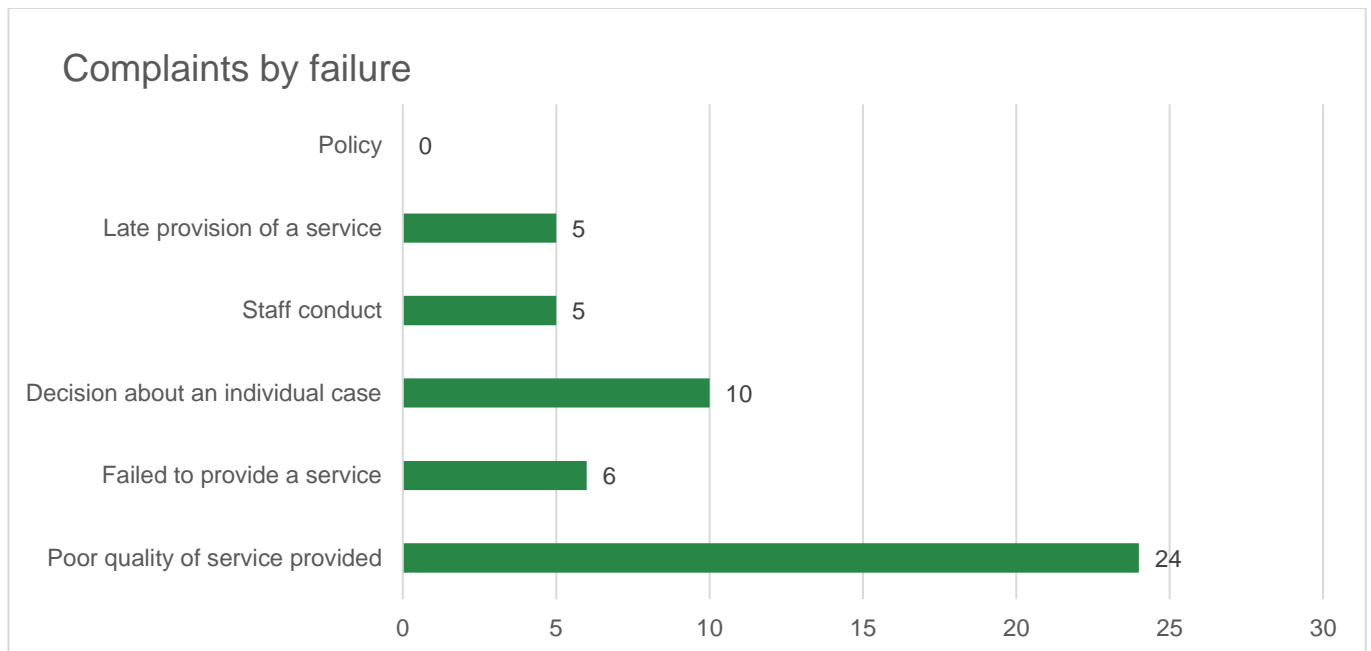
Everything arrived, thank you. X tells me that all is working well which is great. X particularly likes the headpiece for the TV. Thank you very much for all your help and for arranging all this equipment which will certainly make a big positive difference to X's wellbeing.

6. Appendix One: Number of complaints

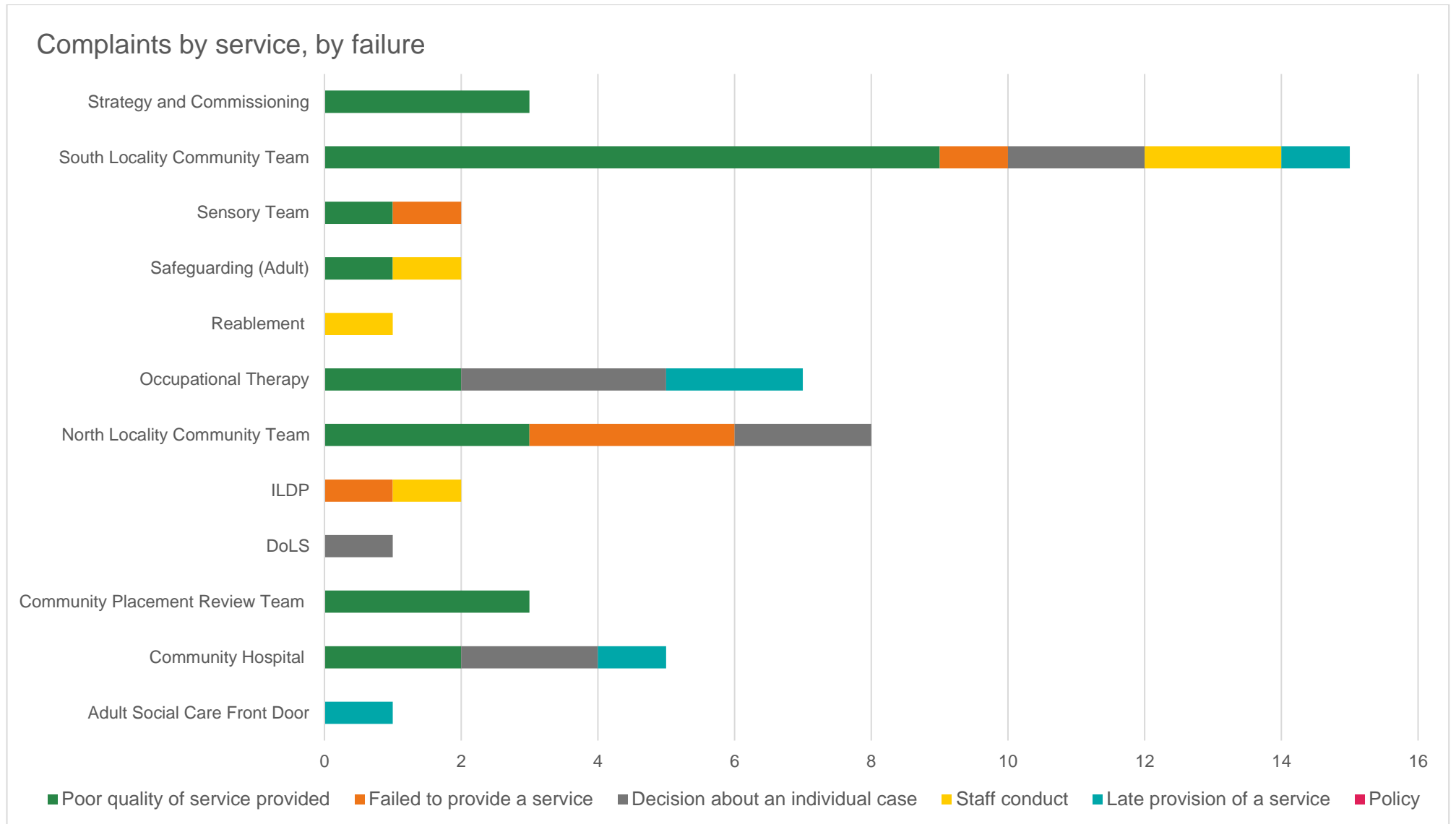
6.1. The chart shows the number of complaints recorded by service. Where more than one service may have been involved, the complaint is logged against the team with the most substantial involvement.



6.2. The chart shows the number of complaints recorded by failure.

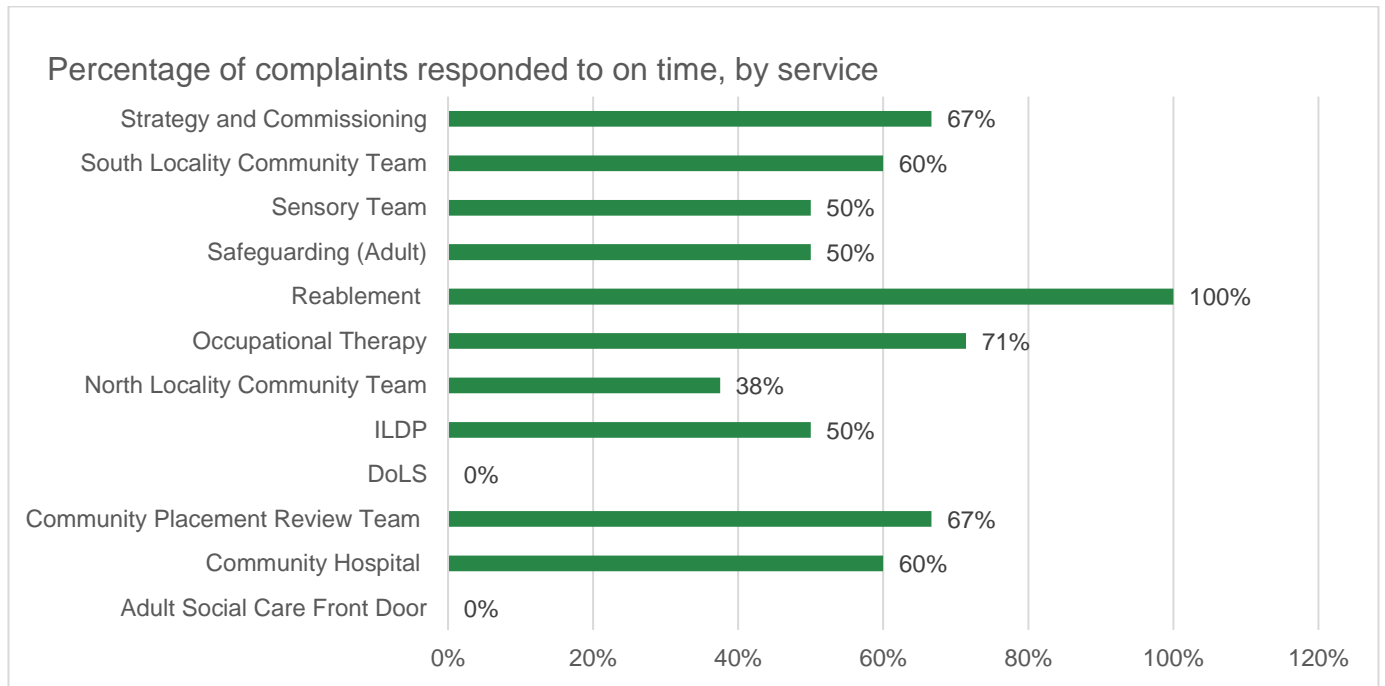


6.3. The chart shows a breakdown of complaints by service and by failure.

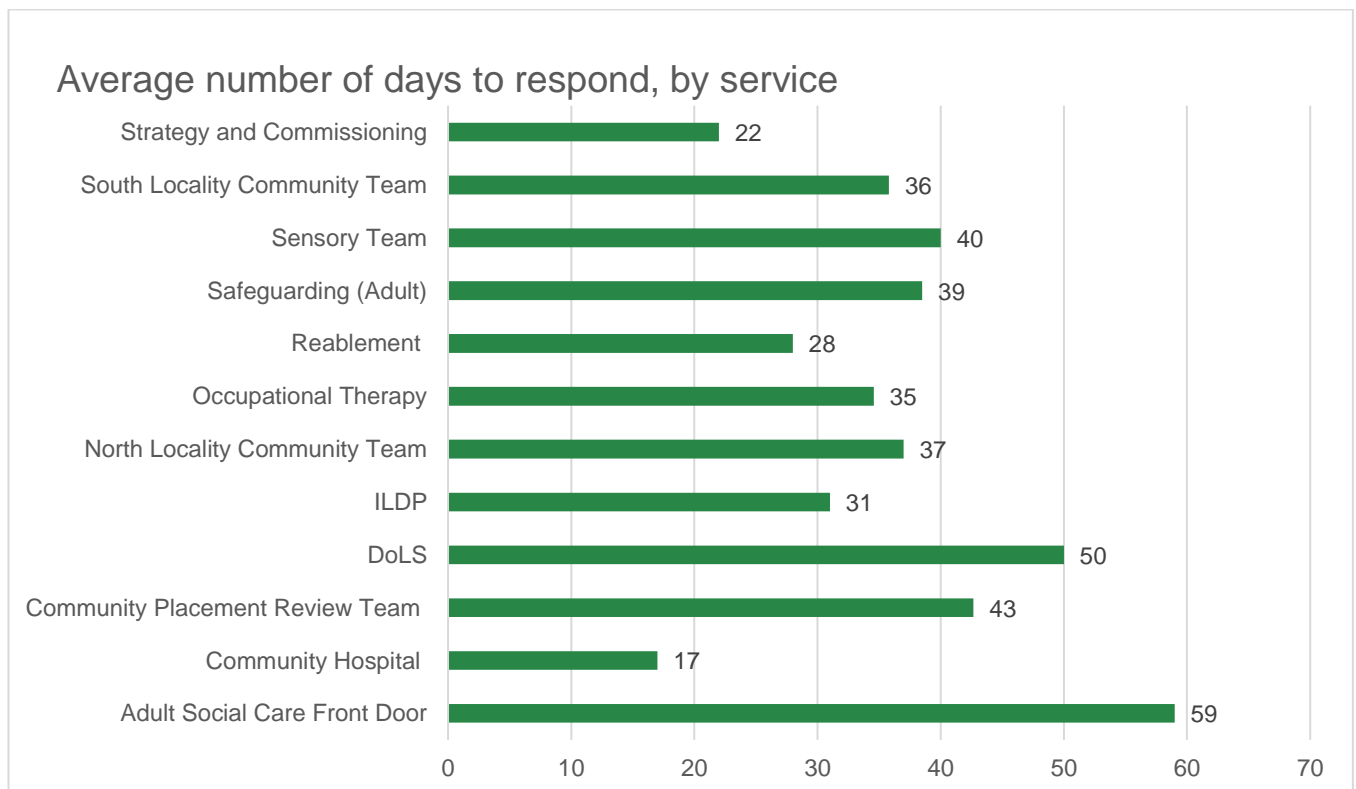


7. Appendix Two: time to respond

7.1. The usual target to respond to any complaint is 20 working days, which is normally 28 calendar days. The chart shows the percentage of complaints responded to on time, by service.

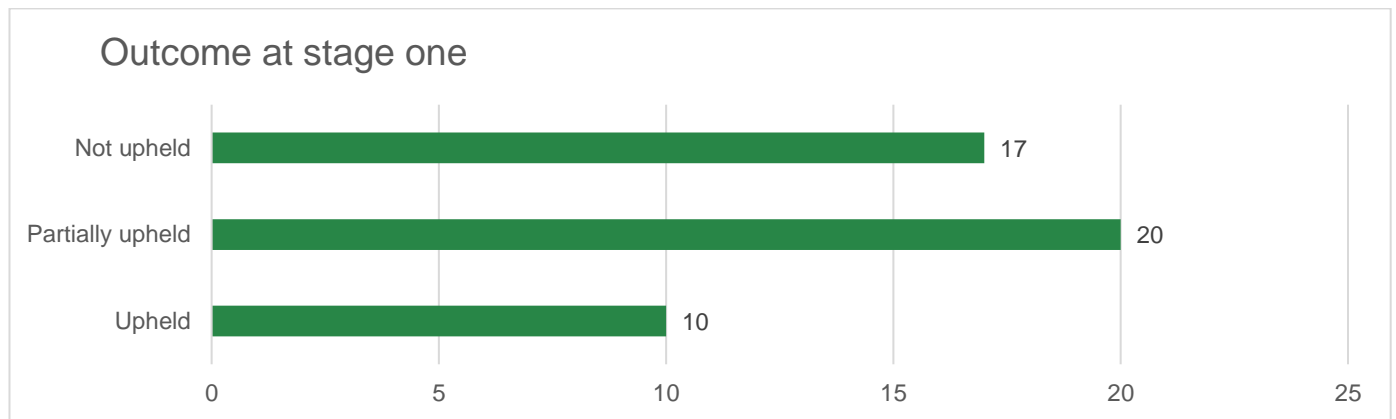


7.2. The chart shows the average number of calendar days to respond, by service.

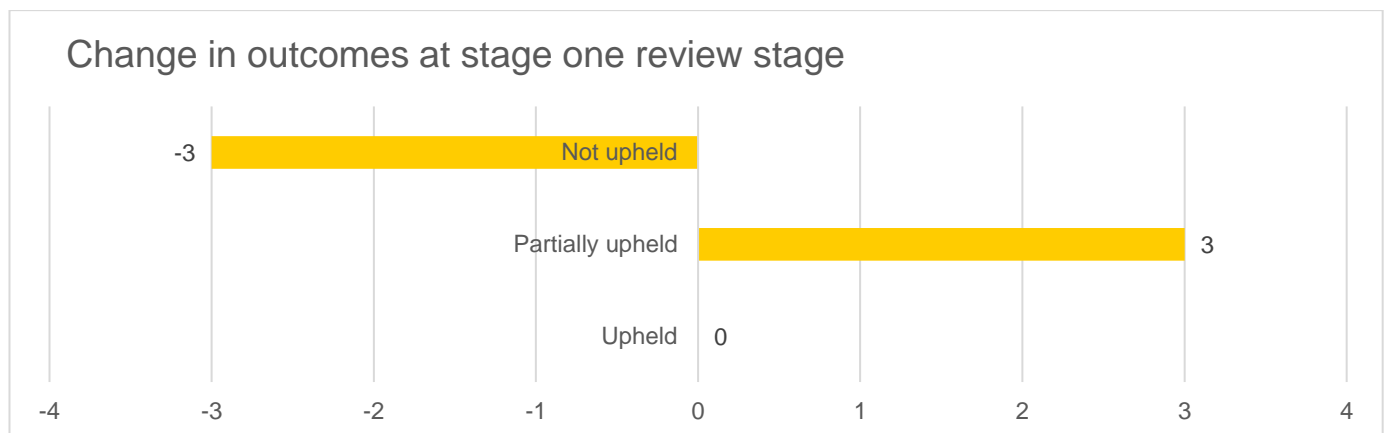


8. Appendix Three: Outcome of complaints

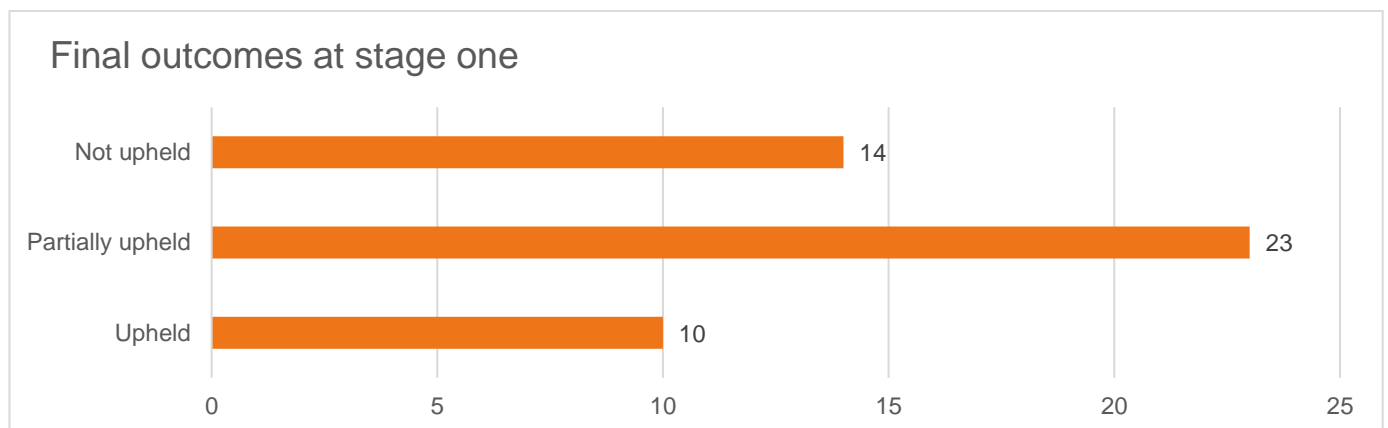
- 8.1. The chart shows the outcome of complaints investigated at stage one. Note that the cumulative total of outcomes will be different to the number of complaints investigated as not all complaints have completed their investigation.



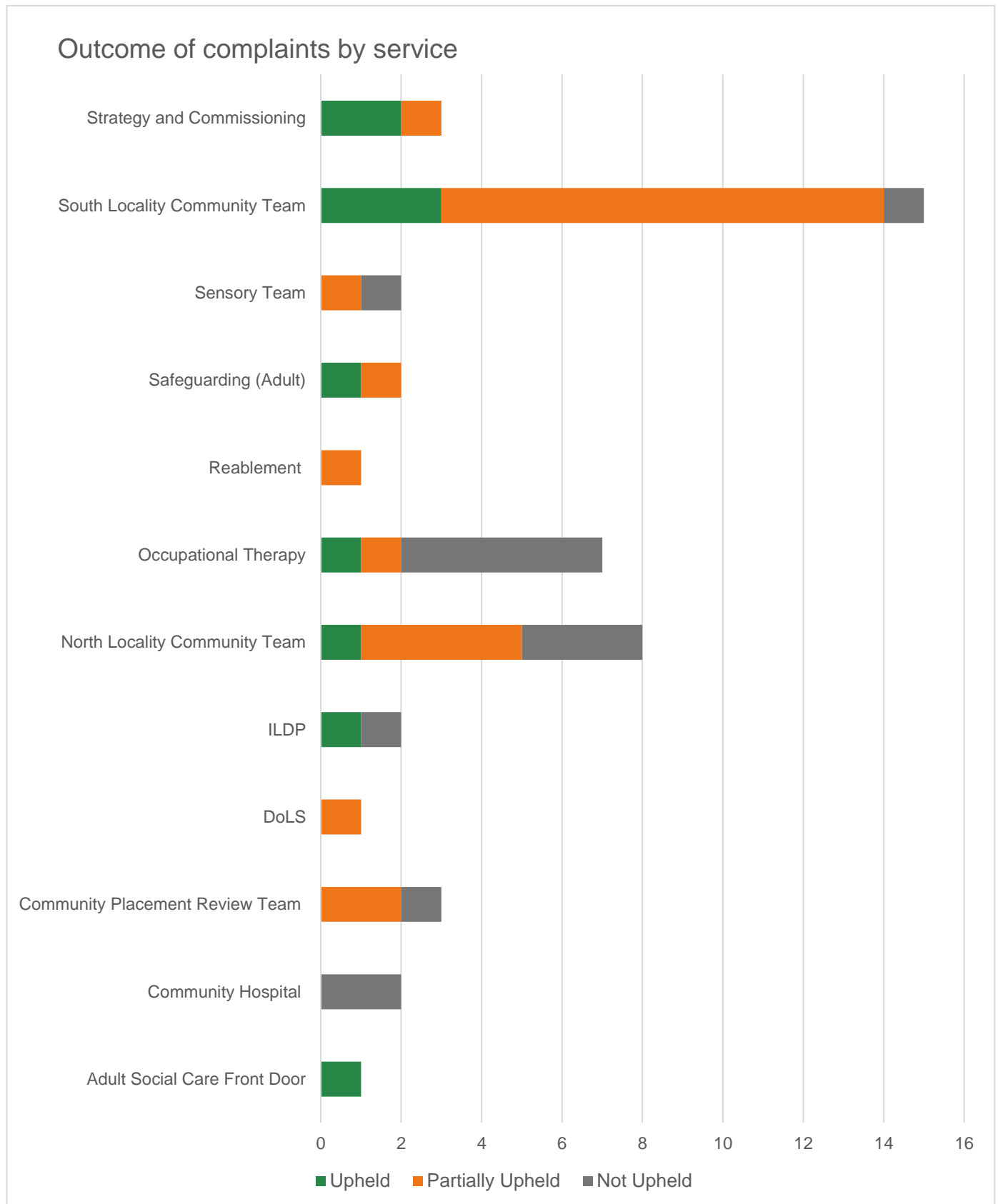
- 8.2. Seven complaints were escalated to the stage one review stage in this reporting period. The chart shows the change in outcomes to those complaints.



- 8.3. The chart shows the outcome of all complaints after they have been completely through our complaints process.



8.4. The chart shows the outcome of complaints after they have completed our complaints process, by service.



9. Appendix Four: Compliments

9.1. The table shows the number of compliments received by service

