

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 12 June 2025

BY: Executive Director for Council Resources

SUBJECT: Customer Feedback Reporting 2024/2025

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2024/2025 (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025).
- 1.2 To raise awareness of implemented and planned improved processes as result of trends seen in the reporting.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report and, where appropriate, highlight areas for further consideration.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council complies with the model complaints handling procedure (CHP) for local authorities introduced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution) – Complaint dealt with at point of service within 5 working days

Stage 2 (Investigation) – Complaint investigated; acknowledged within 3 working days and response provided within 20 working days. If complainants remain dissatisfied after completing this process they have a legal right of appeal to the SPSO.

- 3.2 Complaints handled at Stage 1 – where customers are not satisfied with the response, escalate to Stage 2. Such complaints continue to be recorded separately. This ensures that the reporting of complaints “escalated to Stage 2” are more accurate.
- 3.3 The Customer Feedback and FOI team are in the process of recruiting a new officer to assist the team due to the increase of complaints and

Information requests. A continuation of cross-skilling has enabled the team to provide continued stabilisation within both teams. The teams now permanently work from home with no impact on service delivery allowing the teams to comply with the regulatory requests in accordance with legislation.

- 3.4 The Complaint Handling Completion Form continues to capture valuable data, including resolutions and learnings and it helps develop new practices. The learnings and service improvements are captured within each service area's improvement log and shared with Service Managers quarterly. This remains a valuable tool for supporting Services in making continuous improvements and maintaining a Customer First approach.
- 3.5 The Customer Satisfaction Survey has now been fully embedded. The survey captures the feedback around how the complaint process was handled. We sent 138 survey requests to customers and 28 were returned. The findings are included in our quarterly benchmarking data and shared with our regulator, the SPSO.
- 3.6 The Council continues to record and report on complaints received by the Contact Centre, local area offices and the Customer Feedback Team. Service areas are encouraged to report complaints they receive through these channels to ensure recording is as accurate as possible.
- 3.7 The new OCP (On-line Customer Portal) is working well. Further adaptations and improved processes continue to ensure improved efficiencies.
- 3.8 This report covers all Council services.

Customer Feedback Overview 2024/2025

- 3.9 During 2024/2025, East Lothian Council received **648** complaints, compared with **580** in 2023/2024. Overall 2024/2025 saw an increase from the previous year in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints. This is detailed further below. There has been a decrease in comments received, with Waste still receiving 41% of all comments. Changes to bin 3-weekly collection and the fee for garden waste collection remain the main points of topic.

2024/2025

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	542	322	370
2	106		

2023/2024

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	519	255	465
2	61		

3.10 Complaint **response times** were as follows:

Stage 1: 40% (190 of 475) responded to within 5 working days.

Stage 2: 95.1% (77 of 81) responded to within 20 working days.

3.11 Response times have slightly decreased since 2024/2025 at 40% for Stage 1 compared to 42% in 2023/2024 and increased from 66% to 95.1% for Stage 2.

Whilst the response time is longer than the SPSO guidelines, customers are advised if their Stage 2 complaint is going to take more than 20 days and provided with regular updates, where required.

Complaint Analysis 2024/2025

3.12 Stage 1 complaints

Outcomes in 2024/2025 were as follows:

542 Stage 1 complaints received

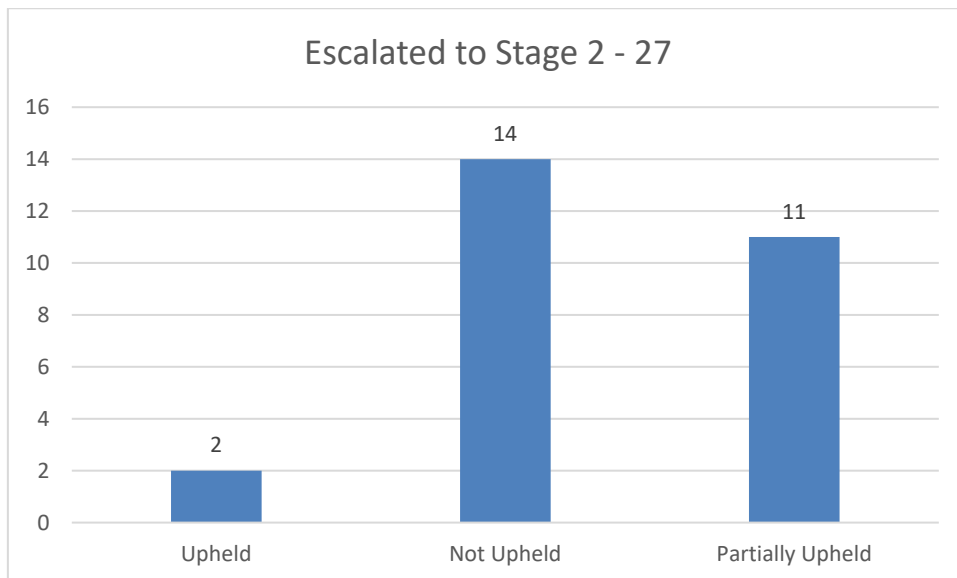
Not Upheld - 142

Partially Upheld - 55

Upheld - 39

Resolved - 239

Escalated to Stage 2 - 27



Please note: Totals may not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.

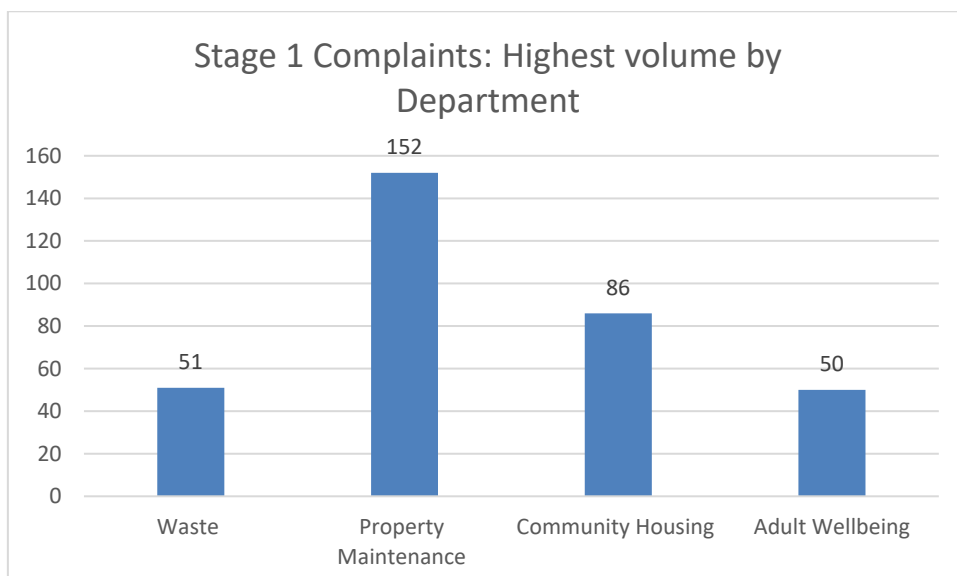
The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2024/2025** were:

Waste 9% (51)

Property Maintenance 28% (152)

Community Housing 16% (86)

Adult Wellbeing 9% (50)



Please note: Totals may not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received

Waste received 9% (51) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2024/2025 (542). Of the complaints received, over 35% were resolved.

Adult Wellbeing received 9% (50) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2024/2025 (542). Of the complaints received, over 40% were resolved.

Community Housing received 16% (86) of all Stage 1 complaints (542) and has seen a decrease from 104 in 2023/2024. Of the complaints received, over 36% were resolved.

Property Maintenance received 28% (152) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2024/2025 (542). Stage 1 complaints have seen a decrease from 231 in 2023/2024 to 152 this year. Of the complaints received, over 49% were resolved

3.13 Stage 2 complaints

Outcomes in 2024/2025 were as follows:

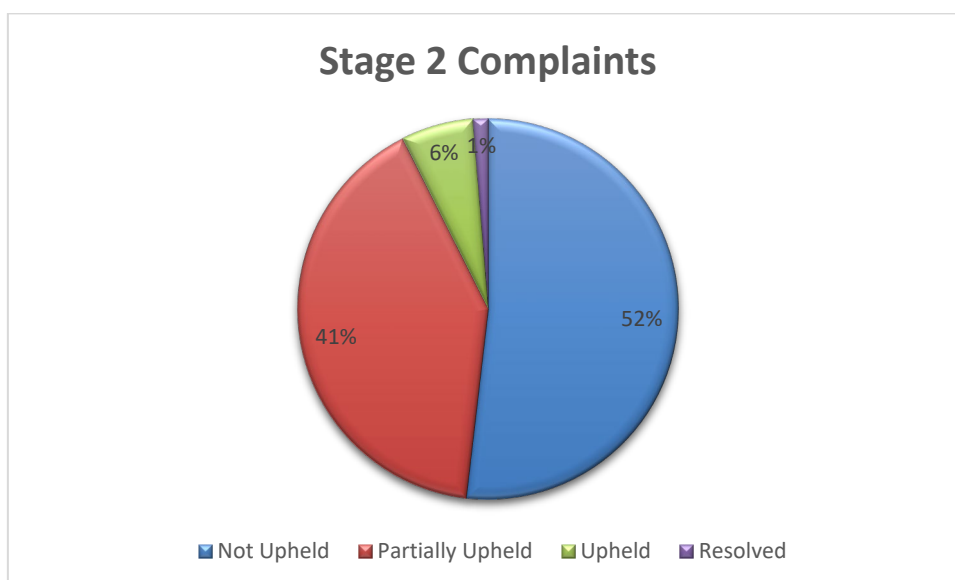
106 Stage 2 complaints received

Not Upheld - 42

Partially Upheld - 33

Upheld - 5

Resolved - 1



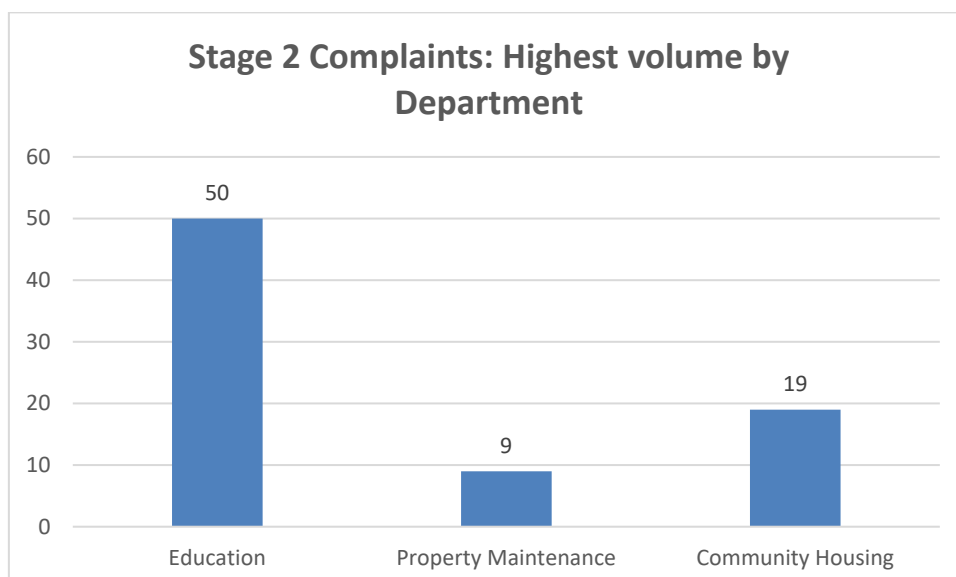
Please note: Totals may not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 2** complaints in **2024/2025** were:

Education 47% (50)

Property Maintenance 8% (9)

Community Housing 18% (19)



Education received 47% (50) of all Stage 2 complaints received in 2024/2025 (106). Of the complaints received, over 32% were not upheld. 15% of Education complaints were in relation to bullying and 8% were in relation to ASN pupils.

Property Maintenance received 8% (9) of all Stage 2 complaints received in 2024/2025 (106). Of the complaints received, over 44% were not upheld.

Community Housing received 18% (19) of all Stage 2 complaints (106). Of the complaints received, over 47% were not upheld.

- 3.14 A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2023/2024 are shown in [Appendix 1](#). Service Area Response Timescales are shown in [Appendix 2](#).

Compliments Overview 2024/2025

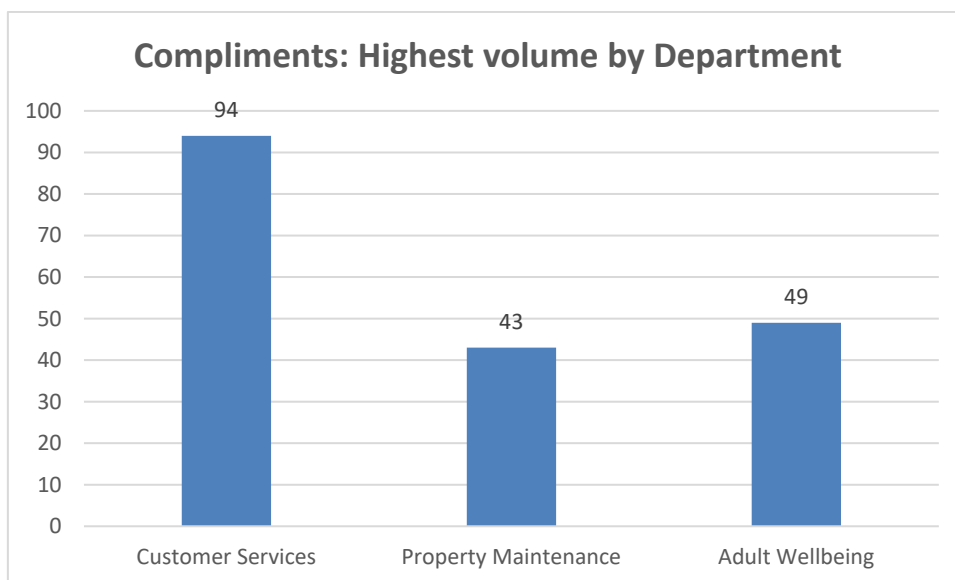
- 3.15 **322** compliments were received in **2024/2025**.

The following Service Areas received a high percentage of compliments:

Property Maintenance 13% (43)

Customer Services 29% (94)

Adult Wellbeing 15% (49)



This follows the trend seen in previous years as these Service Areas have a high volume of customer facing interactions and as such have more opportunity to receive more feedback; both compliments and complaints.

Comments Overview 2024/2025

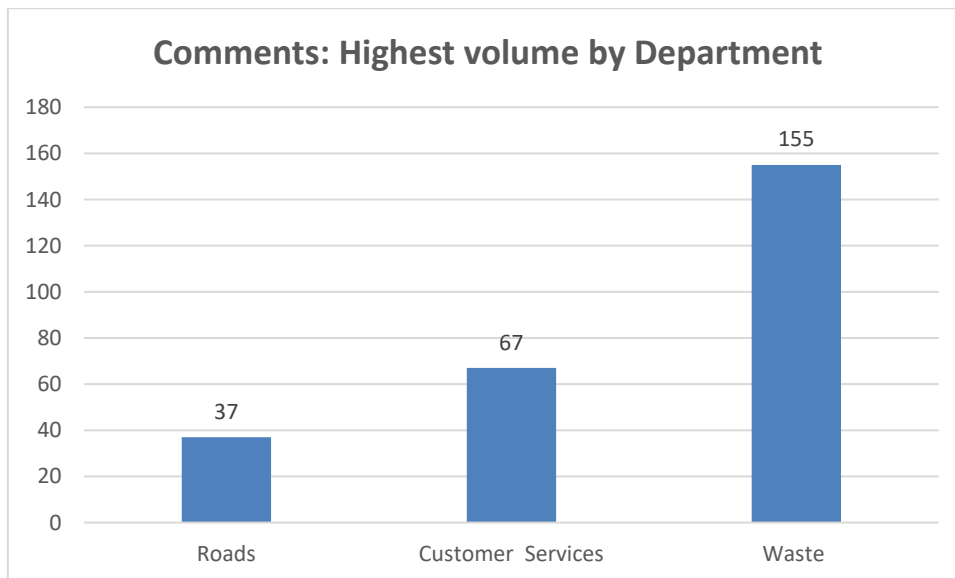
3.15 **370** comments were received in **2024/2025**.

The following Service Areas received a high percentage of comments:

Roads 10% (37)

Customer Services 18% (67)

Waste 42% (155)



This follows the trend seen in previous years as these service areas have a high volume of customer facing interactions and as such have more opportunity to receive more feedback; both compliments and comments.

Complaint Trends Found Across Service Areas

3.16 All - Services Communication

Across all service areas of the Council, lack of communication is the most frequently reported issue.

Effective communication is crucial when handling customer enquiries/complaints. It not only ensures that issues are addressed promptly and efficiently but also fosters trust and transparency between the Council and its residents. Communication with customers early and throughout the handling of enquiries also reduces the likelihood that complaints will be escalated, minimising demands on staff time overall.

Looking forward to 2025-26 based on this years trends, improvements to effective communication are likely to have a significant impact.

After communication, the following topics were the most frequently reported subjects of complaints, by service area:

Education

- Bullying – pupil to pupil
- ASN funding
- ASN provision
- Staff conduct

ELHSCP

- Care providers
- Care packages

Housing

- Neighbour issues
- Not calling tenants back when requested
- Property conditions at let

Property Maintenance

- Damp & Mould
- Conditions of properties
- Ongoing repairs
- Cancelled appointments
- Lack of response

Waste

- Recycling centre
- Brown bin payment
- Bin collections
- Staff conduct
- Recycling service

3.17 Number of Complaints Received per Individual

Total number of complaints: 648

Total number of complainants: 559

Complainants who submitted 1 complaint only: 536

Complainants who submitted 2-5 complaints: 22

Complainants who submitted 6-10 complaints: 1

Complainants who submitted more than 10 complaints: 0

Highest number of complaints submitted by a single individual: 6

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

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Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2024/2025

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Compliments	Comments
Adult Wellbeing													
Total	50	7	6	11	20	3	6	2	2	1	0	49	6
Building Standards													
Total	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Children's Services													
Total	16	2	1	0	10	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Community Housing													
Total	86	18	14	8	31	13	19	9	7	2	0	4	24
Community Partnerships													
Total	4	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Web & Corporate Communications													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	6
Customer Services													
Total	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	94	67
Education													
Total	49	17	4	4	13	9	50	14	16	3	1	3	7
Engineering Services													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Service areas which have not received any complaints or comments/compliments in 2024/2025 have not been included in this overall report

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Compliments	Comments
Environmental Services													
Total	32	12	3	2	6	5	5	1	2	0	0	6	13
Planning													
Total	8	6	0	0	0	2	4	4	0	0	0	0	2
Facilities													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
Property Maintenance													
Total	152	39	11	9	74	11	9	4	3	2	0	43	9
Roads													
Total	25	2	2	3	15	1	2	2	0	0	0	19	37
Transportation													
Total	12	2	1	0	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	4
Sports & Countryside													
Total	16	2	1	1	8	1	3	3	0	0	0	42	24
Waste													
Total	51	22	2	1	18	4	1	1	0	0	0	26	155
Revenues Services													
Total	9	2	1	0	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	7	2
Governance													
Total	7	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	4
Strategic Asset & Estates													
Total	3	0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
People and Council Support													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Housing Assets inc Central Heating													
Total	14	9	1	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

Service areas which have not received any complaints or comments/compliments in 2024/2025 have not been included in this overall report

Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2024/2025

Service Area	Stage 1 % responded to within 5 Working days	Stage 2 % responded to within 20 Working days
Adult Wellbeing	26%	82%
Building Standards	100%	*
Children's Services	36%	60%
Community Housing	24%	81%
Community Partnerships	0%	100%
Customer Services	100%	100%
Education	43%	69%
People and Council Support	*	0%
Environment Services	26%	90%
Housing Assests Inc Central Heating	57%	*
Strategic Asset & Estates	33%	100%
Governance	50%	*
Planning	33%	33%
Property Maintenance	34%	80%
Revenues Services	87%	100%
Roads	73%	66%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	66%	100%
Transportation	66%	100%
Waste	74%	100%
** no complaints recorded		