



Knowsley Council

Have Your Say Annual Report 2024-25

Contents

3	Introduction
4	Why do we produce this report?
5	What is a complaint?
6	Stage One - Summary of complaints received
7	Stage Two - Summary of complaints received
8-10	Response Times – Stage One & Stage Two Complaints
11	Children's Social Care Complaints – Stage Three
12	Types of Complaints
13	Council Complaints
14-16	Children's Social Care & Adult Social Care
17	Complaint Outcomes
18 -19	Learning from complaints
20	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)
21-23	Compliments received
24	Reporting, monitoring, and driving service improvement



Every year, Knowsley Council publishes an annual report to provide a summary of the complaints and compliments the Council has received and how they have been dealt with.



Feedback from residents and service users is important to the Council.



It is an opportunity to identify and address problems, learn from our mistakes and good practice, and continue to improve what we do.

Why do we produce this report?



To be open and transparent about the complaints we receive, how we have responded, and what we have done to put things right.



To explain what we have learnt from the feedback we have received.



To encourage people to get in touch to tell us about their experiences.

What is a complaint?



A complaint is defined by the Council as an expression of dissatisfaction made about the Council, its services, staff, or an action of an organisation providing a service on behalf of the Council.

The Council's aim is to resolve complaints as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring a thorough and fair investigation.

The Council's 'Have your Say' policy incorporates three areas



Each of these have an escalation stage to allow the complainant an opportunity to request further review if they remain dissatisfied following the first response. Once each stage of the process has been exhausted, the complainant may contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Comments and compliments are also captured through the process, providing service users with further options to engage with the Council and share their views.

The Council's 'Have Your Say' policy and procedures can be found on the Council's website

[Compliments, complaints and feedback | Knowsley Council](#)

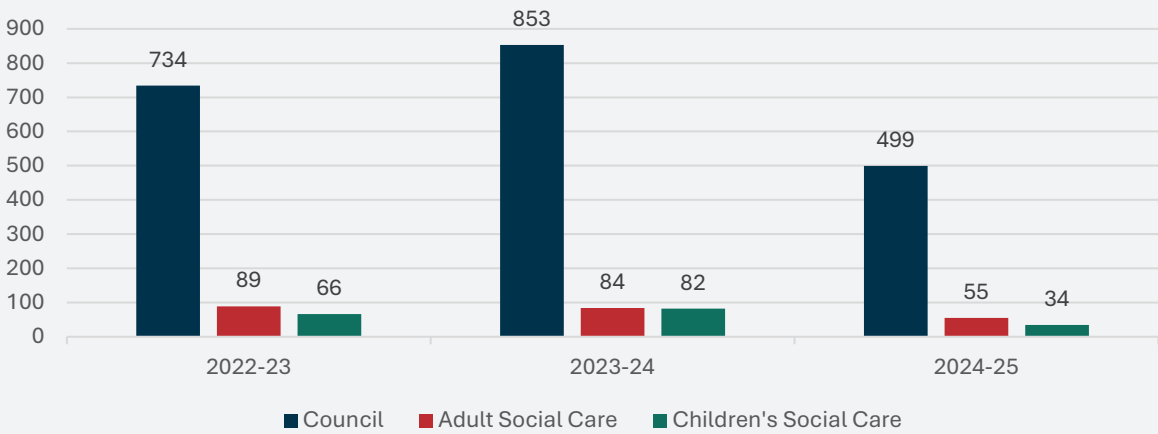
Summary of complaints received in 2024-25

Stage One



Despite the breadth and complexity of Council services delivered and the substantial volumes of interactions each year, in 2024-25, the total number of complaints received was **588**. This is a significant decrease of 431 from the previous year's total of 1019.

The highest volume of complaints are dealt with through the Council Complaints process which includes all Council services, apart from Children's and Adult's Social Care.



Complaint area	2023-2024	2024-2025	% change +/-
Council	853	499	-41.50%
Adult Social Care	84	55	-34.52%
Children's Social Care	82	34	-58.53%

Overall complaints have decreased by 42.29% in the last 12 months.

The Council supports over 159,000 residents from c.71,000 households with a wide range of services. The scale of services offered is significant, over the course of the year an estimated total of 4,473,000 waste, recycling and green waste bins are emptied, Adult Social Care undertook 14,800 assessments for adults and provided support to 4,200 service users and 3000 carers, and Children's Social Care provided support to 1,966 vulnerable children and their families. In addition, Customer Services have recorded 219,863 visits to libraries, 132,076 calls to the Contact Centre, 37,984 online chats and 415,161 online transactions. This is just a proportion of the hundreds of thousands of interactions the Council has with its residents.

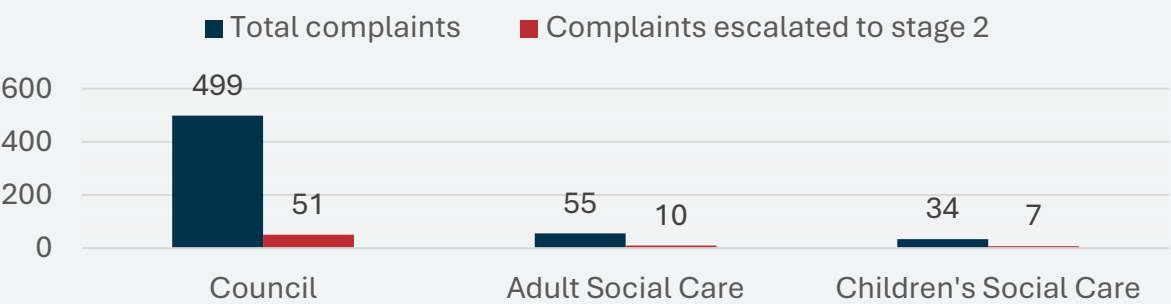
Summary of complaints received in 2024-25

Stage Two



Of the 588 complaints received, **88% were resolved successfully at the first stage** of the complaints process without the need for further review. A total of 68 complaints were escalated to stage two.

Complaints escalated to stage two



Area	Total complaints	Complaints escalated to Stage 2	% of complaints successfully resolved
Council	499	51	89.78%
Adult Social Care	55	10	81.82%
Children's Social Care	34	7	79.41%

If a complainant is unhappy with the Council's response to their complaint, the complaint can be escalated to stage two of the complaint's procedure. This provides a further opportunity to review the issues raised by the complainant to ensure that the response at stage one has addressed all the concerns raised within the complaint and that the response is both proportionate and reasonable.

Escalation to stage two does not necessarily mean that there has been any failing on the part of the Council. It can simply mean that the complainant disagrees with the outcome of the stage one complaint.

Stage One Response Times



All complaint processes have an option to extend the timescale should further time be required to investigate the matter thoroughly.

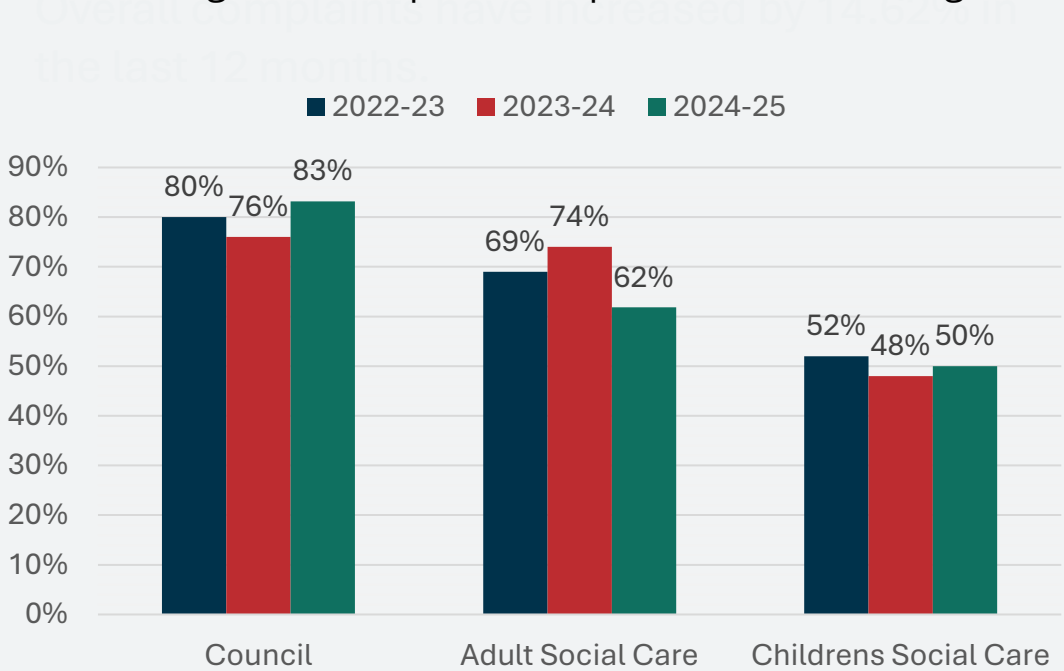
If this is the case, the Council will write to the complainant to explain the reason why and provide the new response date.

Response time targets for stage one complaints

Complaint	Working days
Council Complaints	15
Adult Social Care Complaints	15
Children's Social Care Complaints	10

Timeliness of response to Adult Social Care complaints has reduced by 12%. However, there is an improvement in timeliness of 2% in Children's Social Care and an improvement of 7% for Council complaints.

% stage one complaints responded to within target



Stage Two Response Times



All complaint processes have an option to extend the timescale should further time be required to investigate the matter thoroughly.

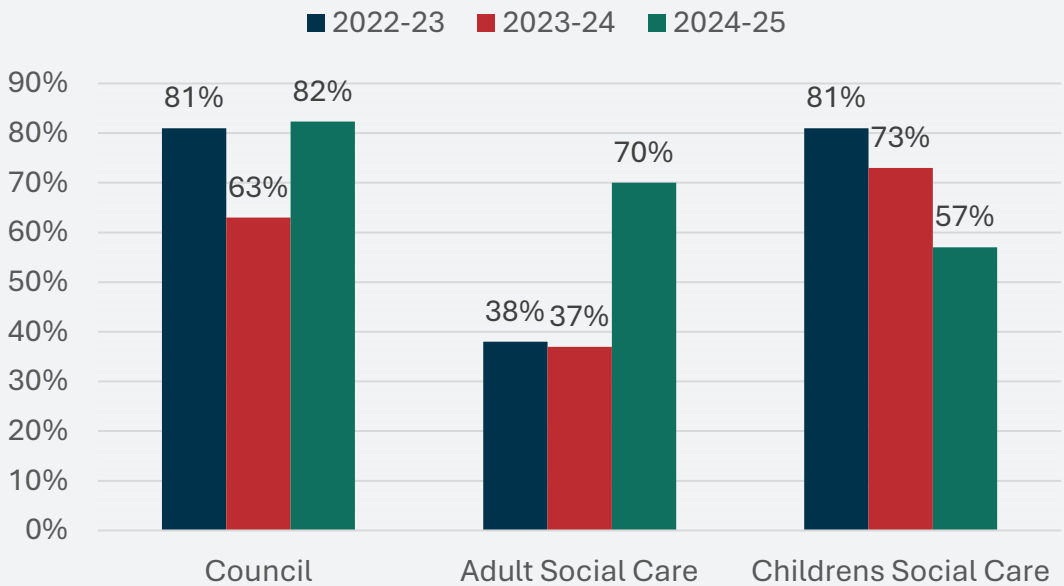
If this is the case, the Council will write to the complainant to explain the reason why and provide the new response date.

Response time targets for stage two complaints

Complaint	Working days
Council Complaints	20
Adult Social Care Complaints	20
Children's Social Care Complaints	25

There has been a decrease of 16% in the timeliness of response within Children's Social Care. However, an improvement in timeliness has been seen in both Council and Adult Social Care complaints. Council complaints improved by 19%, and Adults Social Care by 33%.

% stage two complaints responded to within target
the last 12 months



Timeliness of response



Resource pressures can at times prevent complaints being resolved as swiftly as they should, as essential services are prioritised.



The timeliness of responses within Adult and Children's Social Care, can, in part, be attributed to continued challenges with workforce sufficiency, including vacancy rates and agency staff turnover within the services that can lead to case transfers and sometimes delay. In addition, the complexity of service demand, and an increase in the number of cases.



The Complaints team continues to work with and support Council teams to improve the timeliness and quality of response. This includes meeting with Senior Officers regularly to review performance, address areas of concern, identify improvements to internal complaint management and providing weekly bespoke reports to monitor progress of outstanding complaints. Complaint handling training was rolled out to all staff who deal with complaints and further sessions will be completed with new members of staff going forward.

Children's Social Care Complaints – Stage Three



Where **stage two** of the **Children's Social Care complaints procedure** has been completed and the complainant remains dissatisfied, it is possible to request further consideration of the complaint by an **Independent Review Panel**.

In 2024-25, 3 complaints progressed through an independent review panel hearing compared to 5 in 2023-24.

The panel provided their findings and recommendations to the Council, which were reviewed, and appropriate action was taken.

The process was completed in full and within the agreed response timescale.

Types of Complaints



The table below provides a breakdown of the **Council complaint** volumes received by service area.

Area	Volume
Waste Management	131
Children's Services and Education	105
Licensing	76
Adult Services	26
Revenues & Benefits	25
Street Scene	23
Highways	21
Environmental Health	18
Strategic Housing	18
Environmental Sustainability, Parks and Green Spaces	17
Customer Service	12
Planning/Building Control	12
FACT	4
Information Governance	3

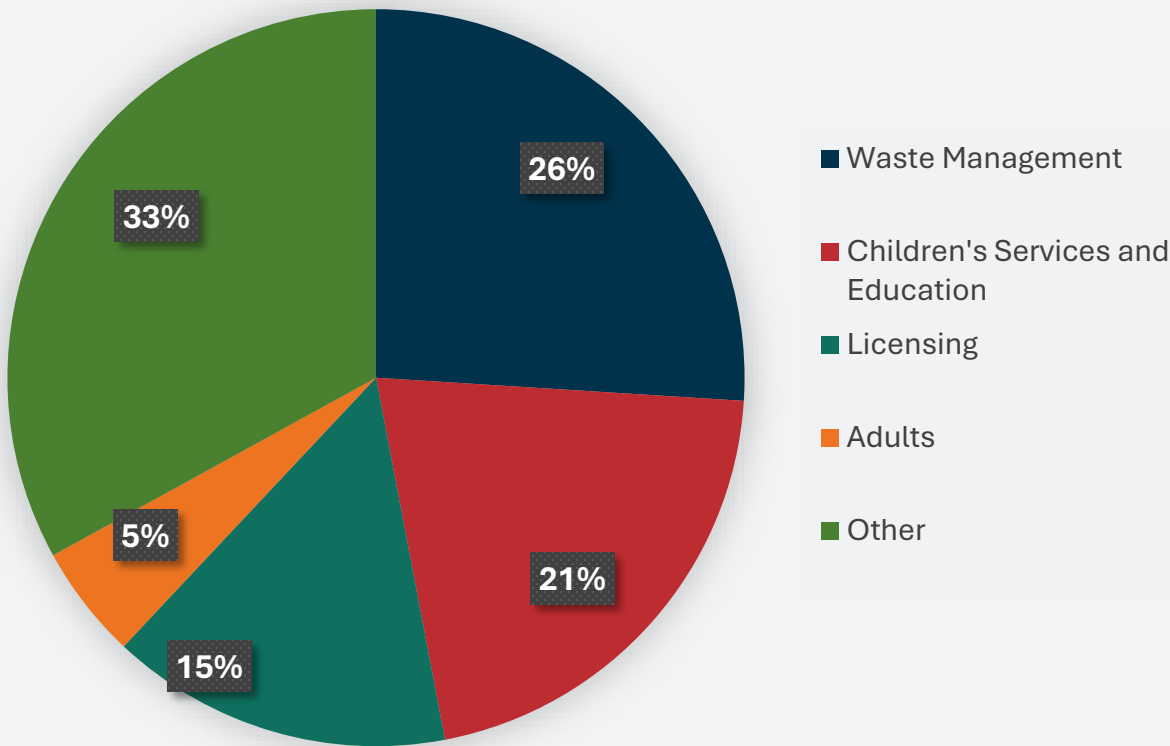
Area	Volume
Town Centre Management	2
Street Lighting	2
Safer Communities	1
Property Development	1
Elections	1
Communications	1

Council Complaints



Below is a summary of the **top 4 services** that received the highest number of council complaints

Top 4 Services



As with previous years, the highest number of council complaints received related to **Waste Management**. There is a high number of service users, with every household and business in Knowsley accessing the service. The themes included missed collections, delays receiving new bins and bulky collection issues.

There has been an increase in non-statutory complaints about Education, Health and Care Plans, within **Children's Services & Education**. The categories include delays to care plans being completed, changes of staff, and lack of support with school placements.

The **Licensing** Team received complaints due to the timescales to new taxi licence applications, renewals and testing availability. The service continue to experience extreme pressure following a sharp increase in volumes. New procedures have been implemented to improve timeliness and the customer experience, with further improvements taking place during 2025.

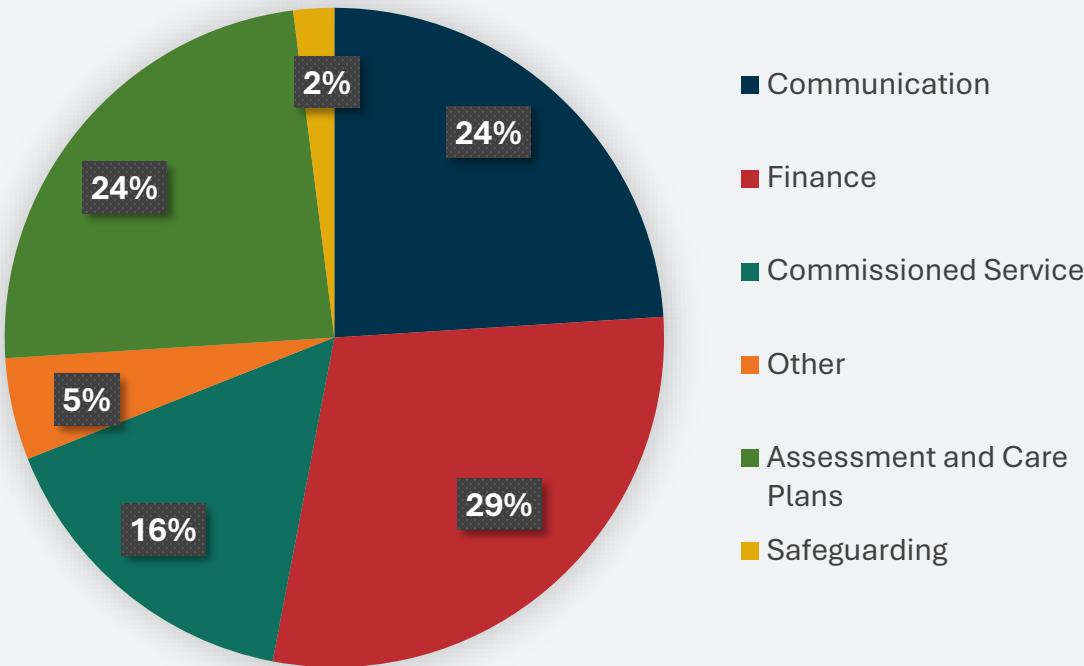
Complaints to **Adult Services** related to communication, including requests for updates on current cases. This also included contact with staff, for example not being able to contact a social worker by telephone, messages not returned, or letters not responded to in a timely manner.

Children’s Social Care & Adult Social Care

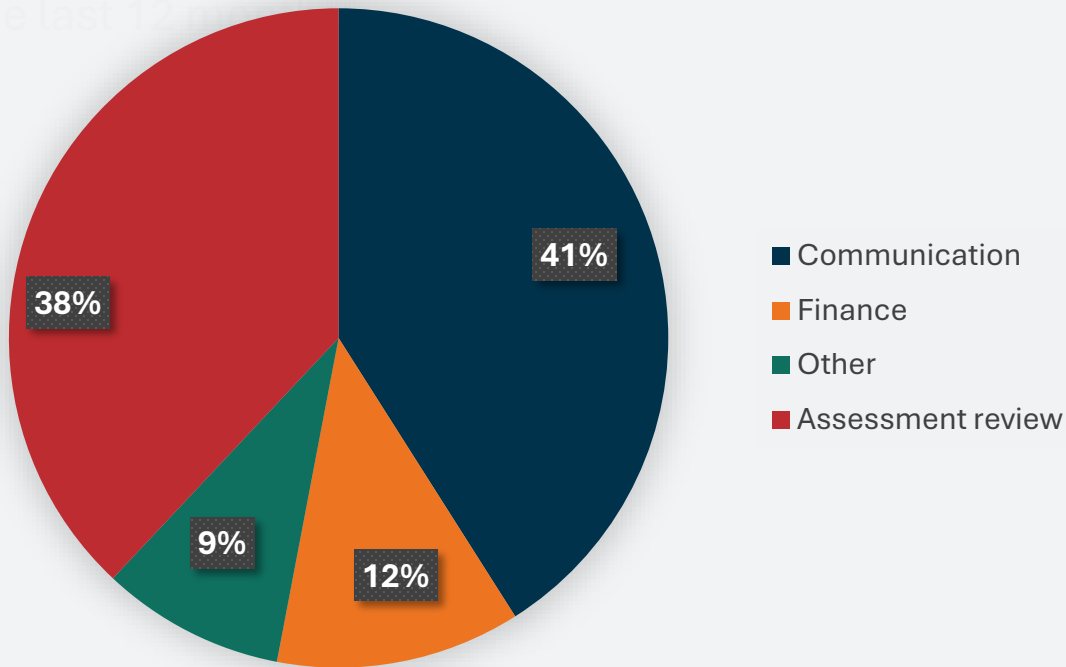


The breakdown of complaints for Children’s Social Care and Adult Social Care services are below.

Adult Social Care Complaints



Children Social Care Complaints



Themes - Adult Social Care

The largest volume of complaints received relate to **finance** and client contribution to their care. This includes people not always knowing what they might be expected to pay at the point their services commence, or in some cases not understanding from the outset that Adult Social Care is a chargeable service. The category also includes the cost of care homes, day services and the amount of disability related expenditure awarded to a service user.

Complaints about **communication** can be requests for updates on current cases, disagreement with meeting minutes, and delays in receiving assessments or the factual content. This is in part, a result of ongoing challenges associated with workforce sufficiency, including agency staff turnover but one which the Council are committed to addressing via the new processes in place in Adult Social Care, to more effectively manage and learn from the complaints we receive.

Commissioned service complaints include late or missed service calls by a Domiciliary Care Provider, inconsistency with the care assistants supplied, or the requirement of a specialist care worker. Commissioned complaints were also received about residential, nursing, or Elderly Mentally Infirm (EMI) Care Homes. Concerns will be raised due to general care.

Assessments and care plan complaints can be about the delivery of services, for example the reduction in a care package or the delay in providing care. In many of these cases, the changes to care packages have resulted from a change to the person's assessed need. The Council is not required to provide services to meet needs that are not considered eligible under the Care Act 2014.

The outcome of **safeguarding investigations** may result in complaints, whether a safeguarding enquiry reaches the correct threshold for investigation or how the outcome has been communicated to the family.

Many of these complaints are not upheld as complainants are dissatisfied with the decision based on the Adult Social Care Charging Policy or the outcome of the Safeguarding investigation, rather than dissatisfaction of the service received, and they use the complaints process to appeal the decision.

Themes – Children's Social Care

Most complaints are from parents or carers, rather than the child in care.

The highest volume of complaints received for Children's Social Care related to **communication**. These complaints include families requiring an update, disagreement with the contents of assessments, sharing of information between agencies, the lack of notice when scheduling meetings or meetings being cancelled at short notice.

Complaints have also been received about contact with social workers, not being able to speak to a social worker by telephone, messages not being returned or letters unanswered. Every attempt is made for a social worker to speak to service users; however, social workers are not predominantly office based, and it is not always possible to get in touch immediately as the social worker may be out of the office on a visit. The service face continued challenges with vacancy rates and reliance on agency staff, which can also impact on communications and the number of changes in Social Workers.

Disatisfaction with **Assessment Reviews** can include placements, the actions and decisions of the Social Workers, assessments and support to children and families during these procedures. The amount of time a child may be placed on a child protection plan or the enforcement of a child protection plan.

Financial complaints relate to any payments provided by Children's Social Care. This could be a Fostering payment or a Special Guardianship Order payment. Complaints can link to the date of the assessment and payment, whether the qualifying criteria is met or when payments are stopped due to the child reaching the age of 18.

Children's Social Care manage contact orders, supervisions, and care orders. Complaints can be made about the perceived lack of contact with children, the venue for the contact to take place (i.e., in a children's centre or in the community) and whether contact is to be supervised. Cancellation of contact visits or change of venue, have also resulted in complaints.

Complaint Outcomes



A complaint is deemed to be upheld if the Council has investigated and finds evidence to support the claim or has had to take action to resolve the issue.

Of the 588 complaints received at stage one, 49% (291) were upheld or partially upheld, compared to the previous year’s result of 34%. 68 complaints were escalated to stage two, with 42% (29) upheld or partially upheld, compared to a 34% rate in 2023-24. In 297 of the 588 complaints received during the year (51%), there was no failing on the part of the Council.

Stage one

Area	Total complaints	Total upheld	% upheld
Council	499	246	49%
Adult Social Care	55	23	41%
Children's Social Care	34	22	64%
Total	588	291	49%

Stage two

Area	Total complaints	Total upheld	% upheld
Council	51	21	41%
Adult Social Care	10	4	40%
Children's Social Care	7	4	57%
Total	68	29	42%

Learning from complaints



Complaints are important to the Council. Feedback from service users tells us when things have gone wrong and provides an opportunity to learn from our mistakes and seek improvements.

A sample of positive improvements the Council has made is set out below.

You said	We did
I didn't receive notification that my taxi badge/licence was due for renewal.	An enhancement was made to our notification service. A text message is now sent 90 days before expiry (if a current mobile number is held) to remind the driver and advise of the steps that need to be taken.
I am owed money as some of my care calls were cancelled. The care company said that they have told you and I shouldn't be charged, but my bill has not been adjusted.	Improved how we collect information from care providers and the system which calculates how much service users should be charged.
I have called the Council and sent emails regarding an environmental health problem I have been having, and nobody is getting back to me.	We now collate individual calls and emails which are then added onto a shared team area to complete the call backs in a timely manner
I am struggling to get support from my social worker and get copies of my child's plan.	Increased the number of child protection social work teams. This will support contact with families, reduce caseloads and improve quality of practice.

You said	We did
I have been unable to find any information on what happens next following my EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than at School) application.	We developed an information sheet to share with families so that we have a clear offer of services and provision.
I need to update my personal alcohol licence as my address has changed but there is not enough information on your website.	We reviewed the website to make sure that clear information is given on alcohol licence and updated our auto acknowledgment to include links to the relevant pages.
I used your online chat but had to wait to get through to someone when it was just a quick question.	We made improvements to our 'chat bot' so that simple enquiries can be answered without the need to speak to a member of staff
My mum was in hospital and when she was there, she agreed to care calls to help her when she came home, but it wasn't made clear she would have to pay for them.	A leaflet has been created to explain how charging for services works in Adult Social Care. We also reviewed and made changes to several key pieces of correspondence that are regularly sent to people who use our services. We have simplified letters to explain the outcome of the assessment process and included details about Care Act eligibility.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO)



The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) **can investigate individual complaints** about councils, to consider if decisions have been made in the right way. A complaint is upheld when fault is found in an organisation's actions.

The LGSCO will make recommendations **to put things right** when faults have caused injustice.

The LGSCO report that they have reviewed internal practices to make best use of the resources they have available. One outcome is to be more selective about the complaints they investigate, prioritising those where it is in the public interest to do so. As the LGSCO are less likely to carry out investigations on borderline issues, they are naturally finding a higher proportion of fault overall.

The LGSCO reported they dealt with 35 complaints. Of these, 12 were not for LGSCO, or not ready for investigation. 19 were assessed and closed. A total of only 4 complaints were investigated, and all were upheld. Therefore, the percentage of complaints upheld is 100%. This compares to 81% of complaints upheld in similar sized authorities.

- 3 Adult Care Services
- 1 Education & Children Services

The LGSCO report they are satisfied that Knowsley Council have successfully implemented and complied with **all** recommendations made following complaint investigation (100%).

The Council received an annual review letter from the LGSCO providing a summary of complaint performance for 2024-25.

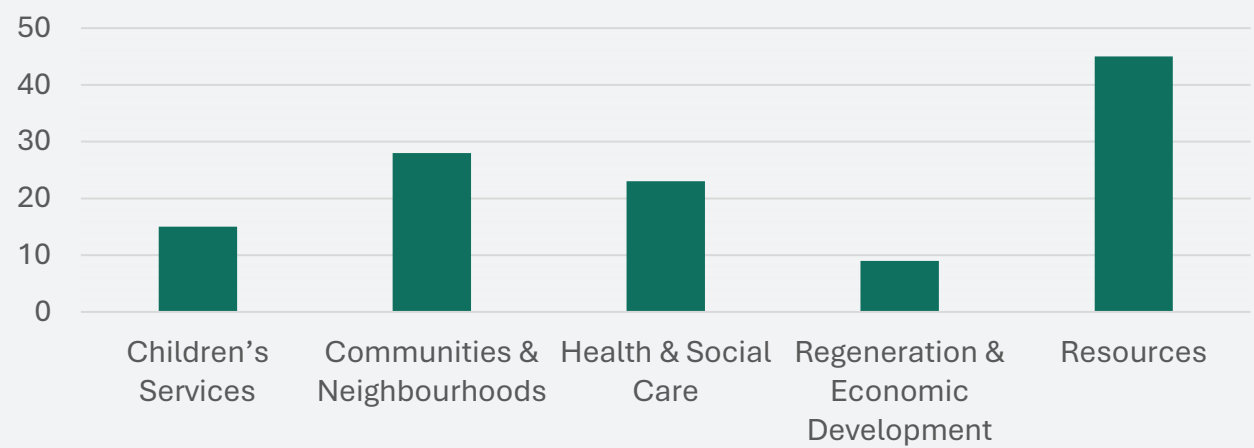
An annual summary of complaint statistics for Councils is published on the LGSCO website on an interactive map called "Your Council's Performance".

[Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council - Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman](#)

This is a useful snapshot of the service improvement recommendations Knowsley Council has agreed to implement following LGSCO investigations.

Compliments received by department

These compliments were received through the Have Your Say process. There are many other compliments received through different channels and directly to services.



Department	Total
Children's Services	15
Communities & Neighbourhoods	28
Health & Social Care	23
Regeneration & Economic Development	9
Resources	45
Total	120

Below are some examples of the compliments the Council have received during 2024-25

Children's



I would like to thank early help and the school family support worker for helping me and my son, I don't know what we would have done without the services provided by them. They have gone above and beyond for us. Really appreciate all their hard work and we will miss her.

Children's



The Early Years team do a fantastic job, putting on so many play groups and information sessions for babies and parents. We've made use of the Starting Solids workshop, Baby Explorers, Baby Massage and MATCH. I am particularly impressed with MATCH as this is the only regular activity I have found that my husband can go to - not a single paid class anywhere in Liverpool or Knowsley run a regular Saturday or evening session. It's an essential offering for mums just as much as dads, I am so grateful that we live in an area with such great 0-5 provision.

Adult's



I just want to say a massive thank you to your amazing team for everything they have done for my family, especially my mum. Our social worker has just been fabulous. We can never thank her enough for her thoughtfulness, always so helpful knowing exactly what we needed. There are many people we all encounter, but some just stand out. We will be forever grateful to them.

Adult's



I would like to thank the social care team after my review for care. Thanks for being so supportive. I would especially like to thank the person who carried out the review who was very understanding, thank you.

Council | Highways



Just before New Year, we heard we were going to have overnight guests on New Years Eve. When checking our visitor permit, we found that it expired on 31.12.24. We already had several cars parked on our shared drive so without any great hope it would arrive on time, I applied online for a new one. I was very impressed to find a new permit posted through the letterbox on the morning of 31/12/2024. Many thanks to all.

Council | Waste



I would like to praise our refuse garden and grey bin collection team who come every Friday morning they've been coming since 2020 as when I used to collect my empty bins as they where always polite friendly and helpful xx ~Well done team they should be thanked xx enjoy your weekend and thank you.

Council | Street Scene



I would like to thank all the staff who help keep my area clean and tidy, it is very much appreciated and makes me feel proud and makes me and my family feel safe to live in the area. I applaud Knowsley Council in how it runs the council services. I previously lived in a Liverpool City Council area and can honestly say I am glad I now live in Knowsley.

Council | Licensing



I would like to thank the licencing team at Knowsley for rushing my badge through for me as I deal with autistic children for school transport. Big thank you to the lady who helped me.

Council | Registration



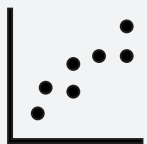
Just wanted to drop you a quick thank you for our wedding ceremony. Sorry, it's our first day back after honeymoon so it's the first chance I've had to contact you 😊. It really was the best day, and you made the ceremony very special for us. We can't thank you enough.

Council | Contact Centre



I wanted to leave feedback for one of your advisors, He was really helpful and throughout the whole phone conversation made me relaxed, listened to my circumstances and I felt like he went out of his way to help me. He is a credit. Thank you for helping!

Reporting, monitoring, and driving service improvement



It is important to know when things have gone right and when people are happy with the services they receive. However, when things go wrong, complaints are equally valuable.

Wherever possible, a proactive approach is taken to resolve concerns prior to the issue becoming a formal complaint.

Senior Officers and Service Managers have real time access to view complaints received. This provides an awareness of current issues within the service area, and allows the monitoring of timely investigation, resolution and any action needed to put things right.

Progress against any actions resulting from complaint feedback is monitored by the service area and complaints team. An Annual Complaints Report is produced for Senior Managers and Elected Members.

Work continues to improve the timely resolution of complaints, and comprehensive staff training took place in 2024. The Complaints Manager is actively monitoring outstanding complaints and supporting staff to ensure a quality response is provided, and remedial action is taken where necessary.

Knowsley Council is committed to dealing with all complaints fairly and impartially and aims to provide a quality, accessible service. We will continue to monitor feedback and actively seek ways to use the information we receive to improve our resident's experience.