



Knowsley Council

Have Your Say Annual Report 2025-26

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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 area has 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 (LGSCO).

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

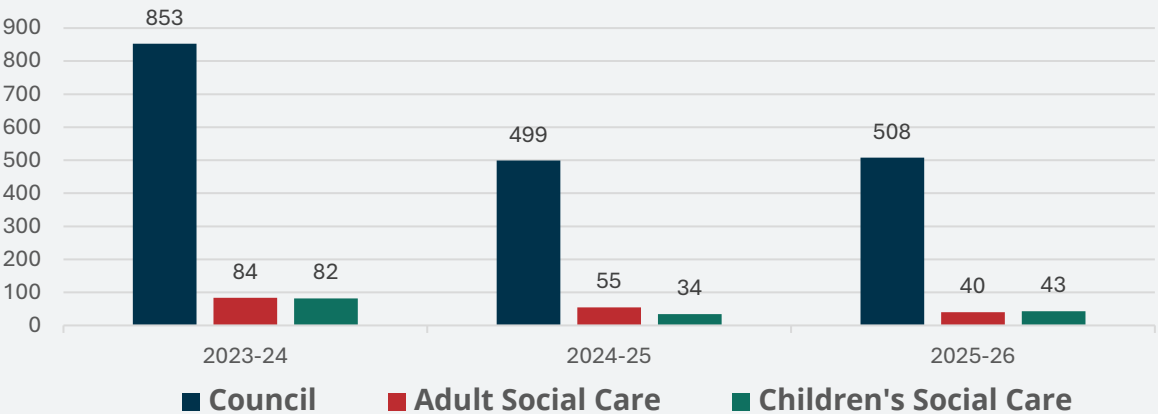
[Compliments, complaints and feedback | Knowsley Council](#)

Summary of complaints received - Stage One



Despite the breadth and complexity of Council services delivered and the substantial volumes of interactions each year, **in 2025-26 the total number of complaints received was 591**. This is a slight increase of 3 from the previous year's total of 588. Notwithstanding the increase in service demand, complaints have improved in terms of performance, through effective triage and active resolution of issues.

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



Complaint Area	2024-2025	2025-2026	% change +/-
Council	499	508	+1.8%
Adult Social Care	55	40	-27.27%
Children's Social Care	34	43	+26.47%

Overall, complaints have increased by 0.51% in the last 12 months.

The Council supports over 159,000 residents from c.71,000 households with a wide range of services and the scale of services offered is significant. Over the course of the year, an estimated total of 4,685,670 waste, recycling and green waste bins are emptied. Adult Social Care undertook 13,900 assessments for adults and provided support to 4,900 service users and 5,200 carers and Children's Social Care provided support to 3,225 vulnerable children and their families. A total of 3,260 children were supported with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), 6,773 contacts were made into the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) via 'Early Help' and social care contacts into MASH totalled 8,593. Early Help Episodes, with children open to 'Family First' (prevention) through an allocated worker, was 1,192 with 3,326 Social Care referrals. In addition, Customer Services has recorded 208,270 visits to libraries, 140,557 calls to the Contact Centre, 27,111 online chats and 444,514 online transactions. This is just a proportion of the hundreds of thousands of interactions the Council has with its residents.

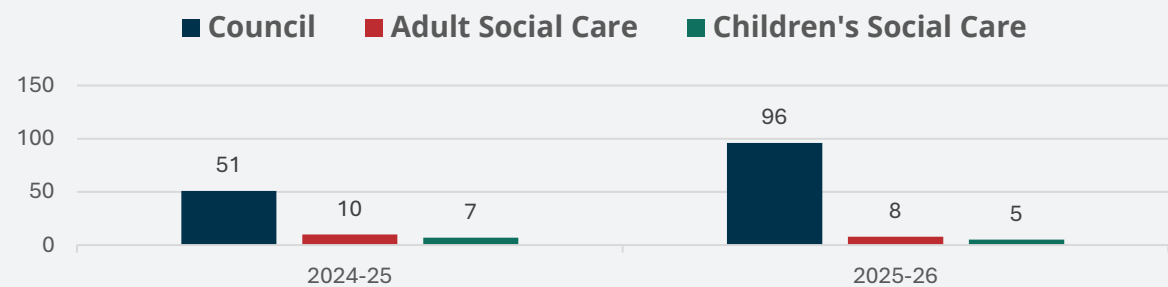
Summary of complaints received - Stage Two



Of the 591 complaints received, 82% were resolved successfully at the first stage of the complaints process, without the need for further review.

A total of 109 complaints were escalated to Stage Two. This is a 62% increase in stage 2 complaints compared to 2024/25.

Complaints escalated to Stage Two



Complaint Area	2024-2025	2025-2026	% change +/-
Council	51	96	+88.2%
Adult Social Care	10	8	-20.0%
Children's Social Care	7	5	-28.6%

If a complainant is dissatisfied with the Council's response to their complaint, it 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 indicate that the Council has failed to respond appropriately; it may be that the complainant disagrees with the outcome of the stage one investigation.

Response Times - Stage One



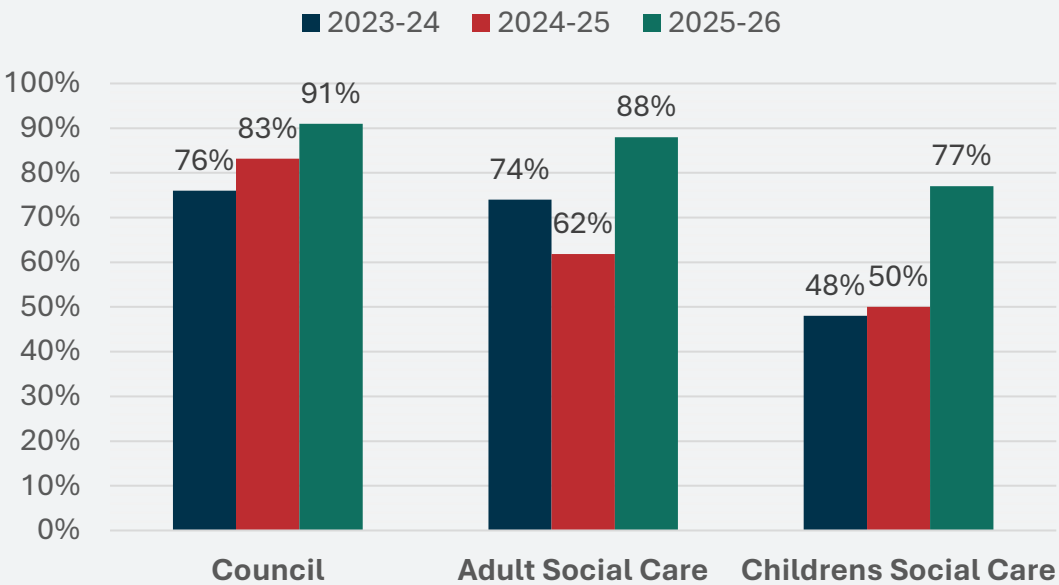
All complaint processes have the option to extend the timescale should further time be required to investigate the matter thoroughly. If this is the case, the Council will write to the complainant to explain the reason(s) why and confirm the new response date.

Response time targets

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

Timeliness of response has improved across all areas with an improvement of 26% in Adult Social Care, 27% in Children's Social Care and 8% for Council complaints.

% complaints responded to within target



Response Times - Stage Two



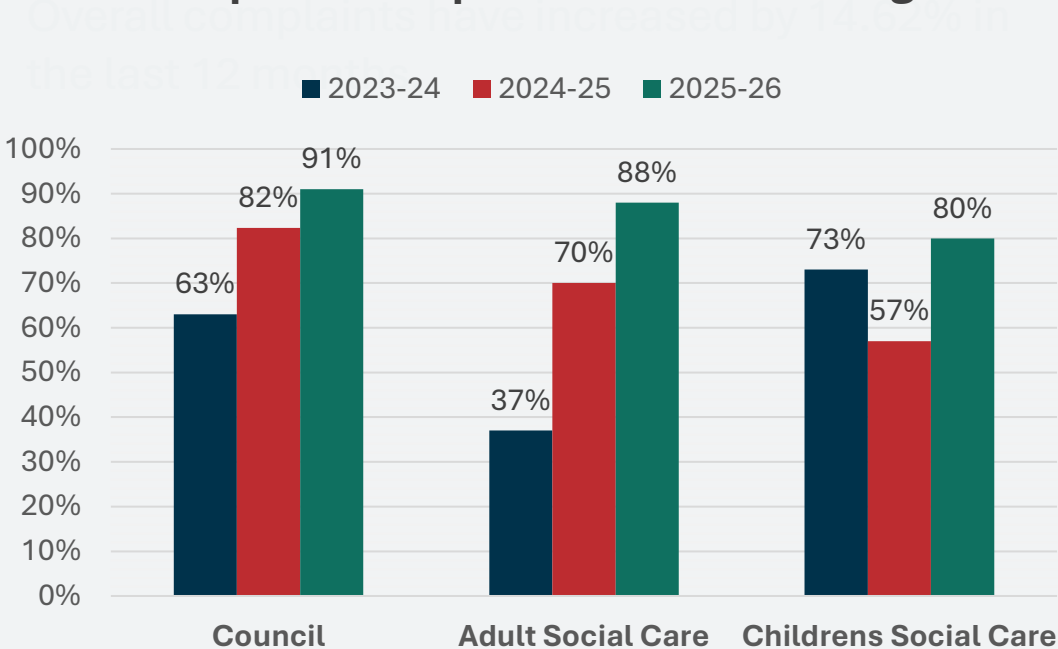
All complaint processes have the option to extend the timescale should further time be required to investigate the matter thoroughly. If this is the case, the Council will write to the complainant to explain the reason(s) why and confirm the new response date.

Response time targets

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

Despite an increase in stage two complaints received, timeliness has improved across all areas. Council complaints improved by 9%, Adults Social Care by 18% and Children's Social Care by 23%.

% complaints responded to within target



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 has significantly improved within Adult Services and Children & Young People, which can be attributed to the appointment of dedicated staff to manage stage one complaints, system improvements and the implementation of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.



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 provide weekly bespoke reports to monitor progress of outstanding complaints. Complaint Handling training has been delivered 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 2025-26, 2 complaints progressed through an independent review panel hearing compared to 3 in 2024-25.

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
Children & Young People	155
Waste Management	89
Licensing	71
Adult Services	39
Housing and Property	38
Highways	23
Revenue and Benefits	21
Planning/Building Control	18
Customer Services	12
Environmental Health	11
Environmental Sustainability, Parks and Green Spaces	11
Street Scene	8
FACT	3

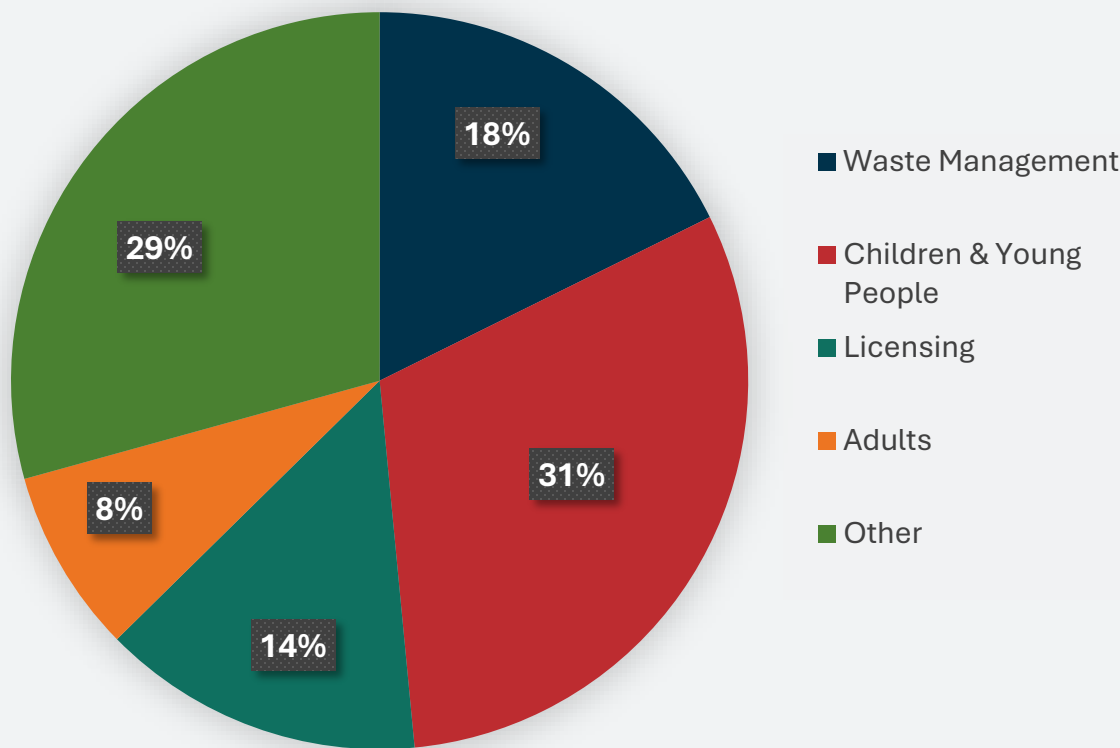
Area	Volume
Safer Communities	3
Employment Initiatives	3
Information Governance	1
Communications	1
Commercial Services	1

Council Complaints



Below is a summary of the top 4 services that received the highest number of Council complaints.

Top 4 Services



Complaints were most frequently raised within **Children & Young People**, with a clear upward trend in non-statutory concerns relating to Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). These complaints primarily centred on delays in the assessment and production of plans, changes in allocated workers, difficulties securing appropriate educational placements and challenges accessing the support outlined within plans. The increase in complaints reflects the significant pressures facing SEND services nationally and locally, including rising demand, workforce recruitment and retention challenges, staff turnover and capacity constraints across education, health and social care partners, all of which can impact the timeliness and continuity of support provided to children and families.

A significant proportion of complaints were related to **Waste Management**, reflecting the scale of the service, which is used by all households and businesses across Knowsley. The main areas of concern included missed collections, delays in bin deliveries and difficulties with bulky waste collections.

Within **Licensing**, complaints were largely driven by delays affecting taxi licence applications, renewals and access to required testing. Demand for the service has risen sharply placing it under sustained pressure. In response, process improvements have been introduced to streamline delivery and enhance customer experience, with further changes planned throughout 2026.

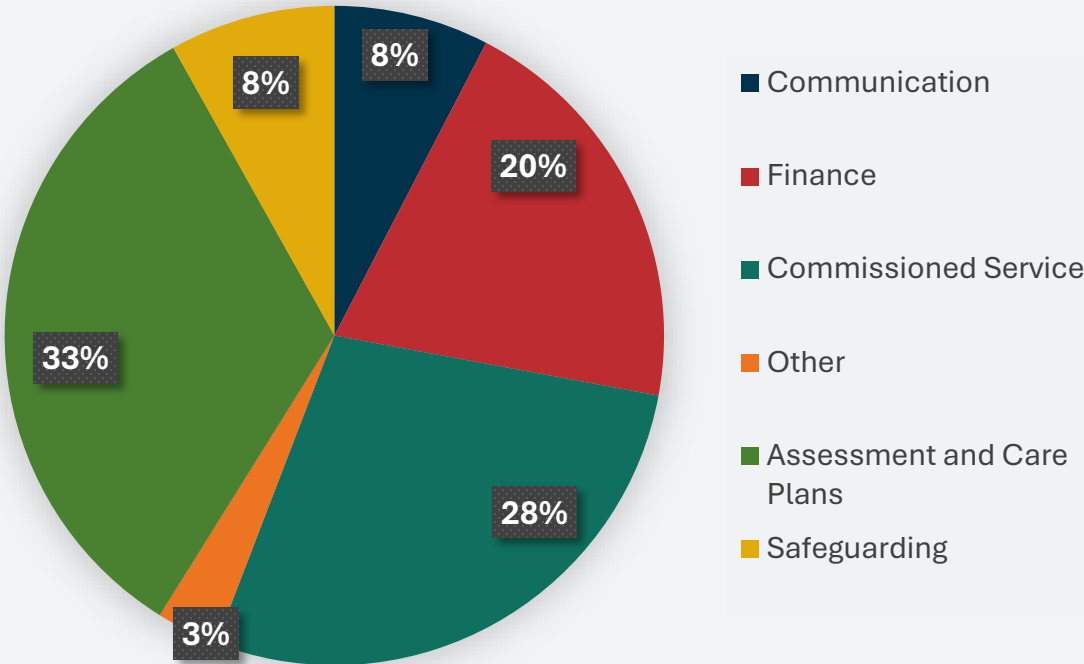
In **Adult Services**, the primary theme for complaints was communication. Concerns focused on obtaining updates about ongoing cases, as well as difficulties in contacting staff. This included unreturned calls, delayed responses to correspondence and limited direct contact with practitioners such as social workers.

Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care

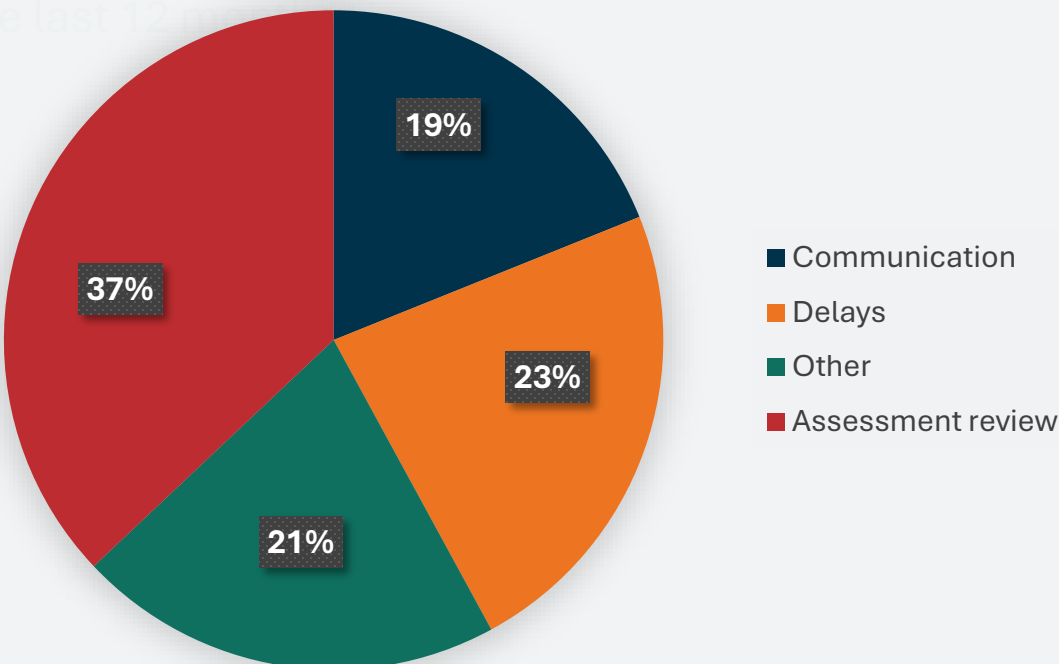


The breakdown of complaints for Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care services are below.

Adult Social Care Complaints



Children Social Care Complaints



Themes - Adult Social Care

The largest proportion of complaints within Adult Social Care relates to **Assessment and Care Plans (33%)**. These concerns are typically linked to how services are delivered, including reductions in care packages or delays in provision. In many instances, changes reflect updated assessments of need, with services aligned to eligibility criteria set out in the Care Act 2014.

Another prominent theme is **Commissioned Services (28%)**. Complaints in this area often involve the quality and reliability of externally provided care, such as missed or late domiciliary care visits, inconsistency in care staff or the need for more specialised support. Feedback was also received regarding residential, nursing and EMI (Elderly Mentally Infirm) care home provision, particularly around standards of care.

Finance (20%) represents another significant area of concern. These complaints mainly relate to client contributions towards care, including a lack of clarity about charges at the start of services and confusion around how costs are calculated. Issues also include the affordability of care settings, such as care homes and day services and how disability-related expenditure is assessed.

Complaints relating to **Communication (8%)** highlight ongoing issues with keeping service users and families informed. This includes requests for updates on active cases, disagreements about recorded information and delays in receiving assessments or documentation. These challenges are partly influenced by workforce pressures, including staff turnover, although work is ongoing to strengthen communication processes.

A smaller proportion of complaints concern **Safeguarding (8%)**, often linked to how decisions are made about whether concerns meet the threshold for investigation, and how outcomes are shared with families.

Across several of these areas, some complaints are not upheld as they reflect disagreement with decisions, such as financial assessments or safeguarding outcomes, rather than service failure. In these cases, the complaints process is often used to challenge or seek review of decisions made.

Themes - Children's Social Care

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

The highest proportion of complaints within Children's Social Care relates to **Assessment Reviews (37%)**, for example an independent social worker review or a review of a care package for a child with disabilities. These complaints focus on decisions made during assessments and review processes, including placement arrangements, actions taken by allocated social workers and the level of support provided to children and families. Concerns are also raised about the length of time children remain subject to child protection plans and how these plans are implemented.

Delays (23%) represent the second largest category. These complaints are typically associated with waiting times for assessments, the scheduling of meetings and delays in progressing plans or services. Short-notice cancellations or changes to planned activity have also contributed to dissatisfaction in this area.

Complaints categorised as **'Other' (21%)** cover a range of issues, including financial matters and contact arrangements. Financial concerns relate to payments such as fostering allowances or Special Guardianship Order support, including questions about eligibility, timing and when payments cease. Issues relating to contact include arrangements for supervised or unsupervised visits, choice of venues and changes or cancellations to agreed contact.

Communication (19%) remains a key theme in complaints. These concerns often come from parents or carers rather than children and include requests for updates, disagreements with recorded information and issues around information sharing between agencies. Additional complaints relate to difficulties contacting allocated workers, unreturned calls and delays in responding to correspondence. While allocated workers aim to maintain regular contact, the nature of the role means staff are frequently out of the office on visits. Ongoing workforce pressures, including vacancies and reliance on agency staff, can also contribute to these challenges and to changes in allocated workers.

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 591 complaints received at stage one, 63% (375) were upheld or partially upheld, compared to the previous years of 49%.

109 complaints were escalated to stage two, with 49% (54) upheld or partially upheld, compared to 42% in 2024-25. 37% (216) of the 591 complaints received during the year recorded no failing on the part of the Council.

Stage One

Area	Total complaints	Total upheld	% upheld
Council	508	325	64%
Adult Social Care	40	25	62%
Children's Social Care	43	25	58%
Total	591	375	63%

Stage Two

Area	Total complaints	Total upheld	% upheld
Council	96	49	51%
Adult Social Care	8	4	50%
Children's Social Care	5	1	20%
Total	109	54	49%

Learning from Complaints



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

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

You said....	We did....
Kirkby Library is used for social group and for the last three weeks the heating has been broken which is affecting the group.	We have sourced the funding to replace the heating system, and it will be upgraded before next winter. Alternative temporary heaters were installed.
Blue bin not emptied. I reported it via your website that evening having checked there was no reason given. Standard email response. We are now on Tues and Blue Bin still not emptied and no communication received as to why.	We have recruited more staff, so we are able to recover any missed collections quicker than we have previously. We have also made improvements to the system / process to ensure our residents are updated regarding any delays.
I applied for a Knowsley private hire taxi plate before my MOT. But I withdrew my application and every two weeks I rang I have been told my refund is in process. Every time I ring I get the same answer the refund is in process.	The process for dealing with refund requests has been reviewed to improve the speed in which they are processed.
I reported what I consider dangerous encroachment to pavement in Cronton Rd Knowsley and supplied images.	We wrote to the landowners to inform / remind them of their responsibilities regarding the maintenance of the vegetation around their property boundaries. In the meantime, we arranged for the vegetation to be cut back and removed.

You said....	We did....
I wish to make a formal complaint in respect of the decision not to increase direct payments as requested	We carried out a new assessment with a newly allocated social worker to ensure that all elements were considered and provided the increased hours as a result.
I received poor communication regarding Child In Need meeting including lack of clarity about the location, information was not received in a timely manner which created confusion. I was also not informed of a change of chair until the last minute.	We reviewed how our duty process is managed to ensure more timely responses and information provided to parents to avoid confusion.
I am currently homeless and have been placed in temporary accommodation with my children, one of whom has additional needs requiring stability and proximity to specialist services. Despite my ongoing engagement with Property Pool Plus and repeated updates to my application, I have been offered a property that is wholly unsuitable due to its location.	A review was carried out by an officer who was not involved in the case previously, in accordance with homelessness legislation, to ensure the relevant details were captured correctly so this did not occur again during the automated bidding process.
We submitted an application to Planning and have not received validation or response to the application.	We issued a reminder to all staff about the importance of responding to applications as soon as possible to prevent delays for customers.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman



The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) can investigate individual complaints about council's, 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 that they dealt with 49 complaints. Of these, 16 were not for LGSCO, or not ready for investigation. 25 were assessed and closed. A total of only 8 complaints were investigated and 7 were upheld. The percentage of complaints upheld is 88%; this compares to 81% of complaints upheld in similar sized authorities.

- 2 - Adult Care Services
- 5 - Education and Children Services

The LGSCO report that they are satisfied that Knowsley Council has 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 2025-26.

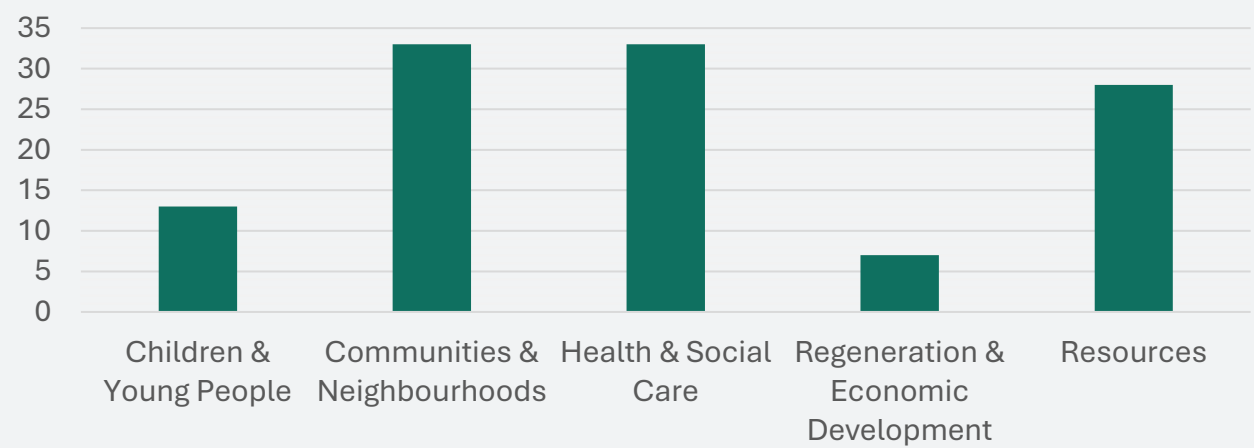
An annual summary of complaint statistics for Council's is published on the LGSCO website on an interactive map called "Your Council's Performance".

[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 & Young People	14
Communities & Neighbourhoods	33
Health & Social Care	33
Regeneration & Economic Development	7
Resources	28
Total	115

A sample of compliments the Council has received

Children's



My Son, has received his EHC Plan and his SEND caseworkers have been great throughout a very difficult process, and totally uncharted territory for me. I thank them for their support and guidance throughout the process - which has been tricky - we are most grateful.

Children's



I would like to formally commend our Social Worker for the outstanding support they has provided to me and my daughter. Throughout a very difficult and complex situation, they have been professional, empathetic and genuinely supportive. They have consistently listened without judgment, clarified important matters and ensured that both our wellbeing's were prioritised. Their guidance and reassurance have made an immense difference, helping me navigate challenging circumstances with confidence and calm, including enabling me to reach out for family support I thought was lost forever.

Adult's



I would like to express my gratitude to two members of your staff who have been of great assistance in dealing with a couple of problems my mother has been having . Both have been extremely helpful, professional and most importantly very pleasant to deal with, thank you.

Adult's



I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to a member of staff for their support in helping to arrange residential care for a family member. Throughout the process, they were professional, approachable, and very supportive. Nothing was ever too much trouble, and I always felt comfortable asking for help or advice. They responded to queries promptly, guided me clearly through each stage of the process, and provided reassurance at a difficult time. I could not have asked for better support and am extremely grateful for the high level of service provided.

Council | Highways



I just want to let you know I was very impressed by your speedy response to repair a pothole in Campbell Drive and also prune overhanging branches in Thingwall Lane after I submitted a request - although I realise I may have been one of many who contacted you. Thank you.

Council | Waste



Please can you thank the Bulky waste men that came and took all the items from the front of our house today, absolutely delighted they took it all. Just thought instead of criticising our council, praise where it's due, thank you.

Council | Street Scene



Just want to thank the Street scene team once again for the swift removal of fly tipping from the land at the rear of 4 Amanda Road. This is definitely a hot spot for fly-tipping and I do appreciate each time it is cleared.

Council | Licensing



Great quick and effective service, during my experience on gaining a new taxi badge. Thank you to Knowsley council.

Council | Registration



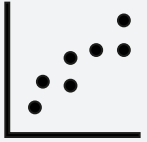
On behalf of my wife and myself may we both express our sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation to your colleagues at the Registrars Service for the kind, courteous and highly professional manner in which you all conducted the arrangements for our civil marriage ceremony which made it such a memorable and hassle-free occasion for all concerned. We cannot honestly imagine it to have gone any better.

Council | Customer Liaison



I didn't get the lady's name, but she was so lovely on the phone to me - very caring and compassionate. Thank you so much. This complaint against my GP has caused me a great deal of stress and anxiety, but I'm now going directly to my GP to very calmly ask them to read your email. Thank you once again.

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.

The Complaints Manager actively monitors outstanding complaints and supports officers 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 the customer experience for our residents.

It is important to note the impact that the increase in AI-generated complaints is having on the Council. These complaints are often lengthier and more complex, requiring additional review, which places increased demands on resources across services.

Guidance on the use of AI to write complaints is available on the website as a support tool for residents and further improvements to the 'Have Your Say' process are in progress.