

# Annual Report 2024-25: Corporate Representations

## Contents

Annual Report 2024-25: Corporate Representations .....	1
Part I: Headlines and trends .....	2
Corporate representations received .....	3
Themes .....	4
Response Times (Key Performance Indicators) .....	5
Outcomes .....	6
Part II: This year's incoming representations .....	7
Representations we accepted.....	7
Representations we did not accept for investigation or response .....	11
Part III: Responses we sent this year .....	13
Stage 1 .....	13
Stage 2 .....	16
Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Internal Reviews .....	18
Information Governance Complaints.....	19
Part IV: Ombudsman Investigations .....	20
Part V: Remedies and Learning .....	21
Remedies we offered this year at Stage 1 and Stage 2 .....	21
Remedies offered this year in Ombudsman Cases.....	21
Learning we identified this year .....	22
Part VI: New Reporting Methods and Preparing for the New Code .....	25
More accurate performance measurements .....	25
A new corporate representations procedure.....	26
New timescales from 2026-27.....	26

## Part I: Headlines and trends

From 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

we received:

**1,271** corporate representations, **up 18%**

which included

**1,136** complaints, **62** comments and **73** compliments

from these, we accepted:

**778** complaints and comments for investigation and response, **up 18%**

Meanwhile, we completed:

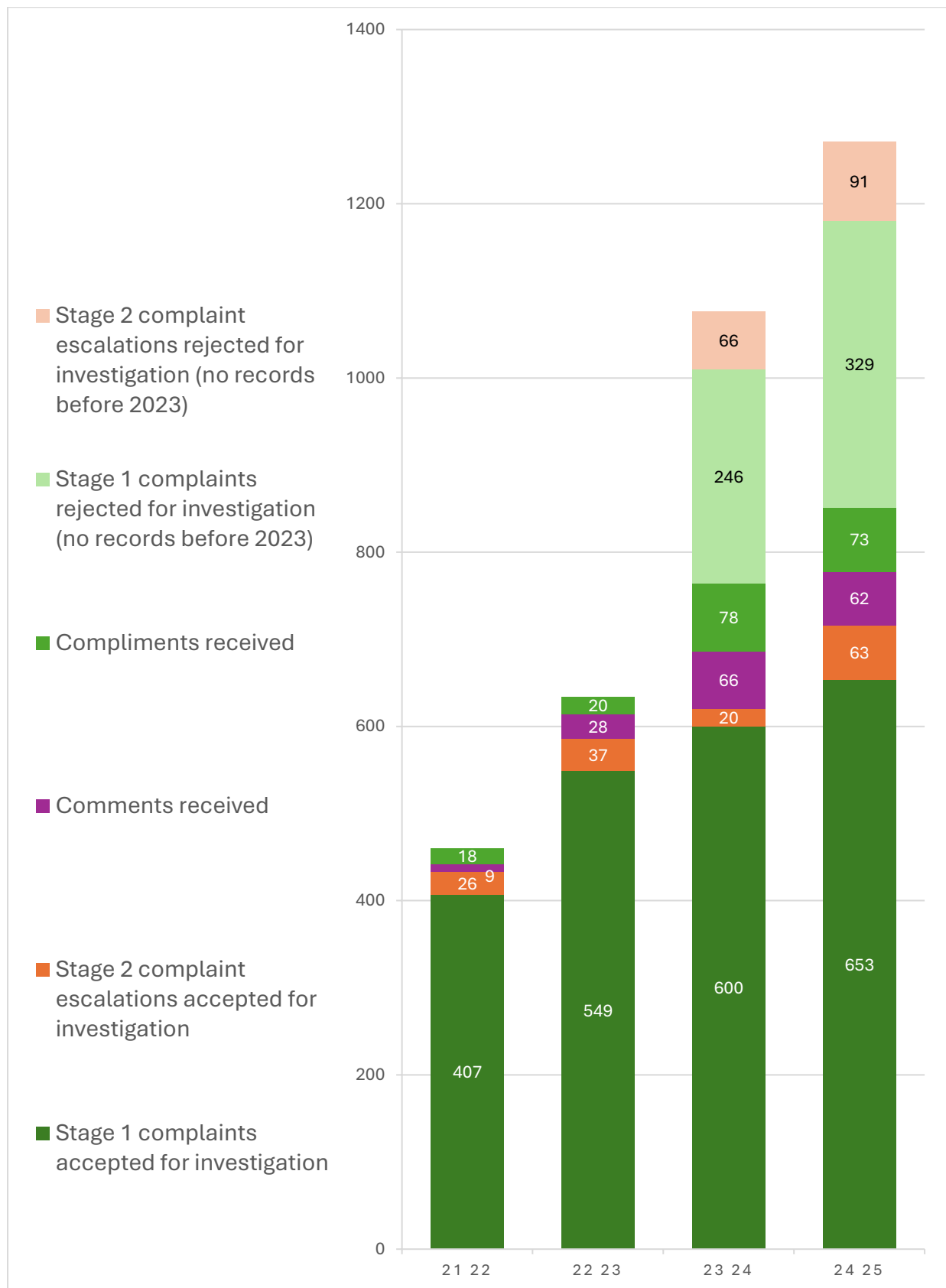
**717** complaint responses, **up 30%**

**62%** of responses met the new complaint handling code response timescales, a **22% improvement**

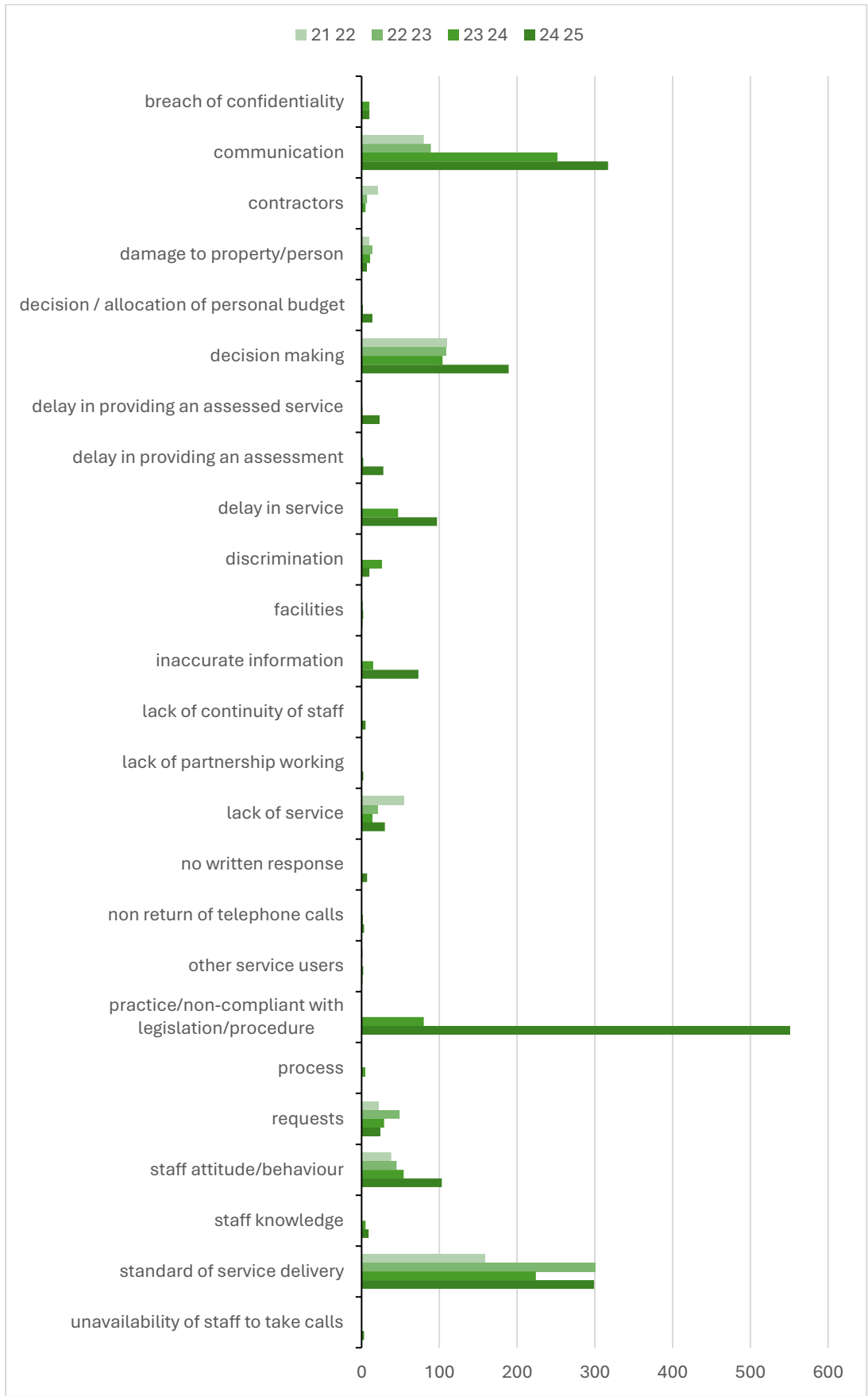
**92%** of responses met our current response timescales, a **17% improvement**

The Ombudsman issued decisions on **40** corporate cases, upholding **16**

## Corporate representations received

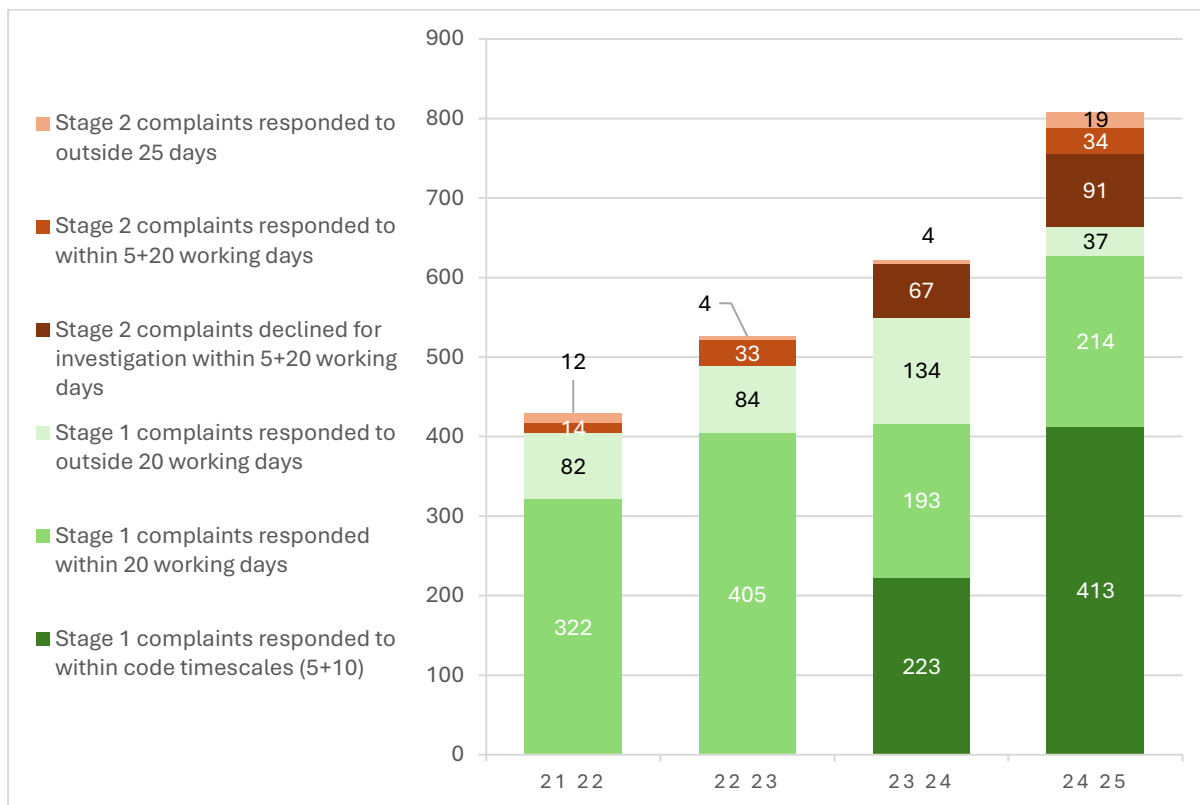


# Themes

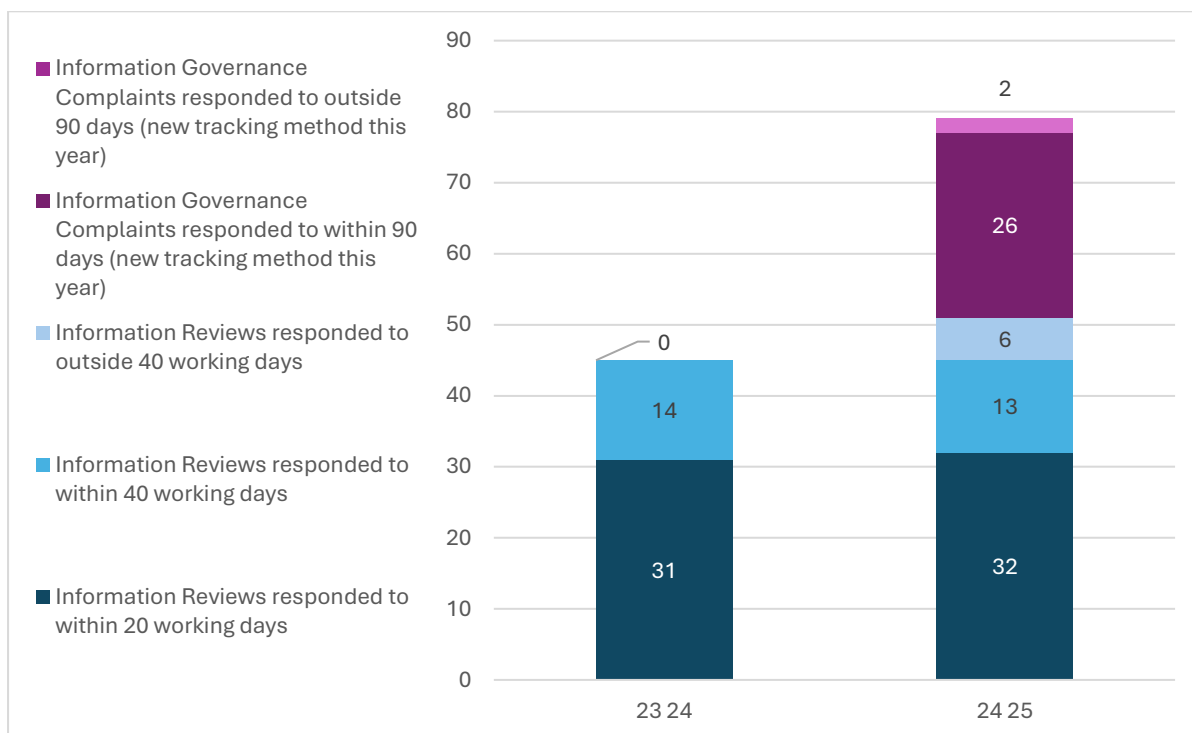


## Response Times (Key Performance Indicators)

### Complaints responded to within and outside standard timescales

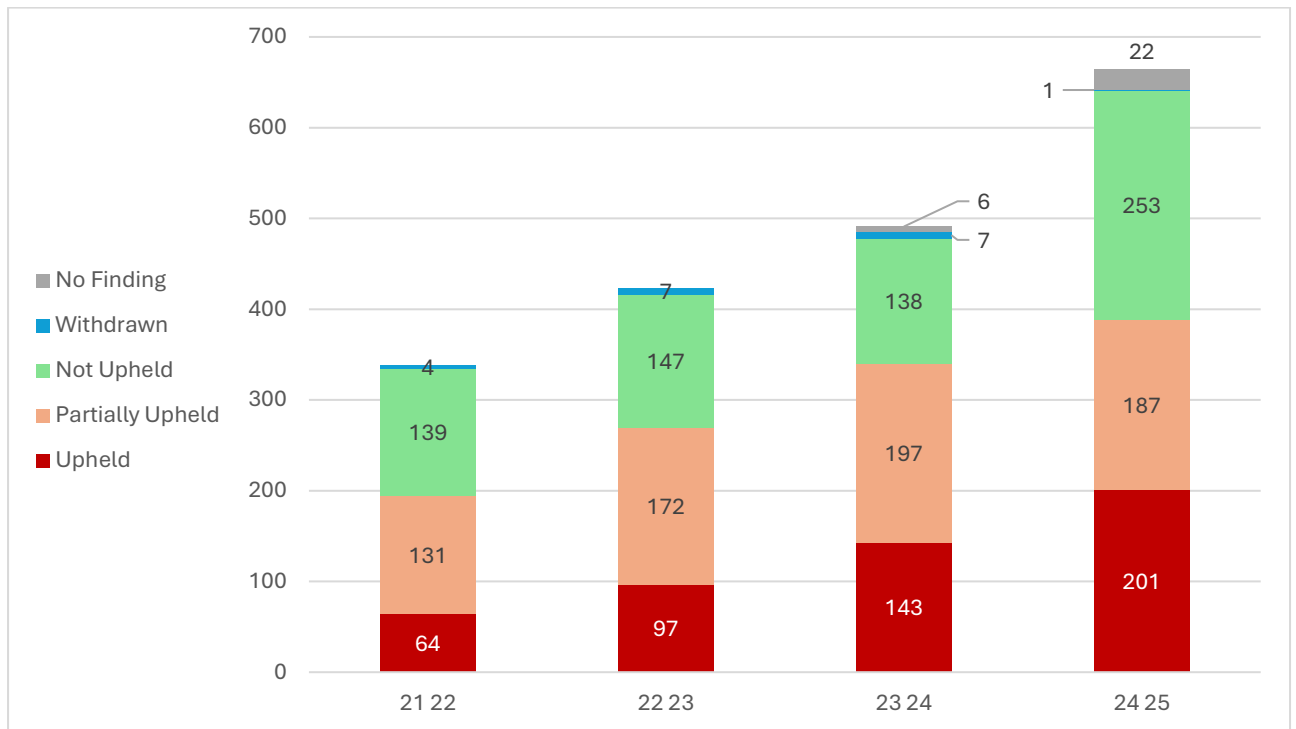


### Information Governance complaints/reviews responded to within and outside standard timescales

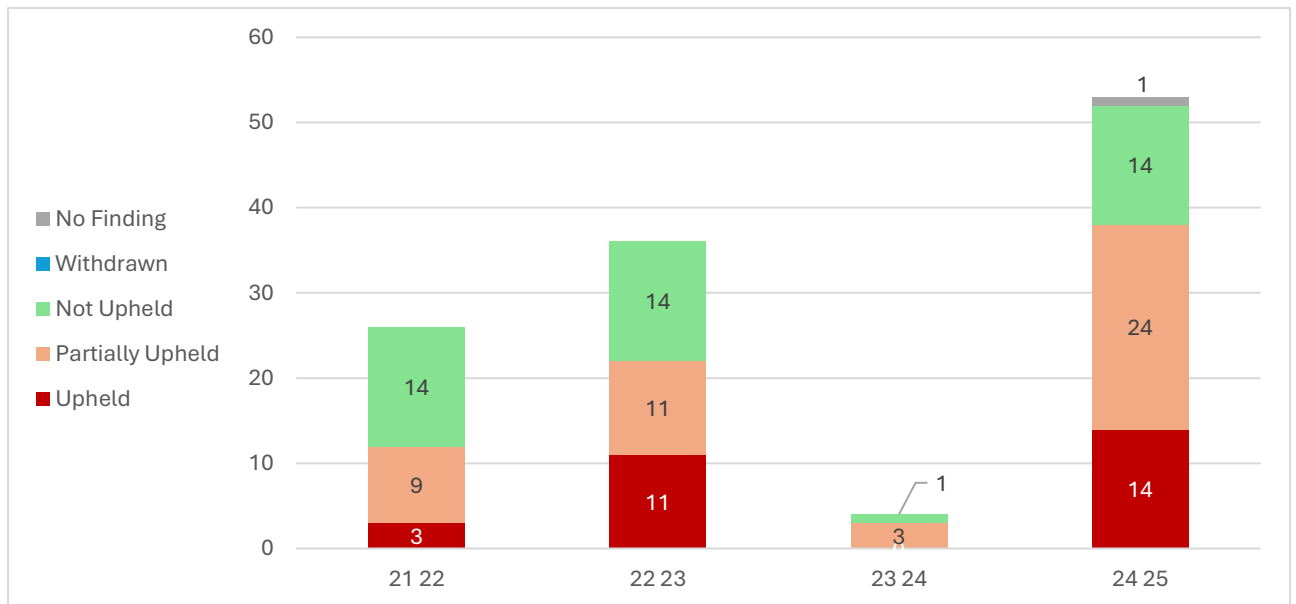


# Outcomes

## Stage 1 complaint outcomes



## Stage 2 complaint outcomes



Note: in 21-22 and 22-23, Stage 2 complaint statistics included a mix of Stage 2 complaints and Freedom of Information/Environmental Information Request reviews. In 23-24 and 24-25 information processes were counted separately to Stage 2 complaints. The number of Stage 2 complaints accepted for investigation rose significantly this year, due to changes in practice explained in the detailed sections of this report.

## Part II: This year's incoming representations

The total number of corporate representations submitted was **1,271**:

Type of Representation	2024-25	Change
Stage 1 Complaint	982	+136 / +16%*
Stage 2 Complaint Escalation	154	+68 / +79%
Compliments	73	+34 / +87%
Comments	62	+27 / +77%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>+195 / +18%</b>

This is **up 18%** on the previous year's submissions.

\*Stage 1 figure is estimated using figures from second half of 23-24 due to no previous tracking of rejected Stage 1 complaints.

### Representations we accepted

#### *Stage 1 complaints*

There were **653** Corporate Stage 1 complaints accepted for investigation, which is **66%** of the total submitted (982).

This was **up 9%** on the previous year's total.

Using the directorates as they existed at the start of the year, these broke down as follows:

Directorate	2024-25	change
Worcestershire Children First / Children's Services	325	+80 / +32%
Economy and Infrastructure	246	-34 / -12%
People / Adults and Communities	48	+24 / +100%
Commercial and Change	19	-11 / -36%
Chief Executive's Unit	15	+3 / +25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>+53 / +9%</b>

## Stage 2 complaints

There were **63** Corporate Stage 2 complaints accepted for further investigation, which is **41%** of the total escalations (154).

This was **up 215%** on the previous year's total.

Using the directorates as they existed at the start of the year, they broke down as follows:

Directorate	2024-25
Worcestershire Children First / Children's Services	41
Economy and Infrastructure	17
People / Adults and Communities	3
Commercial and Change	1
Chief Executive's Unit	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Change (breakdown not available for previous years)</b>	<b>+43 / +215%</b>

There was a significant increase in both Stage 2 escalations and resulting Stage 2 investigations.

The total number of escalations submitted was nearly double the previous year's number. This may reflect greater dissatisfaction with Stage 1 responses (or with lack of follow up to promised actions in Stage 1 responses), since the number of Stage 1 complaints accepted has only grown by 9%.

The number of escalations taken forward to further investigation tripled from the previous year, meaning a higher proportion of complaints are now being reinvestigated.

Progressing a higher proportion of escalations reflects changes to practice made recently:

- Some past Stage 1 responses did not clearly signpost Stage 2 escalation as an option for complainants as required by the forthcoming Complaint Handling Code. This has now been addressed by introducing standardised templates.
- In the light of the forthcoming Complaint Handling Code, we no longer default to the use of an independent investigating officer if undertaking further investigation. This is not required by the code.
- The above approach gives more scope for proportionate further investigation where previously the expense of external investigation could not be justified for many cases. This allows earlier resolutions to complaints, potentially avoiding Ombudsman escalations.
- We established clearer written guidance on selecting different levels of Stage 2 investigation, where previously we chose between resource-intensive

investigation versus entirely rejecting the escalation. We have been applying these on a case-by-case basis and accepting more escalations overall.

### Comments

There were **34** Corporate comments accepted for response, which is **55%** of the total submissions (62).

This was **up 3%** on the previous year's total.

Using the directorates as they existed at the start of the year, they broke down as follows:

Directorate	2024-25
Worcestershire Children First / Children's Services	7
Economy and Infrastructure	14
People / Adults and Communities	7
Commercial and Change (pre-abolition)	4
Chief Executive's Unit	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Change (breakdown not available for previous years)</b>	<b>+2 / +3%</b>

### Compliments

There were **70** Corporate compliments accepted, which is **96%** of the total submissions (73).

This was **up 79%** on the previous year's total.

Using the directorates as they existed at the start of the year, they broke down as follows:

Directorate	2024-25
Worcestershire Children First / Children's Services	27
Economy and Infrastructure	20
People / Adults and Communities	12
Commercial and Change (pre-abolition)	8
Chief Executive's Unit	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Change (breakdown not available for previous years)</b>	<b>+31 / +79%</b>

## Examples from the 70 compliments received

*I would like to compliment [officer] following an EHCP review that she attended today with myself and the parents of one of our students. [The officer] was helpful, supportive and friendly which created a safe and relaxed space for the parents to talk, [the officer] also listened and made the parents feel they were being heard, she was clear on what would happen next too which is really important to parents. EHCP reviews can be a difficult space for parents and I really felt that [the officer]'s approach today made the meeting so much more successful.*

~

*Re Blue Badge Application caller/customer would like to say thanks to all the team for the Blue Badge as it will help me "fantastically" with parking.*

~

*My wife and I live between Upton and Welland and we would like to say how much we appreciate the fantastic road improvements that you have made leading into the town from the A38.*

*Firstly the raising of the road for flood access improvements has definitely worked over the last two years, but most importantly the new roundabout on the A38 has really changed the access and queuing into and out of the town.*

*We have had a full cycle of events since the improvements locally and at the Malvern show ground, and traffic is managed much better as a result of what you have put in place.*

*Once again a big thank you from local residents and many congratulations on a well planned and executed project.*

~

*I am writing to express my appreciation of members of your staff at the Recycling Centre at Romsey / Bromsgrove.*

*The manager [named], an operator [named] but especially an older operator [named]. All three are always so helpful especially as nowadays the site seems to be extremely busy.*

~

*I would like to put in an official compliment on record for the team from Ringway who helped with road closures for this year's Worcester Carnival. The hassle and abuse you guys must get day in, day out, must be horrendous and you do not get the credit you deserve for helping to keep us all safe on the highway.*

## Representations we did not accept for investigation or response

### Stage 1 complaints

There were **329** complaint submissions that were **not** responded to as Stage 1 complaints, mostly because they did not meet criteria for what we can investigate/respond to at Stage 1.

This was an **increase** of **38%** on the previous year.

For each, we recorded a reason for not completing a Stage 1 response.

Reason for exclusion	Whole Year
not Worcestershire County Council responsibility	74
redirected	70
duplicate record	60
service or information request	32
does not constitute a complaint, comment or compliment	16
other legal process or policy (e.g. court proceedings)	21
customer not responded	16
complaint discontinued	13
in court/legal action/historic	12
complaint withdrawn	5
appeals process	4
vexatious, per policy	3
no investigator response after 6 months	2
consent not provided by service user concerned	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Change (breakdown not available for previous years)</b>	<b>+83 / +38%</b>

The largest categories are “not Worcestershire County Council Responsibility” or “redirected”. These are frequently for another organisation, such as a district/borough/city council, a school, or Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

“Redirected” can also mean that they fall within Worcestershire County Council’s remit but not within our representations policy. During this year we have attempted to deprecate this category and use other categories (such as “service or information request” or “appeals process”) to explain more clearly which submissions fall within the council’s remit, but not under the representations procedure.

Duplicate records are created either when a complainant fills in the form twice, believing their first submission has not been accepted, or where a complainant submits complaint points that have already been addressed in previous responses.

A very significant number of submissions are in effect highways reports (e.g. potholes, graffiti) or requests for compensation related to a Highways issue. There is a separate

system for these. These are re-submitted where possible into the highways issues system as service requests before they become a complaint.

Two complaints this year were closed because no response was completed by the relevant team after six months. The complainants in these cases were offered escalation to the Ombudsman.

### *Stage 2 complaints*

**91** complaint escalations were declined for further investigation, which is **59%** of the total submitted (154).

This was an **increase** of **38%** on the absolute number of rejected cases (but as explained above, also represents a significant **decrease** in the proportion of Stage 2 escalations rejected because the overall number of escalations was higher).

All these already have a Stage 1 response which then becomes the council's final position on the matter complained about.

When a consumer relations officer concludes that further investigation is not likely to achieve new factual findings or revised outcomes, then escalations are rejected, and the Ombudsman signposted as a next step for the complainant.

This is most likely to happen when the complainant doesn't identify (or provide objective evidence for) specific faults with the investigation or findings but just restates their disagreement with the outcome at Stage 1.

Other reasons for rejecting included the introduction of new complaint points that were not part of the Stage 1 complaint.

### *Comments*

**28** comments were not responded to, which is **45%** of the total submitted (62). These were predominantly service or information requests rather than comments. Others were about matters that were not Worcestershire County Council's responsibility, usually district, borough or city council matters.

### *Compliments*

**3** compliments were not processed (**4%** of 73 submitted), because two were not about Worcestershire County Council services and one was a service request.

## Part III: Responses we sent this year

### Stage 1

There were **664** Corporate Stage 1 complaint responses made this year.

This was an **increase** of **9%** on the previous year's total.

This includes responses to the last complaints submitted in 2023-24 and excludes complaints we were still working on at the end of the 2024-25 year, so does not match the total complaints accepted during 2024-25.

#### *Stage 1 responses by directorate*

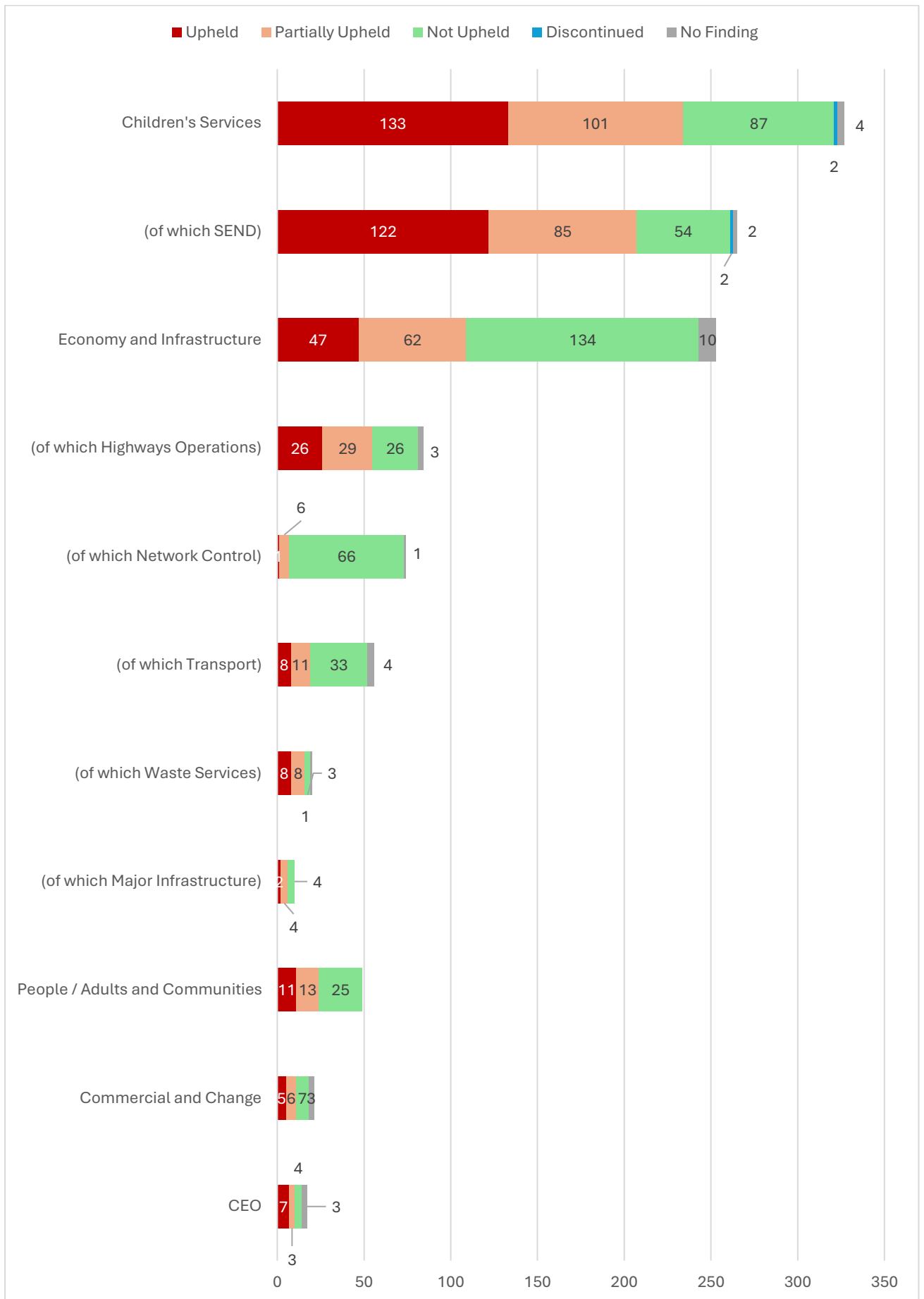
	Whole Year
Economy and Infrastructure	253
Children's Services	327
<i>(of which SEND)</i>	<i>(263)</i>
People / Adults and Communities	49
Commercial and Change	19
CEO	16

#### *Stage 1 Outcomes*

	Whole Year	Change from last year
Upheld	201 / 30%	+58 / +1%
Partially Upheld	187 / 28%	-10 / -12%
Not Upheld	253 / 38%	+115 / +10%
Other (no finding or unrecorded)	23 / 3%	+16 / +2%

Note: percentage changes here reflect the change in proportion of total complaints in each category between years, not the change in absolute numbers.

(see overleaf for breakdown by directorate and key services)



## Stage 1 Timescales

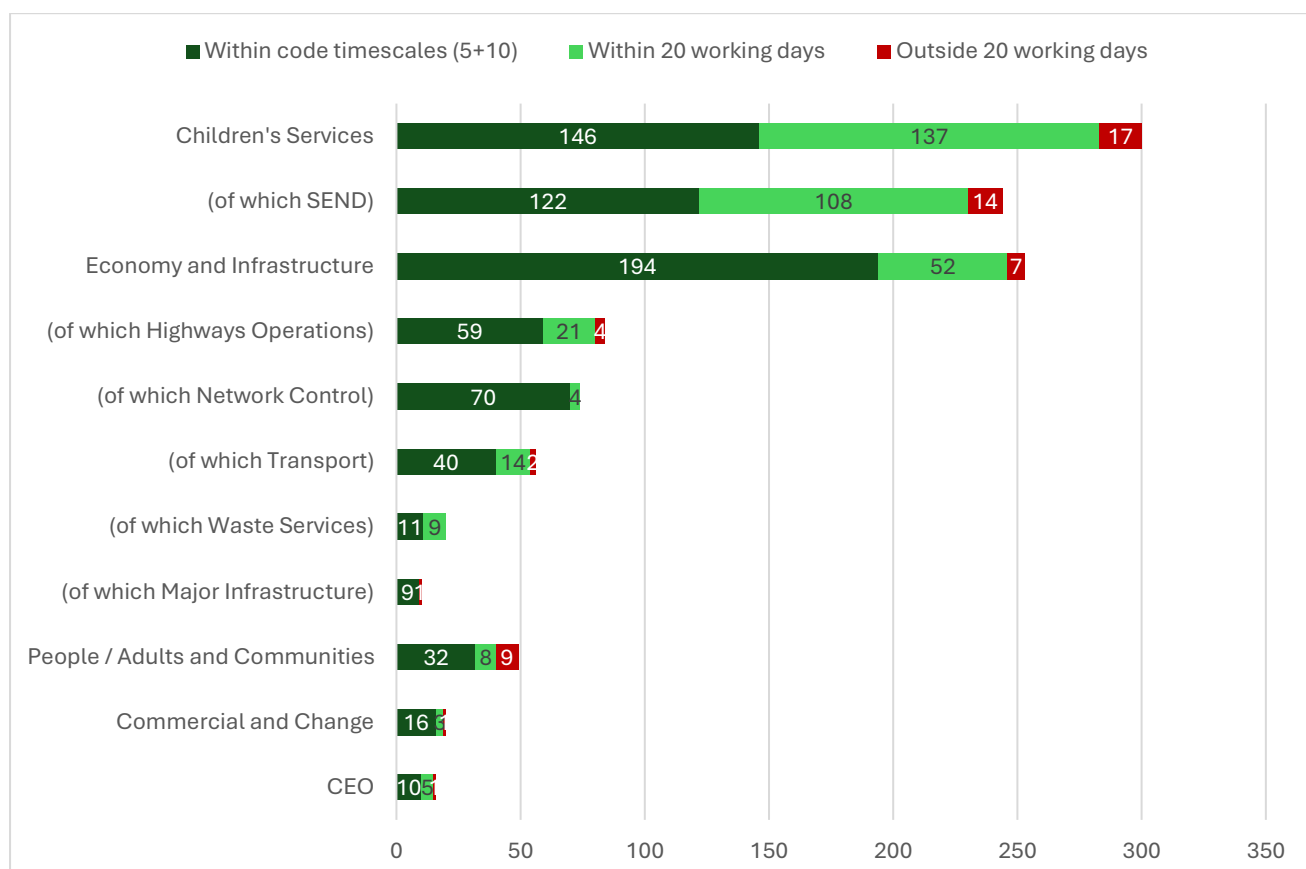
The council's average time for handing a Stage 1 complaint was **12.4 days**, down from 19.2 days the previous year, an **improvement of -36%**.

Economy and Infrastructure had the shortest average response time at **8.8 days**.

Children's Services had the longest average response time at **15.3 days**.

	Whole Year	Change from last year
Response made within new code standard (5+10 working days)	413 / 62%	+190 / +22%
Response within 15-20 working days (still within current SLA)	214 / 32%	+21 / -3%
Response outside 20 working days	37 / 6%	-97 / -18%

Note: percentage changes here reflect the change in proportion of total complaints in each category between years, not the change in absolute numbers.



## Stage 2

There were **53** Corporate Stage 2 complaint responses made this year.

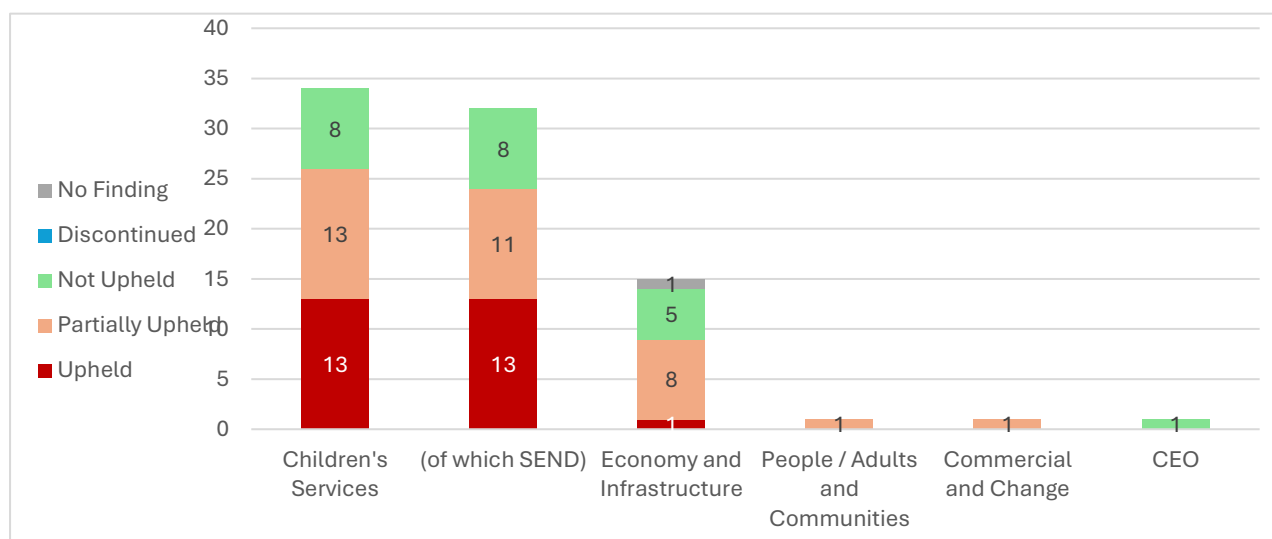
The total includes responses to the last complaints submitted in 2023-24 and excludes complaints we were still working on at the end of the 2024-25 year, so does not match the total complaints accepted during 2024-25.

This was an **increase of 1,225%** on the previous year's total and reflects a decision by the council to bring its practices into compliance with the forthcoming complaint handling code and accept more Stage 2 complaints for proportionate internal investigation. More commentary on this change can be seen above in "Representations we accepted".

### Stage 2 responses by directorate

	Whole Year
Economy and Infrastructure	16
Children's Services	34
<i>(of which SEND)</i>	<i>(32)</i>
People / Adults and Communities	1
Commercial and Change	1
CEO	1

### Stage 2 outcomes

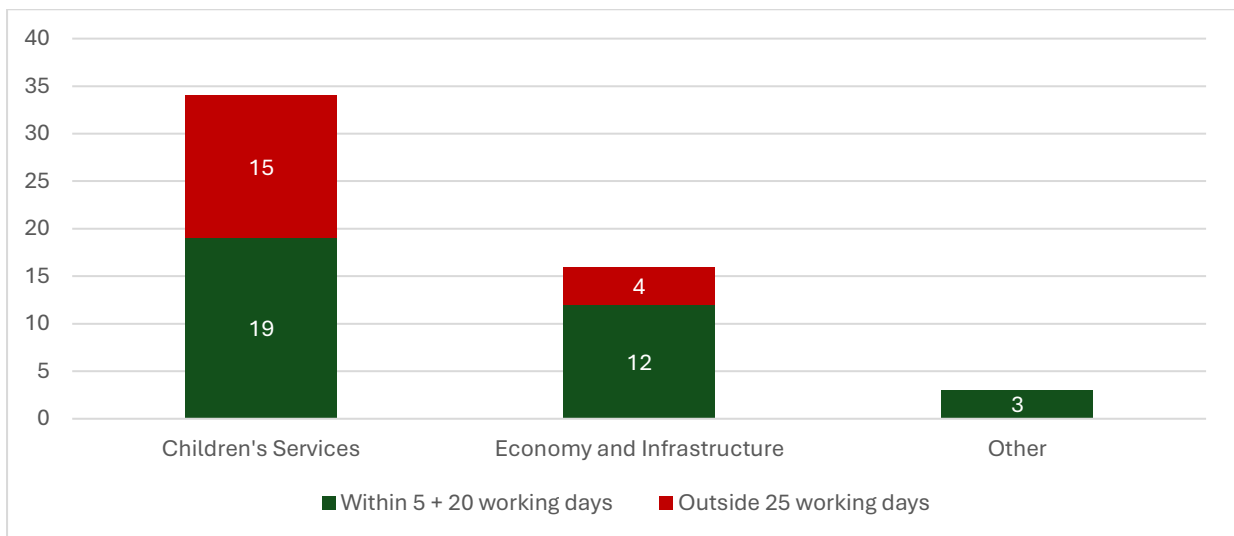


## Timescales

The council's average time for handing a Stage 2 complaint was **25.8 days**. Last year's figure was not measured, as there were many fewer Stage 2 complaints taken, as explained earlier in this report.

Economy and Infrastructure had the shortest average response time at **16.5 days**.

Children's Services had the longest average response time at **32 days**. This figure reflects both the internally- and externally investigated methods of Stage 2 handling, with the latter usually taking significantly longer.



## Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Internal Reviews

**51** requests for Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Internal Reviews were investigated by the Consumer Relations Unit on behalf of the Corporate Information Governance Team.

This was an **increase** of **11%** on the previous year's total.

### *Outcomes*

	Whole Year	Change from last year
Upheld	21 / 41%	-7 / -11%
Partially Upheld	13 / 25%	+2 / +8%
Not Upheld	19 / 37%	-7 / +11%
Discontinued	0 / 0%	-5 / -11%

### *Timescales and trend*

The average response time for Freedom of Information or Environmental Information Internal Reviews was **17.5** days. The average was not measured last year.

	Whole Year	Change from last year
Response made within 20 working days (statutory)	32 / 63%	-1 / -4%
Response made within 21-40 working days (statutory extended)	13 / 25%	-1 / +5%
Response outside 40 working days	6 / 12%	+6 / +12%

percentage changes here reflect the change in proportion of total reviews in each category between years, not the change in absolute numbers.

## Information Governance Complaints

**19** data breach reports were responded to.

**9** complaints were investigated about information supplied in responses to subject access requests.

Because of a change in how these are processed and logged during the 2023-24 year, direct comparison figures for the previous year on data breach reports and subject access request complaints are not available.

### *Outcomes – data breach*

	Whole Year
Upheld	0
Partially Upheld	4
Not Upheld	13
Other (no finding or unrecorded)	2

### *Outcomes – subject access request complaint*

	Whole Year
Upheld	1
Partially Upheld	0
Not Upheld	6
Other (no finding or unrecorded)	2

### *Timescales and trend – all information governance complaints*

The average response time for responses was **31.4 days**.

	Whole Year
Response made within 90 calendar days (internal service level)	26 / 93%
Response outside 90 calendar days	2 / 7%

## Part IV: Ombudsman Investigations

**47** cases relating to corporate complaints were raised with the Ombudsman this year, **up 27%**. Some of these received decisions within the year. Others are still in progress.

Meanwhile, the Ombudsman made decisions on **40** corporate cases, **up 82%**. Some of these had been raised in the previous year. Of these, **2** were rejected as raised prematurely.

The Ombudsman upheld **16** cases, an **increase** from 32% to **40%** of cases decided.

### *Ombudsman cases by directorate*

	Whole Year
Children's Services	32
<i>(of which SEND)</i>	<i>(29)</i>
People / Adults and Communities	1
CEO	1
Economy and Infrastructure	5
Commercial and Change	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Change (breakdown not available for previous year)</b>	<b>+18 / +82%</b>

### *Ombudsman findings*

	Whole Year	Change from last year
Premature Submission	1 / 3%	±0 / ±0%
Closed with no response	18 / 45%	+8 / ±0%
Closed before accepting: out of jurisdiction	3 / 8%	+1 / -2%
Report issued: maladministration and injustice	1 / 3%	+1 / +3%
Upheld: maladministration and injustice	14 / 35%	+7 / +3%
Upheld: maladministration, no injustice	1 / 3%	+1 / +3%
Not Upheld: no maladministration	1 / 3%	+1 / +3%
Not Upheld: no further action	1 / 3%	-1 / -7%

percentage changes here reflect the change in proportion of total reviews in each category between years, not the change in absolute numbers.

See the next section for financial remedies recommended by the Ombudsman, which relate to a number of these cases, plus some from the previous financial year.

## Part V: Remedies and Learning

### Remedies we offered this year at Stage 1 and Stage 2

**18** complaints that were completed in this year resulted in the payment of financial remedy.

The total remedies offered by the council and accepted by complainants came to **£53,158**.

This is the first year in which early financial remedies have been systematically considered as a method of earlier and fairer resolution, so comparable figures are not available for the previous year.

### Remedies offered this year in Ombudsman Cases

**23** Ombudsman cases resulted in the recommendation of a financial remedy. This is **up by 17 cases, or 283%**.

The total remedies recommended came to **£83,090**. This is **up £68,290, or 461%**. These settlements may not all have been from cases determined within this financial year as to record the payments, the Ombudsman must be satisfied first with the remedies. This means that each year's figure can reflect cases determined in the previous year, especially when some remedies have been delayed and the council is catching up.

The lowest remedy paid in an individual case was **£100** and the highest was **£13,050**.

All these cases related to special educational needs provision.

The very significant increase in financial remedy recommendations and overall amount this year reflects

- (a) a higher number of cases around special educational needs taken to the Ombudsman,
- (b) a higher number of cases where financial remedy is found and
- (c) the completion in this year of remedies recommended in the previous one.

## Learning we identified this year

**114** corporate complaints contained learning points, **16%** of the total responses.

Learning points are general insights about a service that come from findings on a complaint. A learning point is recorded when an action undertaken in response to a complaint is intended to improve outcomes for multiple service users.

Case-specific actions which would only affect the individual complainant/service user are not recorded as learning points.

There could be multiple learning points on some complaints and none on others, so the total number of learning points identified does not sum to a figure matching the number of complaints handled.

	Whole Year
Process Improvement	42
Cross Service Communication	32
Staff Training/Guidance	24
Customer Communication	8
Policy/Procedure Review	6
Reflective Supervision for Social Worker	6
Re-assessment	5
IT Systems fix	2
Equalities Awareness Point	1
Reflective Supervision for Team Manager	1

### *Examples of learning points this year*

To ensure that Amendment Notices and finalised EHCPs are issued following Annual Review meetings.

~

The Special Educational Needs (Personal Budgets) Regulations 2014 state that the dates for payments should be provided by the Local Authority. This will be looked into by the service as we recognise that this information is not currently included in PEB letters.

~

Social work team to invite the Safeguarding Midwife to a team meeting to go through the hospital processes for when babies who are supported by WCF are discharged from individual wards and discharged home with the expectations shared between the midwifery service and WCF for babies who are supported by WCF.

~

Ensure greater consistency regarding site and or road descriptions in responses to planning applications

~

...re-briefing and re-training sessions with our planned works teams which specifically focus on customer liaison and communication...

~

...passed onto the site supervisor to speak to the member of staff identified by your complaint and discuss all of the issues that you have raised...

~

The development of an Easy Read EHCP

~

Adjust the team's approach to processing Stage 3 requests so that delay in acknowledgement and starting the process of organising a Stage 3 panel is minimised in future.

~

...our drainage team to investigate the location and ascertain if there are any long-term issues with the existing surface water drainage infrastructure as well as identify any further surface water drainage improvements that can be made to resolve the flooding...

~

The Council is reviewing at technology with regards to smart ticketing which will assist the team in reviewing passenger numbers sooner.

~

Training is being arranged in December for library staff to support their understanding of neurodivergent customers.

~

The Local authority will however be amending letters relating to remedies to ensure they are clear that before remedy payment is made that the person must provide or confirm their bank details. The local authority will provide a deadline by which the details should be provided in order to comply with the LGSCO time frames. There will not be a notion that remedy is accepted or refused, but that payment can and will only be processed upon receipt of bank details or confirmation to use the information on file.

~

Collaborating with our internal IT development teams to improve the contact section of the travel page with emphasis on public transport elements

~

Ensuring that our supplier reviews and maintains the reliability of the real time displays on an ongoing basis, with an initial review already being completed

~

Having received further reports of behaviour issues on this contract from both the school and the operators we will be reviewing the transport in place to allow some passengers the space and therefore a more enjoyable journey to school...

~

We will strengthen the Libraries Unlocked induction process by emphasising that it is not the responsibility of Libraries Unlocked customers to challenge other library visitors who try to enter the library without Libraries Unlocked membership when staff are not present.

~

Review our documentation to highlight that our statutory ceremonies have a limited time slot

~

Ensure requests for meetings which must be facilitated as part of a statutory process are arranged, even where information is also provided in writing.

~

We will arrange for an immediate review of the placement of the blocks on the corner of Lark Hill Road and arrange for a suitable regime of inspection and maintenance of the blocks and associated traffic management. We will review the arrangement at the base of the steps to ensure that the closure of the footpath is robust.

~

We will be reviewing the wording in the WCC School Admissions Policy in relation to parental responsibility to ensure it is clear in terms of school days and hours of responsibility – this will be published ahead of the school admissions window opening for September 2026 Admissions.

~

Learning will be taken forward regarding communication with third party providers and ensuring there is prompt and transparent communication if and when they are no longer able to fulfil the agreed contract, so that the local authority can make alternative arrangements as soon as reasonably practical and ensure you are informed throughout.

## Part VI: New Reporting Methods and Preparing for the New Code

### More accurate performance measurements

In October 2023, the council introduced its Representations Management System, a new in-house system for processing representations under the corporate representations process as well as Adults Social Care and Children’s Social Care Complaints.

This system more smoothly automates the recording of key data about representations, outputting statistics on an ongoing basis via Microsoft’s Power BI, rather than relying on periodic extractions from the database.

Because the system tracks representations from their very first submission, for the first time we can efficiently track numbers of submissions that turned out to be requests other than representations. Because we can now analyse the customer’s goal in these cases, we will be able to develop our website to direct customers earlier to the appropriate route, with the intention of reducing rejected submissions.

Other features of the system include version tracking, whereby an audit trail records which officers have uploaded, approved or edited responses before they leave the system, allowing us to check and to show that the council follows appropriate ethical standards in its handling of representations, preserving the independence of its Stage 2 investigators.

The system also contains multiple email templates for customers and for complaint handlers and investigators. These ensure timescales, process and next steps are consistently explained when representations are acknowledged, allocated internally and responded to. The email templates also cover frequently recurring circumstances where a representation is rejected or redirected, so these submissions can be handled quickly, including links to other resolution options, so that these do not have to be repeatedly researched. New templates are added on an ongoing basis.

RMS as a custom system has enabled us to fully separate out representations that escalate to the Information Commissioner from those that terminate with the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, enabling us to more quickly collate statistics about these distinct processes.

The system has also been set up to be “code-ready” so that it is simple to update service levels (e.g. response times) as we achieve convergence with the requirements of the Complaint Handling Code ready for its full implementation in April 2026.

## A new corporate representations procedure

In the light of the publication of the new Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code, the time was ripe this year to develop a new comprehensive and written process for how corporate representations should be handled.

Having a single document for this:

- Creates transparent and consistent processes that are available to complaint investigators, complainants, elected members and the Ombudsman
- Establishes clear guidance on exclusions and the treatment of service requests versus complaints or other formal representations
- Makes explicit where previous custom and practice no longer apply (e.g ending use of any “informal stage”)
- Establishes clear guidance on the ethics and processes for complaint handling in Worcestershire, in greater detail than is covered in the code
- Assists investigators in making clear findings and issuing compliant responses

The procedure is now published internally and available to council officers. In the introductory period (until 1 April 2026) it remains in review to ensure that it is sufficiently comprehensive and useable. Once it is finalised, key elements of the procedure will be published as a document on our website for the public, allowing complainants to understand in detail what they should expect from the process.

## New timescales from 2026-27

From 1 April 2026, councils will be assessed against the complaint handling code, and so our standard timescales for Stage 1 corporate complaints will change:

Corporate Stage 1 complaint response deadlines will be set at a maximum of 15 working days from submission (allowing up to 5 working days for acknowledgment, if required). This reduces the time we allow for responses by 5 working days.

Corporate Stage 2 complaint response deadlines will be set at a maximum of 25 working days from submission (allowing up to 5 working days for acknowledgment, if required). This matches the standard already established in our process.

During 2024-25 we reduced our corporate acknowledgement timescales from 7 to 5 working days, moving earlier than required to the code standard. We achieved **95% compliance** for Stage 1 complaint acknowledgements. For Stage 2 escalation acknowledgements/determinations we achieved **76% compliance** overall, with the latter 3 quarters of the year each showing **over 85% compliance**.

**Comments on this report are welcomed and requests for further information should be directed to [representations@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:representations@worcestershire.gov.uk) or 01905 844096.**

**This document can be made available in other languages and alternative formats (large print, audio or braille) by contacting the Consumer Relations Unit on [representations@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:representations@worcestershire.gov.uk) telephone number 01905 844096.**