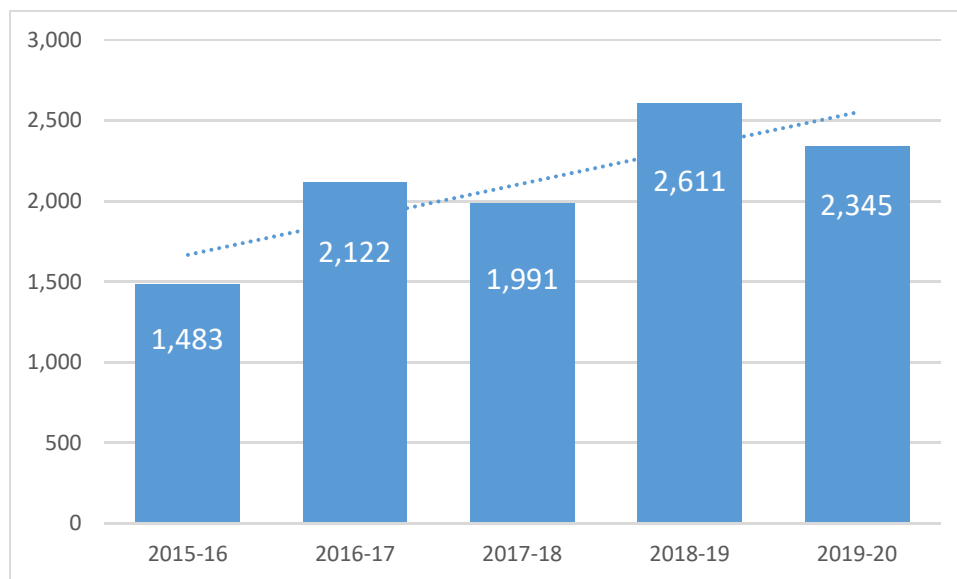


5. Compliments for Cardiff Council in 2019-20

A total of 2,345 compliments were recorded during 2019/20. This is a 10.2% decrease from the previous year, when 2,611 compliments were recorded.

Year	Number of compliments
2019-20	2,345
2018-19	2,611
2017-18	1,991
2016-17	2,122
2015-16	1,483



Compliments received per 1,000 of population

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Cardiff population (estimate)	361,168	362,756	366,903
Total number compliments received	1,991	2,611	2,345
Number of complaints received per 1,000	5.5	7.2	6.4

The population of Cardiff is estimated at 366,903 (Source: <https://statswales.gov.wales>). In 2019/20, Cardiff Council handled 2,345 compliments from customers, meaning that an average of 6.4 compliments were received per 1000 residents.



Governance & Legal

Service Area	2018/19	2019/20
Governance & Legal	2	15
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	100%	100%

15 complaints were received for **Governance & Legal** during 2019/20, an increase of 13 complaints when compared to 2018/19. The main reason for the increase in the number of complaints is as a result of the 2019 General Election, which resulted in an increase in activity for the team with relatively short notice to prepare. The Electoral Services Team administer elections in 4 parliamentary constituencies with a total electorate of 279,820 in 2019 and supported 191,244 electors to cast their vote. Taking the above into account, the number of complaints received is very minimal.

All complaints have been investigated and action taken to improve. This includes improved training plans for temporary staff. Despite this increase in complaints, many positive comments were received from candidates, agents and the electoral commission regarding the professional delivery of the election in Cardiff.

Housing & Communities

Housing & Communities received a total of **543** complaints in 2019/20, which is an increase on the 464 complaints received in 2018/19.

Service Area	2018/19	2019/20
Housing & Communities	479	543
Assessment & Support	103	102
Hubs & Community Services	44	40
Landlord Services	119	137
Preventative Services	6	11
Regeneration, Development & Enabling	5	8
Responsive Repairs Unit	184	233
Libraries	17	9
Adult Community Learning	1	3
Number / Percentage of complaints responded to on time	464 (96.9%)	518 (95.4%)



Housing & Communities continue to treat complaints in a positive way, looking at each one thoroughly to establish exactly what (if anything) has gone wrong. In addition to doing everything possible to resolve individual complaints, officers will always look at any changes that can be made following a complaint.

The detailed reasons for complaints are monitored at monthly meetings by the Director of Adults Social Services, Communities and Housing and other relevant staff. Any patterns, such as the types of errors being made, can then be addressed and the appropriate action taken to ensure best practice; for example, changes made to procedure or standard letters being amended.

The role of the specialised Housing Complaint Officers has expanded as hoped and they now deal with complaints relating to a number of housing teams including Landlord Services (including Social Lettings, Anti-Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management), Hubs and the Responsive Repairs Unit. This allows for a consistent and thorough approach to all complaint investigations and their roles continue to evolve.

Overall, the number of complaints has gone up slightly, but this appears to be purely the natural fluctuation that is to be expected. Having looked at the figures and the reports, there is no specific reason that can be identified. An increase in the number of complaints about Landlord Services is primarily due to an increase in complaints about the Social Lettings Unit. This may be as a result of changes to the Allocations Policy. The policy is now based on housing need rather than time served on the list and as such is much fairer. However, there are inevitably some people who have become less likely to be housed as a result of the change.

The largest proportion of complaints was about Responsive Repairs who are responsible for responsive repairs for 13,721 Council properties. 233 complaints were received and, while any level of complaints remains of concern, it should be noted that the amount of complaints is less than 0.40% of the approximately 57,000 repairs carried out in 2019/20 in total. With at least 92% of repairs being carried out by the in-house workforce and 91% of appointments made, customer satisfaction with the Responsive Repairs service remains high as is demonstrated by good feedback in the annual tenant survey.

10. Welsh Language Complaints

During 2019-20, a total of 13 complaints were received by the Council from the public in relation to the Welsh Language Standards. Whether the complaints were received in English or Welsh, they were dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints procedure.



11. Priorities for 2021

We will continue to review the complaints service throughout 2021 and make any necessary changes to ensure that our complaints process remains customer-focused and that the Council is providing the best service possible. Below are some of our priorities this coming year so that we can achieve these goals.

Council-wide complaints system

An internal audit conducted by the Council's internal audit team identified the lack of a central repository for all complaints. Currently, each directorate is recording data using a variety of systems. Therefore, during 2021, we will be working towards implementing a Council-wide complaints system. This will also result in improved consistency of data entry across the organisation. The Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) was created as a result of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act and part of the CSA's duty is to collect and publish specific data from local authorities. A central complaints repository will help us in this regard.

Improved complaints reporting

The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) 2019 Act will require Local Authorities to report on its complaints performance twice a year. This, in addition, to the ad-hoc requests from senior management for complaints performance data, emphasises the importance of a council-wide repository for complaints that can produce council-wide data quickly. To meet the requirements of the act, in addition to the Annual Complaints Report, the Corporate Complaints team will produce a second report to take to Informal Cabinet at the six-month period. This increased reporting will enable our complaints team to conduct frequent trend analysis of the main reasons complaints are made and this could lead to possible and timely improvements.

Improved compliments recording

There continues to be a concern that the good service provided every day by officers within the Council is not being represented. The complaints team will look at ways of updating our recording procedure to ensure our compliments are captured and that we are continuing to take on board what our customers want. Staff will also be reminded that it is important to report compliments as well as complaints. Compliments provide very helpful feedback and provide us with a flavour of what works well and what people using our services really value. Furthermore, a section receiving larger numbers of complaints can appear to be a concern until a consideration of compliments highlights that there is a more balanced view of the service overall.

Guidance document for handling complaints and compliments

The Comments, Complaints and Compliments Policy provides process information for stakeholders, however we are working towards updating our guidance policy for Service Area Complaints Officers. This guidance policy will define how complaints and compliments should be identified, recognised, recorded and reported for improved consistency across the organisation.



Training from the Ombudsman

Since the publication of this report, many of the Service Area Complaints Officers have attended free training provided by the aforementioned Complaints Standards Authority. This training has covered a wide range of topics and has been very warmly received. More Complaints Officers will be attending this training in 2021.

Customer Service training

Whilst the Complaints Standards Authority and Corporate Complaints Team will continue to provide specific training on complaint handling, we will also promote the popular Customer Service training offered by Customer & Digital Services. Whether we are working with external or internal customers, great service is crucial in how we operate across the council and ultimately, can result in decreased complaints and costs.

