

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

2 JUNE 2008

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS QUARTERLY REPORT

QUARTER 4 – 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2008
AND THE YEAR 2007/08

1. This report summarises the compliments and complaints received during quarter 4 of 2007/08 and figures for the full year 2007/08.

Compliments Received

Compliments Received	Adult & Community	Business & Environment	Chief Executive	Children & Young People	Finance & Central	Total for year/quarter
2006/07 Total	193	149	3	20	0	365 (year)
Quarter1 2007/08	276	88	6	21	4	395
Quarter 2 2007/08	277	224	15	14	2	532
Quarter3 2007/08	216	130	16	43	2	407
Quarter 4 2007/08	197	182	16	10	37	442
Total 2007/08	966	624	53	88	45	1776

Analysis and Further Information

2. The majority of compliments this quarter were again received by ACS with 45%. BES received 41% of the compliments this quarter. The rise here was particularly in relation to: household waste recycling centres, with an increase from 1 compliment in quarter 3 to 26 in quarter 4; and Trading Standards, with an increase from 54 to 76.
3. The large rise reported in FCS was due to compliments from Facilities Management not being reported through the year and all being accounted for in the fourth quarter. Compliments will now be reported on receipt, so figures will be correct for each quarter in future years.
4. The new procedure and improved recording leads to the increase in figures between 2006/07 and 2007/08. It is expected that more meaningful comparison can start to be made throughout the following year.

Complaints Received Stages 1 - 3

Complaints Received	Adult & Community	Business & Environment	Chief Executive	Children & Young People	Finance & Central	Total for year/ quarter
2006/07 Total	276	112	8	126	10	532
Quarter1 2007/08	86	11	4	38	1	149
Quarter 2 2007/08	159	21	6	29	1	222
Quarter3 2007/08	222	8	3	31	3	267
Quarter 4 2007/08	175	11	8	24	6	224
Total 2007/08	642	51	21	122	11	847

Analysis and Further Information

5. ACS continues to receive the majority of complaints (78%). It is accepted that this is because of the front line services it provides. Of the 175 complaints received 36 related to Social Care and 139 to Library and Community Services.
6. A review is underway in Library Services looking at how information is being recorded. Although it is recognised that all information collected is important, part of the review will be to set the criteria of what is considered a comment rather than a complaint.
7. There has been an increase in the number of complaints received since 2006/07 - a rise of 316, or 59%. This is mostly due to improved recording across the Council. It is expected that numbers will 'level out' now systems have been in place for some time and figures can be compared more usefully next year.

Timescales

8. During the last quarter 89% of complaints were dealt with within the target timescale (a full response within 20 working days of receipt). Performance in this area has dropped slightly from 91% in quarter 3.
9. 24 complaints took longer than 20 working days to resolve. Of these 20 were handled through the statutory procedure for Social Care complaints, which is noted for being generally of a more complex nature requiring specialist input and the involvement of other agencies and occasionally legal advice.
10. Additional reasons for delay this quarter include complainant availability and staff capacity/availability.
11. When complaints do go over timescale complainants are kept fully informed in accordance with procedures.
12. 77% of stage 1 to 3 complaints in 2006/07 were dealt with within target timescale and 23% went over timescale. There has been an improvement in this area, with 89% of complaints being dealt with within timescales during 2007/08.

Outcomes of Complaints by Directorate

Outcomes	Adult & Community		Business & Environment		Chief Executive		Children & Young People		Finance & Central		Total for year/quarter	
	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU
2006/07 Total	109	136	54	67	1	5	43	62	5	8	212	278
Quarter1 2007/08	10	61	7	3	3	1	7	11	0	0	27	76
Quarter 2 2007/08	27	127	11	8	7	1	25	15	2	0	72	151
Quarter3 2007/08	32	192	1	7	3	0	21	8	3	0	60	207
Quarter 4 2007/08	78	92	2	9	1	7	10	16	4	2	95	126
Total 2007/08	147	472	21	27	14	9	63	50	9	2	254	560

U = Upheld/Partly Upheld NU – Not Upheld

13. 43% of complaints in quarter 4 were upheld or partly upheld, a 17% rise from the previous quarter. The majority of these fell in Library and Community Services (57) and were due to failures of IT equipment.
14. It is accepted that some complaints will be upheld, but we seek to learn from these and improve our services as a result. Some of the changes that have been made as a result of complaints are detailed in Appendix 1 'Overview of Learning Outcomes for Upheld Complaints'.
15. Annually there has been a decrease from 43% to 31% of complaints that have been upheld or partly upheld.

Reason for Complaint

Category	Poor Service		No Service		Delay in Service		Disagree decision/ policy		Staff Attitude		Poor Communication		Personnel		Other	
	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU
2006/07 Jul - Mar*	52	94	11	7	24	4	19	69	6	17	18	7	0	6	4	58
Quarter1 2007/08	6	24	2	9	3	2	5	25	4	5	7	0	0	1	0	10
Quarter 2 2007/08	31	81	5	8	6	3	14	30	6	3	10	7	0	0	0	19
Quarter3 2007/08	29	114	2	7	3	5	7	23	3	3	16	7	0	0	0	48
Quarter 4 2007/08	38	24	38	4	1	7	8	37	1	5	9	10	0	0	0	38
Total 2007/08	104	243	47	28	13	17	34	115	14	16	42	24	0	1	0	115

U = Upheld/Partly Upheld NU – Not Upheld

* No statistics available for Apr - Jun 06

16. Of the 221 complaints completed this quarter, 62 related to poor service, 45 to disagree with decision/policy and 42 to no service. Just over half of these (84) were upheld or partly upheld.
17. Annually 814 stage 1 - 3 complaints were completed, with 347 (43%) of these being recorded in the category Poor Service. Of these, 30% were upheld or partly upheld.
18. Figures for 2006/07 were not available for the first quarter, but for the period July06 - Mar 07 - 396 complaints were completed, 146 (37%) of these were categorised as Poor Service and 88 (22%) as Disagree with Decision/Policy. 35% of the 'Poor Service' complaints were upheld/partly upheld and 22% of the 'Disagree with Decision/Policy' complaints were upheld/partly upheld.

Complaints Process

19. During the last quarter 205 complaints were received at stage one, 17 at stage two and 2 at stage three.
20. It can be seen that only a small percentage of complaints move on to stages 2 (formal Investigation) and 3 (review of investigation by Chief Executive), which is the intention.

Ombudsman's Complaints

21. At the beginning of this quarter 8 Ombudsman complaints were already in progress and a further 15 were received during the quarter. 9 complaints are still in train at the end of the quarter.
22. Fourteen decisions were made, all of which found no maladministration. One complaint did result in Local Settlement. This was in relation to a school transport appeal. Although the Council carried out the original appeal correctly it was agreed in this case to offer another appeal if further information was provided. Brief details of these complaints can be found at Appendix 2.
23. The Ombudsman's Office has experienced some pressure of work this year and there have been delays in making final decisions. However, the vast majority of our responses are made to the Ombudsman within the timescales set by that office. Indeed, the provisional statistics sent to us from the Ombudsman quotes our average response time as 24.9 calendar days, which includes one particularly complex complaint where response was made in 88 days. The standard response target is usually 28 days, although complaints involving education appeals are usually set a deadline of 14 days.
24. A full report on Ombudsman complaints for the year 2007/08 will be brought to Standards Committee on receipt of the Ombudsman's annual letter.

Learning from Complaints

25. Appendix 1 shows learning outcomes from complaints that were upheld or partly upheld for quarter 4.

Yearly Comparison

26. Appendix 3 shows comparisons between 2006/07 and 2007/08 in graphical form.

Conclusion

27. The team of Directorate Complaints Coordinators (DCCs) continue to meet regularly to share best practice.
28. Research is being carried out in relation to procuring a Council-wide system for recording compliments/comments/complaints.
29. Monitoring continues to improve and as a result statistics are becoming more reliable. Reporting issues have mostly been overcome and comparisons in future years should be more meaningful. This will only improve further with the introduction of a corporate electronic system that works well.
30. As part of the County Council's regular seminars for elected members, the event in June will include a short presentation by Neil Hobbs, Assistant Local Government Ombudsman, based in York.
31. The Committee is asked to note the information provided and decide what information they would like to receive in future and in what format.

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May 2008

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Background Documents: None

Appendices: 1. Learning Outcomes
2. Graphs

Overview of Learning Outcomes for Upheld Complaints
Quarter 4 1 January – 31 March 2008

STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS		
Directorate	Description	Learning Outcome
ACS Community	Problems with making reservations on line at Helmsley	Extra training has been provided on automated reservation procedures to identified staff
	4 complaints regarding problems contacting the office via the telephone	The 4 were regarding the Telephone system which was still under investigation in January when these complaints were received – non rec'd after that date
	58 Complaints received regarding computers being down and no access to the internet	All the information has been passed to Library Headquarters support services identifying geographical hot spots
ACS Social Care	Transport provision	Timings reviewed
	Missed PCAH calls and attitude of PCAH staff	Agency replaced, new carers appointed
	Lack of support after death of relative and costs incurred for respite stay	Re-assessment and apology for premature closing of case
	Carpets soiled by carers during wet weather	Trial of non-slip overshoes – situation to be reviewed
	Confidentiality issues	Apology made and systems reviewed
	Contact with staff	Confirmation referral received and process explained
	Invoice for residential stay	Explanation of charging policy
	Missed/late PCAH calls	Apology given, review of rota
	Lack of consultation re change of care manager	Apology and explanation for change
	Delay in adaptations	Apology and review of progress
	Request for records and copy notes not actioned	Apology and appropriate information sent
	Use of wheelchair and mobility	Staff to be more encouraging in use of equipment
	Standard of care in respite facility	Standards reviewed and further staff training where appropriate
	Missed PCAH visits	Apology given. New system implemented to allow easier access to client information
	Case management of daughter's care	Explanation of actions, progressed to Stage 2
	Disagrees with financial assessment	Apology and re-assessment carried out
Lack of funding for placement	Explanation of steps taken to find alternate placement	
Change in care manager and suitability of placement	Alternate accommodation sought.	
BES	Lack of response to enquiry	Must keep people informed of what actions are taking place when not able to give full reply within timeframe, due to waiting for information from outside agencies.
	Following her reporting a footpath in a bad state of repair, cones, signs and sandbags appeared but no further action has been taken to carry out any repair.	Must keep people informed of what actions are taking place and what the processes are with regard to funding and ranking of these types of requests.
CEG Customer Service Centre	Customer not given full information in response to an email, resulting issue 'going round the houses'.	A quality check process was introduced for emails
CYPS Social Care	Actions and attitude of social worker	Apology for any offence caused
	Unhappy with case management	Explanation of actions and apology where appropriate
	Lack of support and poor case management	Financial settlement of costs incurred. Further guidance for staff about status and financial implications being clarified at start of placement
	Contact with relatives	Apology for breakdown in communication
	Calls not returned and views not included	Apology for lack of contact. Explanation of way forward and clarification of roles
	Cancellation of meeting and restricted access to records	Apology for cancellation of meeting. Explanation of access to records policy, including third party consent.

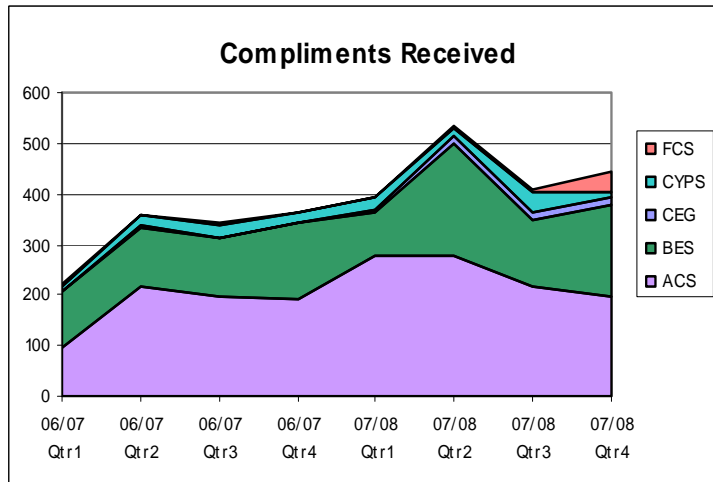
STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS			
Directorate	Description	Learning Outcome	
CYPS Other	Complainant pointed out inconsistencies in Guide for Parents	Guide for Parents amended as a result of the complaint (How nursery provision is described in Guide)	
CYPS Social Care	Actions of social care staff	Apology for delay in sharing outcome of assessment. Apology for appropriate leaflet not being provided	
	Withdrawal of playscheme facility	Apology for poor practice and levels of communication with another agency	
	Sharing of photograph	Apology for distress caused. Review of guidance to foster carers	
FCS	Direct Care payment was made to wrong account	Result of clerical error. Manager emphasised to staff member the need for accuracy in service delivery.	
	Unhappy with treatment and attitude of staff member	Complaints Co-ordinator discussed professional practice with staff member especially whilst dealing with difficult people.	
	Receiving reminder notices when wife's homecare charges are being disputed with ACS Finance. Whilst charges are under investigation, demands should be suspended.	Manager reviewed reminder notice procedures with staff to ensure understanding.	
	Letter sent out twice with incorrect name of deceased mother	Result of clerical error. Manager emphasised to staff member the need for accuracy in service delivery.	
STAGE 3 COMPLAINTS			
Directorate	Description	Learning Outcome	
CYPS Social Care	Actions of social care staff in the case management of their daughter	Review of level of communication. Appropriate information be provided to enable access to records. Encouraged family mediation.	
OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS			
Directorate	Description	Decision	Learning Outcome
CYPS	Home to School Transport	Local Settlement	Agreed to further appeal, although procedures had been followed correctly

Ombudsman Complaints Decisions 1 January to 31 March 2008

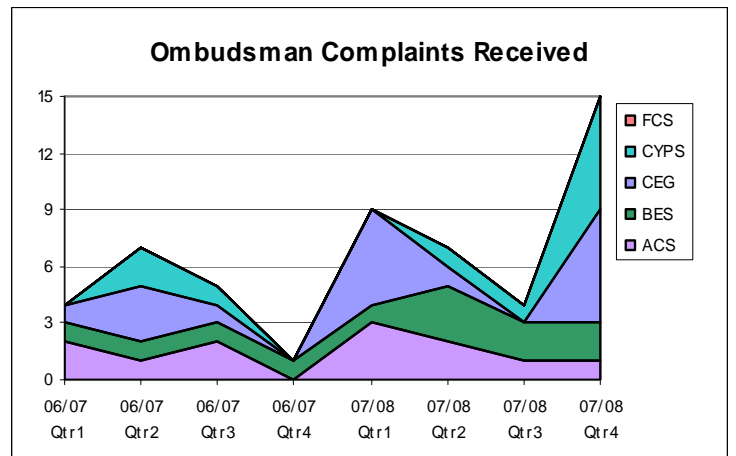
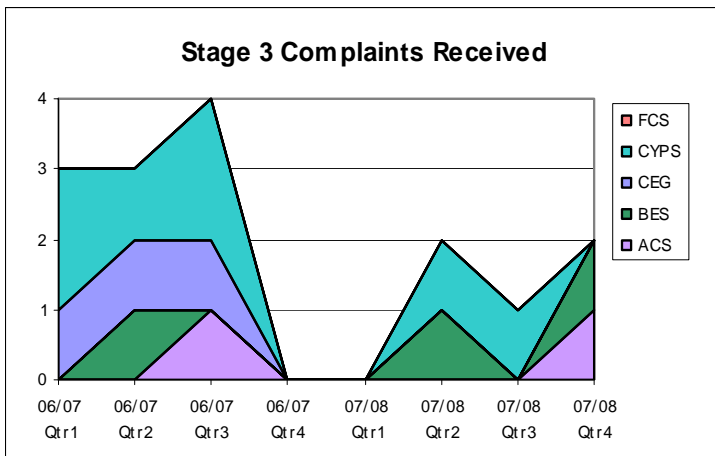
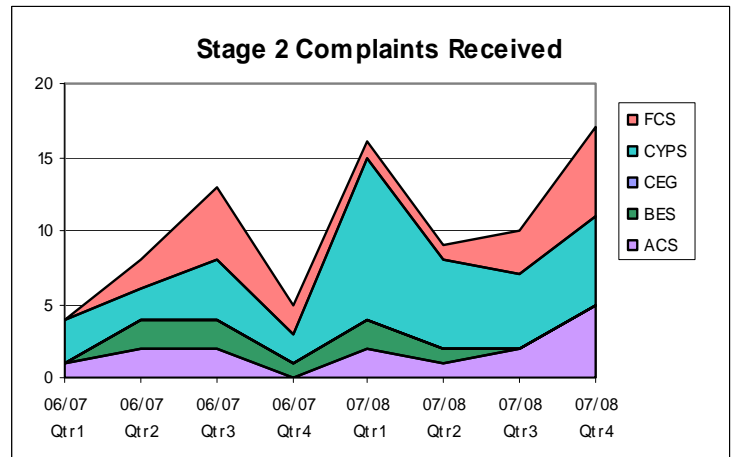
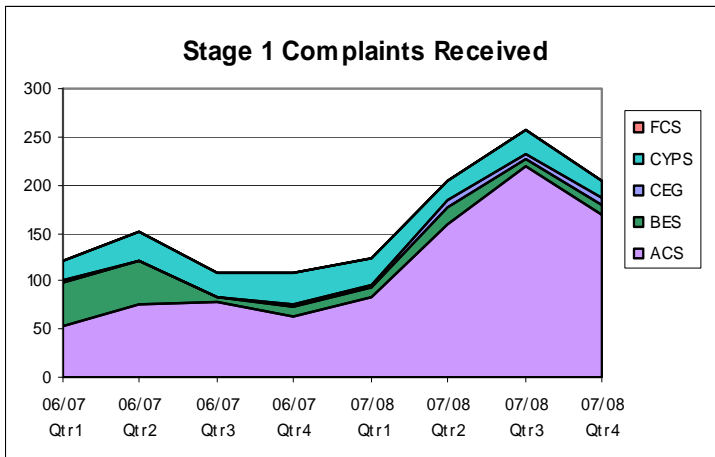
Description	Decision	Learning Outcome
Sale of piece of land - delays	Ombudsman's Discretion	
Pier Road, Whitby - refusal to implement use of rising bollards and refusal to remove loading bays	No Maladministration	
Sale of land, Back Gate, Ingleton	No Maladministration	
Education Admissions	Ombudsman's Discretion	
Education Admissions	Ombudsman's Discretion	
Education Admissions	Outside Jurisdiction	
Education Admissions	Outside Jurisdiction	
Education Admissions	Outside Jurisdiction	
Education Admissions	Outside Jurisdiction	
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Education Admissions	Outside Jurisdiction	
Home to School Transport	Local Settlement	Agreed to further appeal, although procedures had been followed correctly
Education of son with SEN - differing opinion of how needs should be met	Ombudsman's Discretion	
Ripley Endowed School - increased number of pupils and the expansion of the school premises causing noise disturbance	Outside Jurisdiction	

**Overview of Compliments and Complaints
2006/07 to 2007/08**

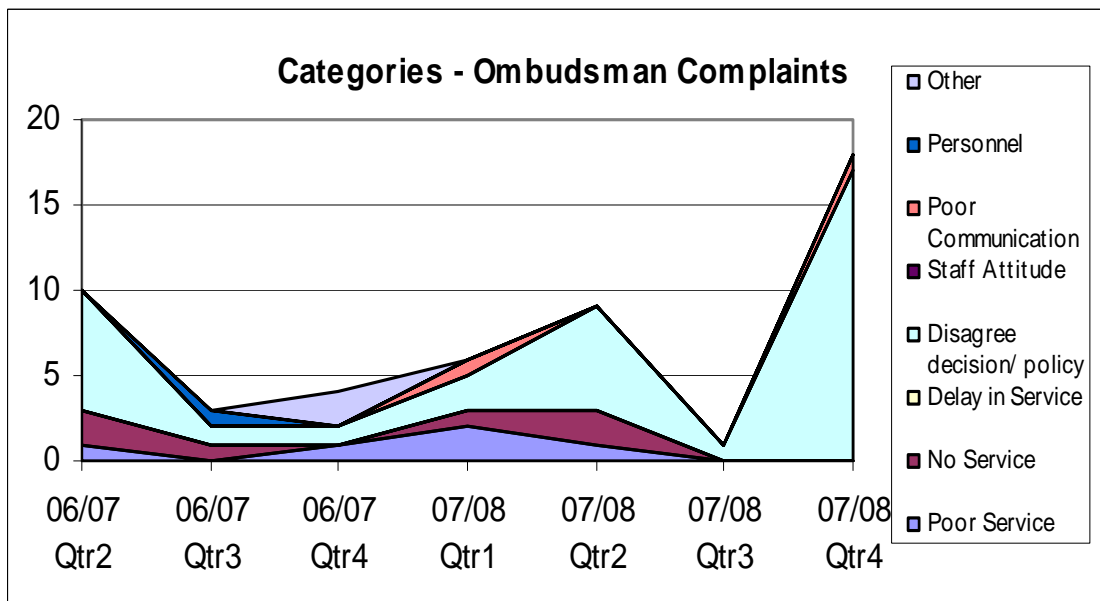
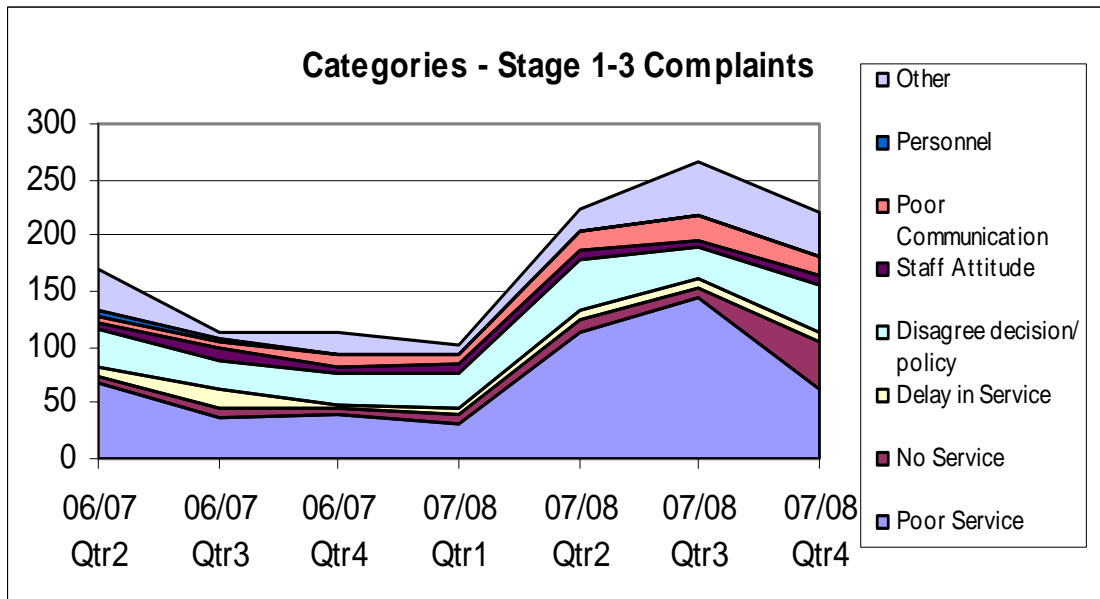
Compliments



Complaints Received

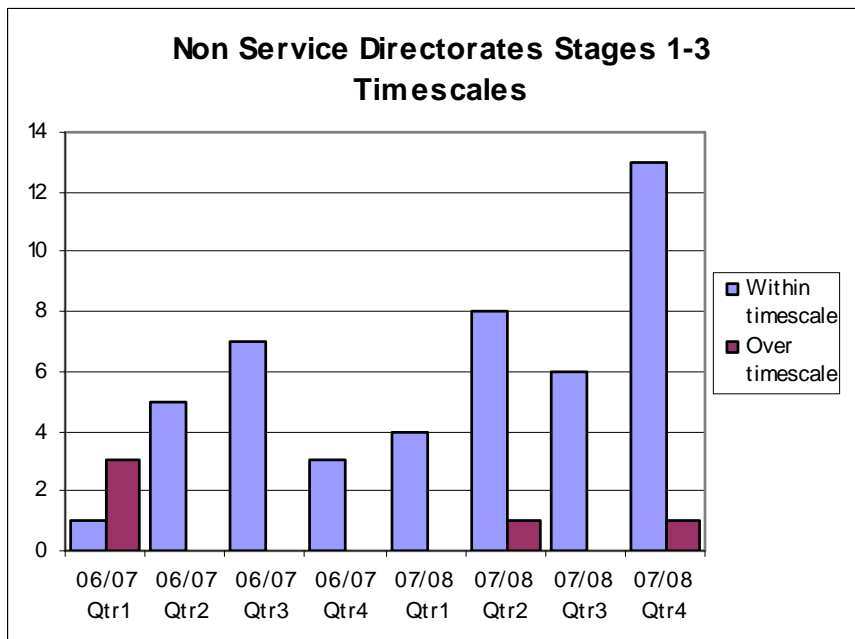
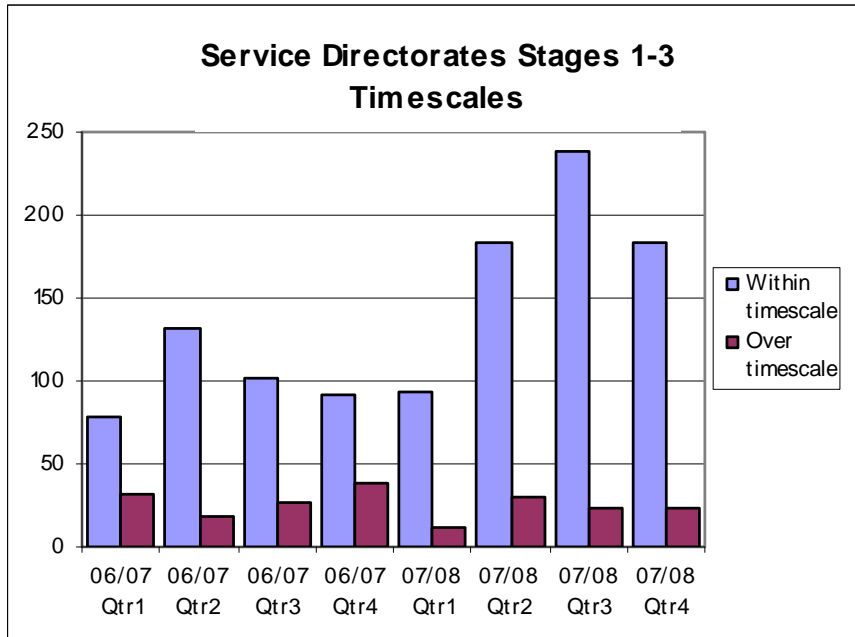


Complaints Categories



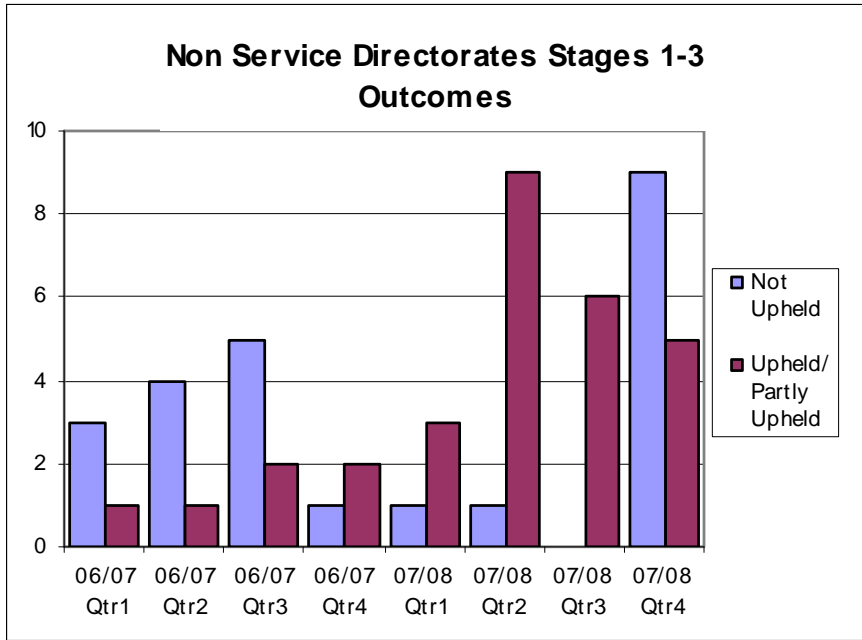
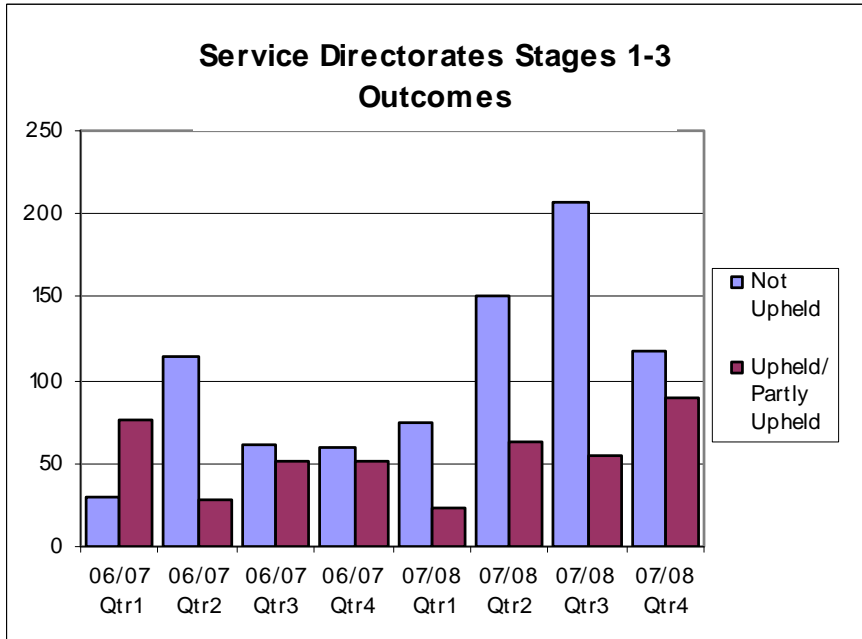
Complaints Completed Stages 1 - 3

Timescales



Please note non service directorates graph split from service directorates because of low figures.

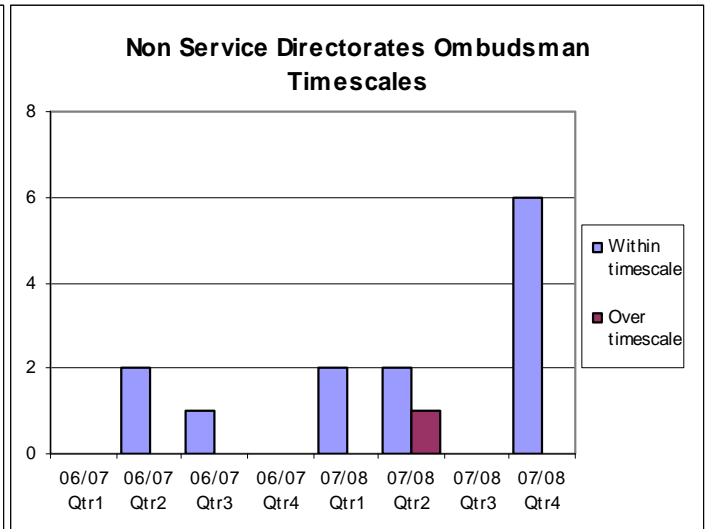
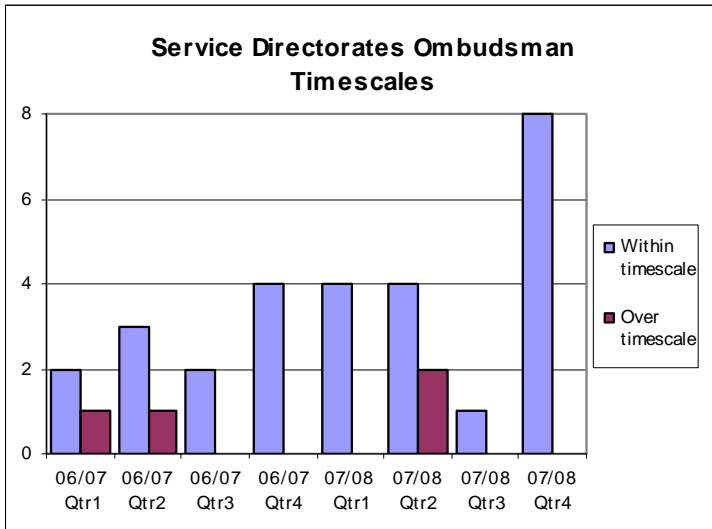
Outcomes



Please note non service directorates graph split from service directorates because of low figures.

Ombudsman Complaints

Timescales



Outcomes

