



Complaints about care services in Scotland, 2015/16 to 2019/20

A statistical bulletin

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HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Executive summary

This statistical bulletin builds on last year's 'Complaints about care services in Scotland 2015/16 to 2018/19' report. This report adds data about complaints received and investigated over the last year April 2019 to March 2020. Focus was made on the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Care services operating in Scotland must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. We currently register and inspect almost 12,600 services, supporting improvement where necessary to ensure that the standard of care experienced by people is of high standard and meets their needs. Our complaints procedure allows people who experience care, their friends and families, and others, to raise with us concerns they have about care services in Scotland. We deal with these complaints through our complaints process, which also enables us to promote and support improvement and share the learning widely.

Since 2015/16, we have received over 4,000 complaints about care services each year with 2019/20 being the first year where we have received over 5,000. Although levels of complaints received have risen over this period, this is not necessarily an indicator that quality of care is in decline. Comparing 2015/16 to 2019/20, the percentage of services graded good, very good or excellent in all quality themes has remained fairly constant at 88% for 2015/16 and just over 87% in 2019/20. This increase in the number of complaints we received may indicate greater awareness of our complaints process, or a greater awareness from people about the standards of care they and others should expect.

Most complaints received (46%) were made by relatives or carers of a person who experiences the care service. The majority of the 1,520 complaints that we investigated in 2019/20 were upheld (61% of completed investigations).

Complaints about services for children and young people, has increased by 23% since last year. We found that very few of the complaints about services for very vulnerable children come from the children themselves. We asked young people what would make it easier for them to contact us, and there are plans to develop our reporting facility to include the ability to get in touch by text. Awareness raising sessions about our complaints function is also planned with advocacy agencies and we are developing leaflets and posters to let young people know about their rights and who they can speak to if they are unhappy with their care.

Care homes account for just under 50% of the total number of complaints investigated – a total of 3,642 completed investigations over the last five years. Over the last five years, 19% of the complaints we investigated were about daycare of children services, 22% about either combined housing support/care at home or standalone care at home services, and 8% were about childminders.

Of the complaints completed in 2019/20, just under a quarter of all areas of complaint were about healthcare issues in a service, 19% were about wellbeing concerns, 15% were about communication and a further 13% related to staffing concerns.

Our focus in all areas of our work, including complaints, is on improving the quality of the care experience and outcomes for people who experience care. We do this during of the investigation process and we use the intelligence from complaint investigations to help us better focus our scrutiny, assurance and improvement support activity.

In March 2020, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland resulted in changes to how services operate. Many services closed, whilst others restricted non-essential visitors. This meant for the two weeks in March, we were required to change how we responded to any concerns and complaints we received, while also having to deal with complaints already open for investigation in other ways. Using our risk assessment process, discussion with the person making the complaint on how they would like us to proceed and working with the service provider, we were able to utilise the alternative pathways to resolution in our complaints process where appropriate. As this occurred in the final weeks of this reporting period, these changes have had a minimal impact on the trends provided in this report.

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1. Introduction

This statistical bulletin builds on last year's 'Complaints about care services in Scotland 2015/16 to 2018/19' report. The report adds data about complaints received and investigated over the last year April 2019 to March 2020. Focus was made on the year 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Care services operating in Scotland must be registered with the Care Inspectorate. We register and inspect around 12,600 services, supporting improvement and aiming to ensure that the standard of care provided is high. The largest groups of care services in Scotland are childminders, children's daycare (for example nurseries), care homes, care at home and housing support services. Where standards fall below acceptable levels, we take enforcement action. We also investigate complaints about care services, including complaints from staff employed in care services.

In many cases, complaints and concerns can be dealt with by staff and managers in care services, but anyone who has concerns or is unhappy with a care service can complain directly to the Care Inspectorate. There are many ways in which a complaint can be made, for example, writing to us, calling us or online through our website. The person making the complaints can choose to remain anonymous if they wish.

We actively promote our complaints function, not only to help people resolve concerns about the quality of care but also because the intelligence from complaints informs our other scrutiny and improvement support activities. Where there is an unexpected pattern of complaints about a service, we may bring forward our next planned inspection to focus on areas of concern highlighted in complaints that we have investigated and we may support specific improvement work with an individual service or a provider of services or partnership area. This active promotion of our complaints function is designed to support people to be more aware of their rights, so they know that they can complain to us if they are unsatisfied with a care service.

Our complaints procedure

In November 2017, we introduced a new procedure for handling complaints about care services. This procedure is designed to be open, transparent, risk-based and focused on people's experiences. The changes give us more flexibility in how we can respond to try to resolve simple matters quickly and focus more attention on more serious issues. Our approach emphasises direct service action, which is where we try to resolve a matter at the first point of contact, without the need for a formal investigation. We use a risk assessment process that allows us to assess the risk identified by a complaint, taking into account what else we know about the service. This enables us to decide how we will proceed and what action we need to take to achieve the best outcome for people experiencing care. There are four pathways we can take.

1. Intelligence: where we receive information about a care service, we may use the information given by a person as intelligence about the service, to help inform future scrutiny and improvement support activity.
2. Direct service action (previously known as front line resolution): where we contact the service and ask them to engage directly with the person making the complaint to resolve the complaint. Typically, this is used for straightforward or simple matters where people are unsatisfied with their experiences and we intervene quickly with a care service to achieve a positive result.
3. Investigation by the care provider: where we contact the service provider, ask them to investigate the concerns and respond to the complaint.
4. Investigation by the Care Inspectorate: depending on our assessment of risk, we may decide that we need to formally register and investigate the complaint.

Our complaints app

Last year we reviewed our current digital systems for complaints to see how able they were to be safely adapted to meet current and future recording and reporting needs. We decided to develop a new digital operating system, using up to date technology to enable us to deliver additional functionality to benefit the recording process and the users experience. It enables us to fully report on all complaints work, the different methods used to resolve complaints and provides better intelligence on the nature of complaints. The complaints app was developed and introduced on the 21 March 2019.

The introduction of the new complaints app affected the categorisation of the statistical data we collect about complaints. This was as a result of some changes in the categorisation of who the person making the complaint is and also the reasons for complaints. The complainant categories were streamlined to include an 'Other' category which amalgamated a lot of the previous categories which were rarely used. The reasons for complaint were changed. General, health and welfare became wellbeing, within which there are additional subcategories. This encourages more specific recording and reduces the large number historically recorded under a more generic general health and welfare category.

Where changes have affected our data, these are detailed in the body of the report.

Impact of COVID-19

In March 2020, the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic in Scotland resulted in changes to how services operate. Many services closed, whilst others restricted non-essential visitors. This meant for the two weeks in March, we were required to change how we responded to any concerns/complaints we received, while also having to deal with complaints already open for investigation in other ways. Using our risk assessment process, discussion with the person making the complaint on

how they would like us to proceed and working with the service provider, we were able to utilise the alternative pathways to resolution in our complaints process where appropriate. As this occurred in the final weeks of this reporting period, these changes have had a minimal impact on the trends provided in this report.

2. How many complaints were received and how did we respond to them?

Complaints received

In 2019/20 we received 5,831 complaints about care services, an 18% increase when compared to 2018/19. Over the five-year period, we received an average of 486 complaints per month. Although the level of complaints received has increased over time, this is not necessarily an indicator that quality of care is in decline.

Comparing 2015/16 to 2019/20, the percentage of services graded good, very good or excellent in all quality themes has remained fairly constant at 88% for 2015/16 and just over 87% in 2019/20. This increase in the number of complaints we received may indicate greater awareness of our complaints process, or a greater awareness from people about the standards of care they and others should expect.

The complaint pathways we introduced in November 2017 were designed so that, following a risk assessment process, we could determine the most appropriate action to resolve a complaint. It allows us flexibility in how we respond and try to resolve simple matters more quickly to focus more attention on more serious issues. Our use of the pathways to resolution during 2019/20 were as follows.

1. Use the information given by the person making the complaint as intelligence about the service, to help inform future scrutiny activity.

In 2019/20 we logged 1,610 concerns as intelligence, or an average of 134 complaints per month. This is more than double the average of 65 complaints per month in 2018/19. 17 complaints received were re-assessed and dealt with using this pathway due to COVID-19 restrictions on visiting the service.

2. Direct service action (previously known as front-line resolution).

In 2019/20, 489, or an average of 41 complaints per month were logged as direct service action. Since the introduction of the new complaints app we are now able to differentiate between each individual pathway to resolution, therefore, direct comparison with last year is not possible but will be in future reports. 27 complaints received were re-assessed and dealt with using this pathway due to COVID-19 restrictions on visiting the service.

3. Investigation by the care provider.

939 complaints were passed to the provider to investigate, or an average of 78 complaints per month. As above, following the introduction of the new app, a direct comparison for last year is not possible but will be in future reports. 25 complaints received were re-assessed and dealt with using this pathway due to COVID-19 restrictions on visiting the service.

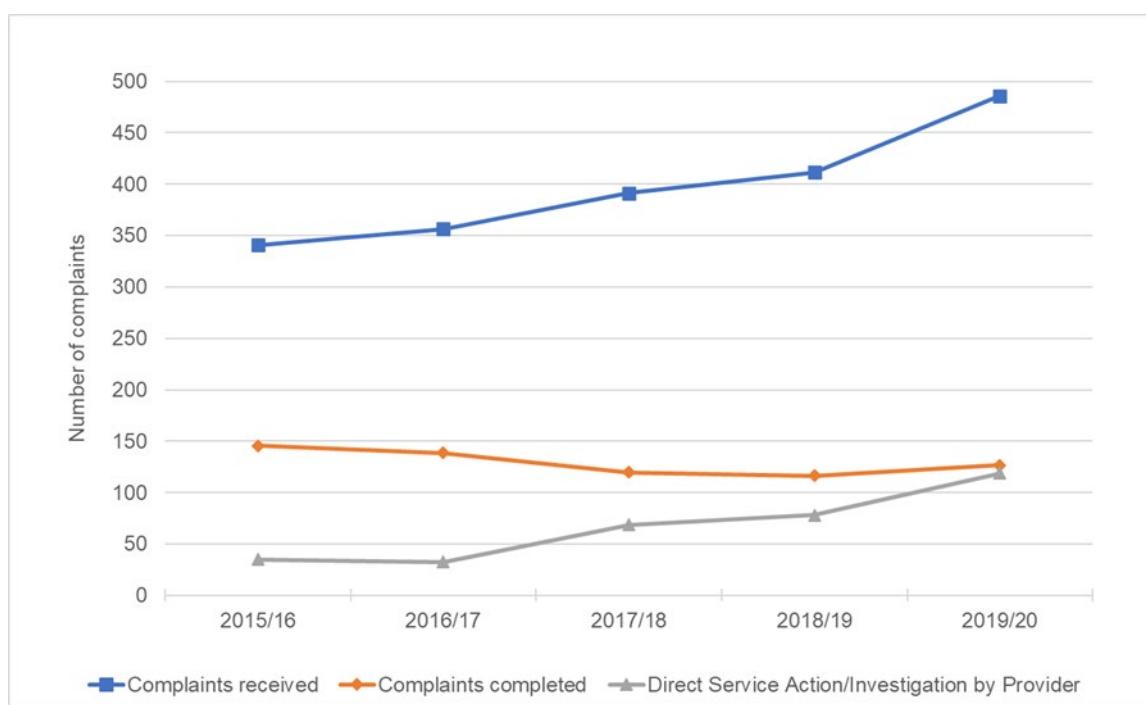
4. Investigation by the Care Inspectorate; depending on our assessment of risk, we may decide that we need to pass the complaint for full investigation.

Since 2015/16, we have seen a decline in the average number of completed complaints per month including last year where we completed on average 116 cases per month. This was partially due to the introduction of the risk assessment process, which meant less complex cases could be resolved in other ways where appropriate. There has however been an increase in 2019/20, where we have completed an average of 127 investigations per month (1,520 investigations in total).

This increase is due in part to a drive to complete the complex cases which remained on our previous complaint recording platform which required full investigation in the first half of the year. These amounted to just under a fifth of the cases completed in 2019/20.

The chart below, (Figure 1), illustrates the trends in the average monthly numbers of complaints received, resolved by direct service action/investigation by provider and completed each year. It shows the complaints received increasing, along with the increase in those resolved by direct service action/investigation by provider. Although the overall trend in investigations completed is decreasing, it shows the recent increase this year is most likely as a result of the focus on clearing cases on our previous complaint recording platform.

Figure 1: Complaints received, completed and resolved by direct service action/investigation by provider – average per month



Revoked complaints

The gap between the complaints received and the complaints completed or resolved by direct action is accounted for by complaints that are revoked.

Many of the complaints we receive about care services are revoked (previously called withdrawn). By revoked, we mean that they are not taken to, or do not complete, a full complaint investigation, instead being directed down one of the other resolution pathways. Common reasons for complaints not being taken to full investigation include: the complaint not being within the remit of the Care Inspectorate to investigate, the person making the complaint not wishing to proceed with their complaint, the person making the complaint deciding to go through the service providers complaints process instead, the concern identifying adult/child protection concerns that were reported to the relevant agencies, and not being able to investigate as information cannot be obtained from the person making the complaint.

Historically, the figure for revoked cases has included those that are logged as intelligence. For the purposes of comparison with previous years, if we include the intelligence cases within the revoked figures then of the 5,831 complaints received in 2019/20, 3,084 were revoked without being taken to full investigation (53%, similar to the 51% in 2018/19).

However, the introduction of the new complaint's app allows us to record intelligence cases and report them separately as they are regarded as being resolved. With intelligence cases removed from the revoked total, of the 5,831 complaints received in 2019/20, 1,474 would now be classed as revoked (25% of all case received).

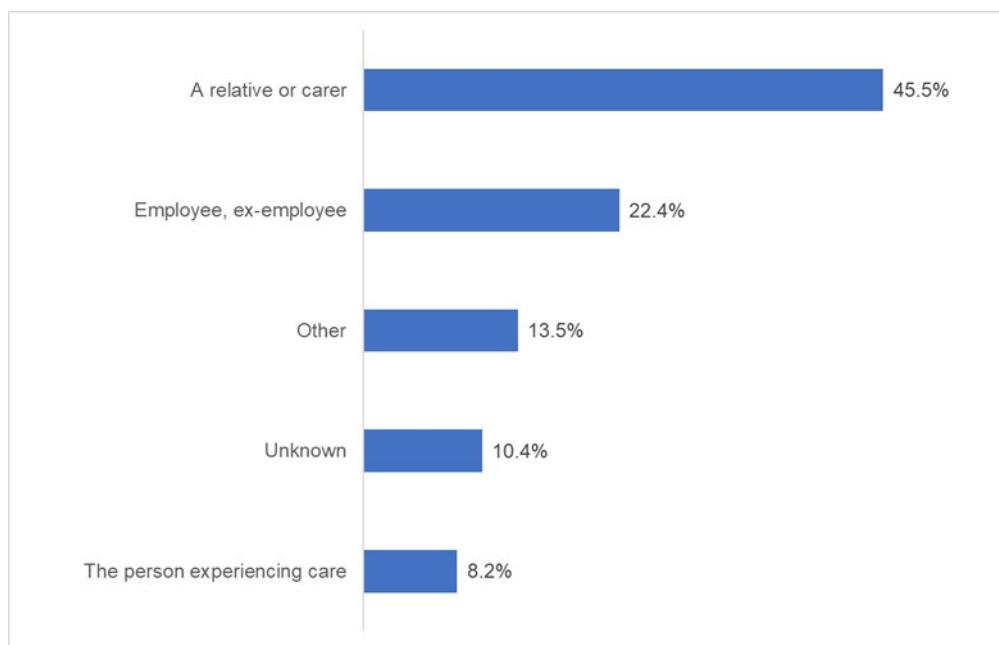
As we are now able to record these cases separately, we will be able to change how we report on this in future reports and be more aligned to the actual resolution process and recording functionality now available to us.

3. Who makes complaints?

Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of all complaints received in 2019/20 by relationship of the person making the complaint to the service. Note that there are fewer categories available to record who made a complaint in the new complaints app than in our previous complaints system. ‘Other’ is now used in place of some categories which we have historically received fewer complaints in, namely health professionals, provider of other service, professional visitor to a person who experiences care, advocacy support service or member of the public. For the purposes of comparison these categories have been amalgamated under ‘Other’ for the years prior to 2019/20. The figures remain similar to those reported at the same point last year.

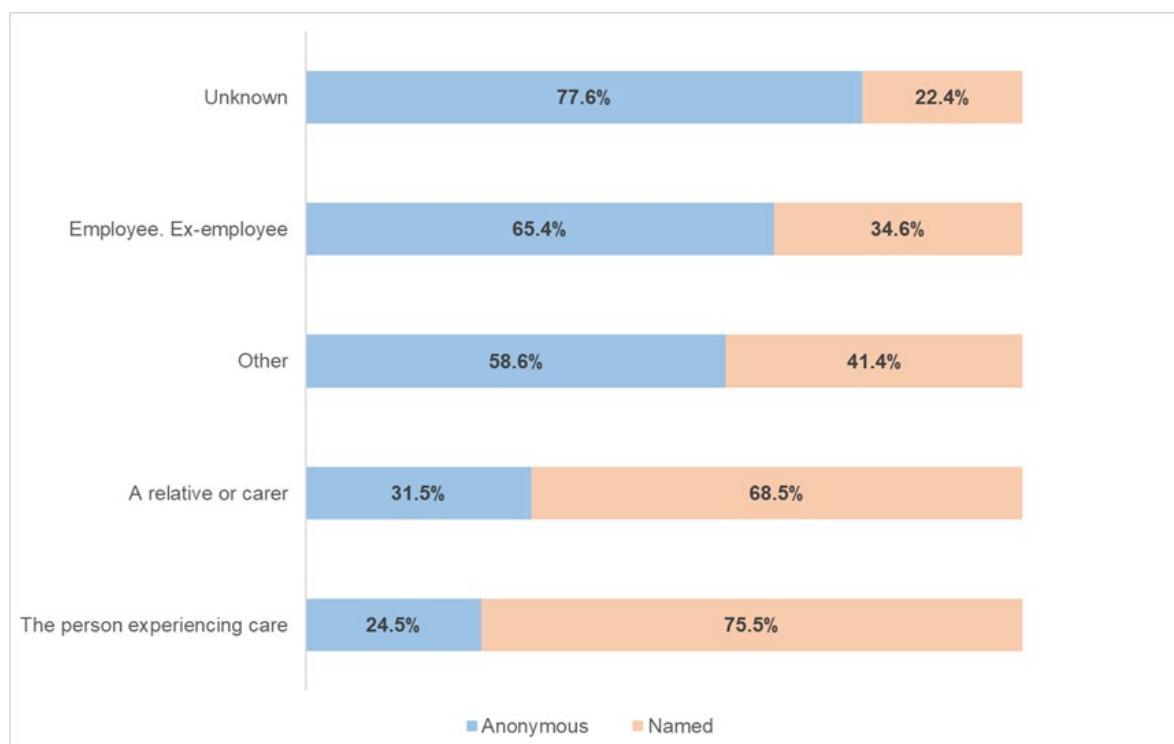
Most (46%) of the complaints we received came from relatives or carers of people who experience care (the same in 2018/19) with a further 22% from employees or former employees and only 8% of complaints made came from people who experience care themselves (both the same as in 2018/19). In the new app, we are able to split the employees and ex-employees into two separate categories and can see for the first time that the majority of these types of complaints in 2019/20 came from current employees of a service (19%).

Figure 2: Complaints received 2015/16 to 2019/20, by relationship to service



When someone makes a complaint, they can choose to remain completely anonymous. Based on all the complaints received over this five-year period, the most likely group who wished to remain anonymous were those whose relationship to the service was unknown – Over three-quarters (78%) did not wish to be named. Two-thirds of employees and/or ex-employees (66%), and over half ‘Other’ complainant types wished to remain anonymous (59%).

Figure 3: Complaints received 2015/16 to 2019/20 that were anonymous, by relationship to service

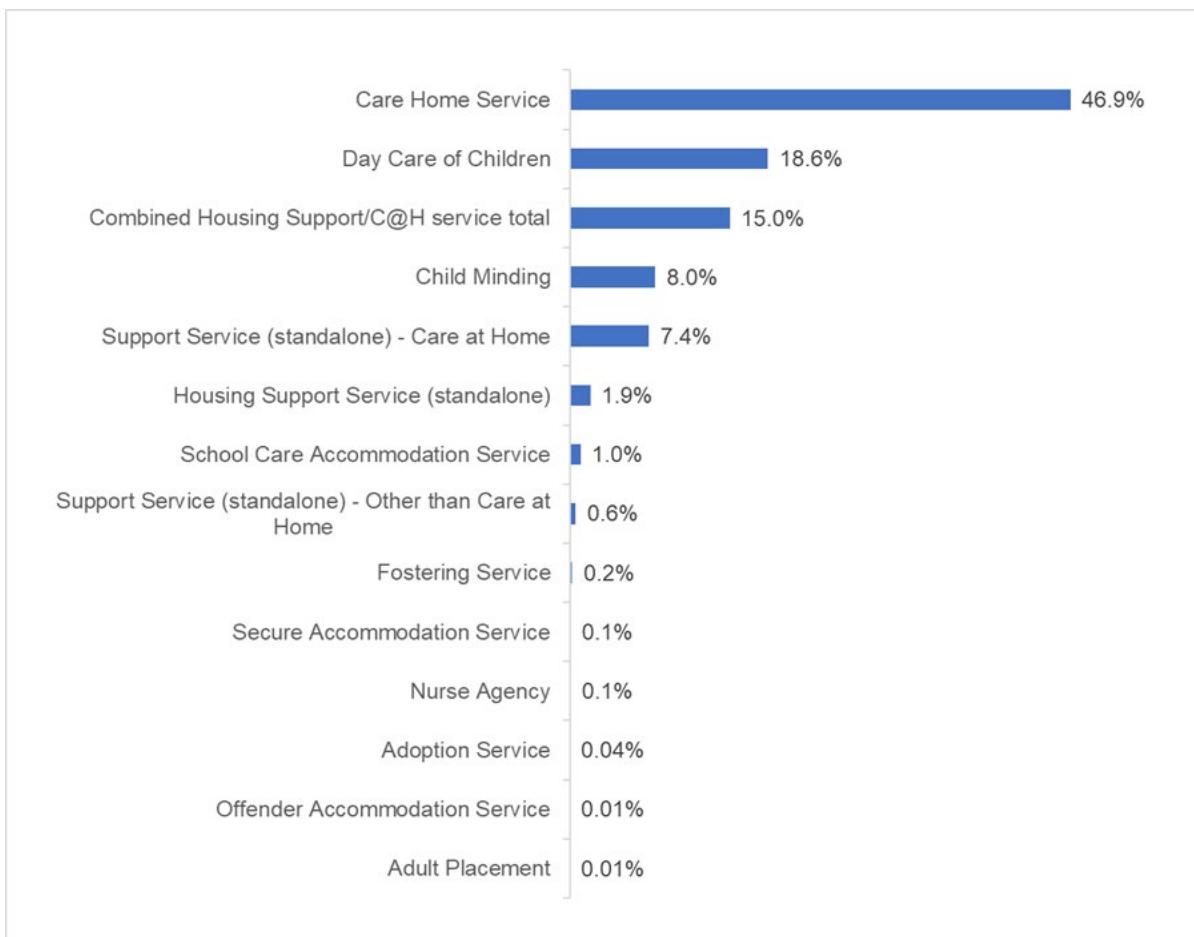


4. What types of care services do people complain about?

The largest number of complaints we investigated over the five-year period involved care homes. Although making up only around 11% of the 12,600 or so registered services, care homes account for 47% of the total number of complaints investigated – a total of 3,642 completed investigations over the last five years.

Over the five years, 22% of the complaints we investigated were about either a combined housing support and care at home service or a standalone care at home service, 19% were about daycare of children services and 8% were about childminders.

Figure 4: Complaints investigated 2015/16-2019/20, by type of service



5. What do people complain about?

Each complaint we investigate can be about several different areas or reasons, each of which will be either upheld or not upheld. Following the introduction of our new complaints app, we changed some of the categories to encourage more specific recording and to reduce the large number historically recorded under general health and welfare.

In 2019/20, just under a quarter of all areas of complaints upheld were about healthcare concerns in a service (for example medication, nutrition or hydration), 19% were about wellbeing (either behavioural, developmental, emotional or social), and a further 15% were related to staffing concerns, such as staffing levels or staff training. There is a more detailed list of areas of complaint in the Appendix (Table C).

Figure 5: All service types, by area of complaint investigations completed in 2019/20

Note: each overall complaint can have several areas of complaint – this table only includes those areas that were upheld.

Summary area of complaint	Number of areas of complaint upheld	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Healthcare	466	22.3%
Wellbeing	401	19.2%
Communication	315	15.1%
Staff	276	13.2%
Choice	140	6.7%
Policies and procedures	130	6.2%
Record keeping	80	3.8%
Protection of people	78	3.7%
Environment	74	3.5%
Privacy and dignity	36	1.7%
Food	30	1.4%
Conditions of registration	27	1.3%
Property	16	0.8%
User participation	12	0.6%
Financial	6	0.3%
Access	4	0.2%

6. Complaints received – children and young people

The volume of complaints received about care services for children and young people¹ has increased by 23% in 2019/20 compared to the same point last year from 1,072 (an average of 89 complaints per month) to 1,324 (an average of 110 complaints per month).

As a proportion of the overall number of complaints received across all service types though it has only increased by 1% (to 23% of all complaints received) when compared to last year.

The majority of the complaints received in 2019/20 about children and young people's services related to early learning and childcare services, namely day care of children services (64%) and childminders (18%).

The remaining 17% (230 complaints) were about services for looked after children, with care homes for children and young people accounting for 9% (123) of all complaints received about children and young people services (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Complaints about children and young people's services received in 2019/20

Service type	Care service type	All complaints received	% of all complaints received about children and young people services
Early learning and childcare	Daycare of children	850	64.2%
	Childminding	244	18.4%
Looked after children services	Care homes for children and young people	123	9.3%
	School care accommodation Service	67	5.1%
	Fostering service	26	2.0%
	Secure accommodation service	11	0.8%
	Adoption service	3	0.2%
All care service types		1,324	100%

¹ Children and young people's services include care home service for children and young people, childminder, daycare of children service, adoption, fostering, school care accommodation service or secure accommodation service

Looking specifically at looked after children's services, 31% (71) of the 230 complaints received about looked after children's services in 2019/20 came from a relative or carer compared to 19% last year.

Only 17 complaints came directly from a child or young person experiencing care. While this was almost double the number received in 2018/19 (9 complaints), we recognise this is still a low number. Following consultation through Who Cares? Scotland, (a national voluntary organisation, working with care experienced young people and care leavers across Scotland), and young inspection volunteers, young people told us that this may be down to the methods we have available to make a complaint. Development work has been planned around this within our new complaints app that would allow young people to be able to tell us about concerns they have about their care by sending us a text. This would go alongside the other ways available to contact us regarding a complaint. Awareness raising sessions about our complaints function is also planned with advocacy agencies and we are developing leaflets and posters to let young people know about their rights and who they can speak to if they are unhappy with their care. Originally due to be undertaken in April and May 2020, this has had to be put on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but we are hopeful to have this implemented in the near future.

7. Complaints about care homes for older people

Almost half of all the complaints we investigated in 2019/20 were about care homes and of these, the vast majority (92%) were about care homes for older people. At 31 March 2020, there were 817 care homes for older people registered. During 2019/20:

- we received at least one complaint in 68% of care homes for older people
- we investigated a complaint in about 40% of care homes for older people
- we upheld a complaint in about 29% of care homes for older people.

Of the services that had a complaint investigated and upheld in 2019/20, 63% had only one upheld complaint, 23% had two upheld complaints, and the remainder had between three and eight upheld complaints during the year.

Most care homes for older people are operated by the private sector (74%) with local authorities providing 13%, voluntary or not for profit organisations providing 11% and the remaining 2% provided by an NHS Board (NHS Highland) (see Figure 7). In 2019/20, we received at least one complaint in 76% of private sector care homes for older people and upheld a complaint in 34% of them. These rates are higher than the proportions of services in other sectors with complaints received and upheld (illustrated in Figure 8)

Figure 7: Proportion of care homes for older people at 31 March 2020 – by sector

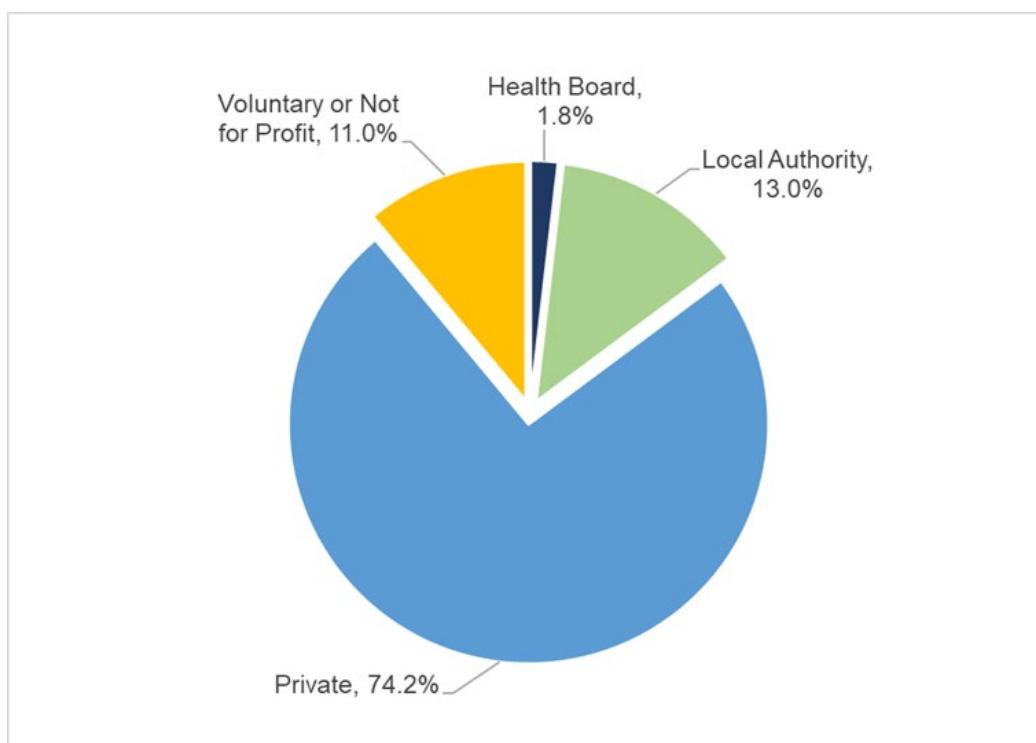
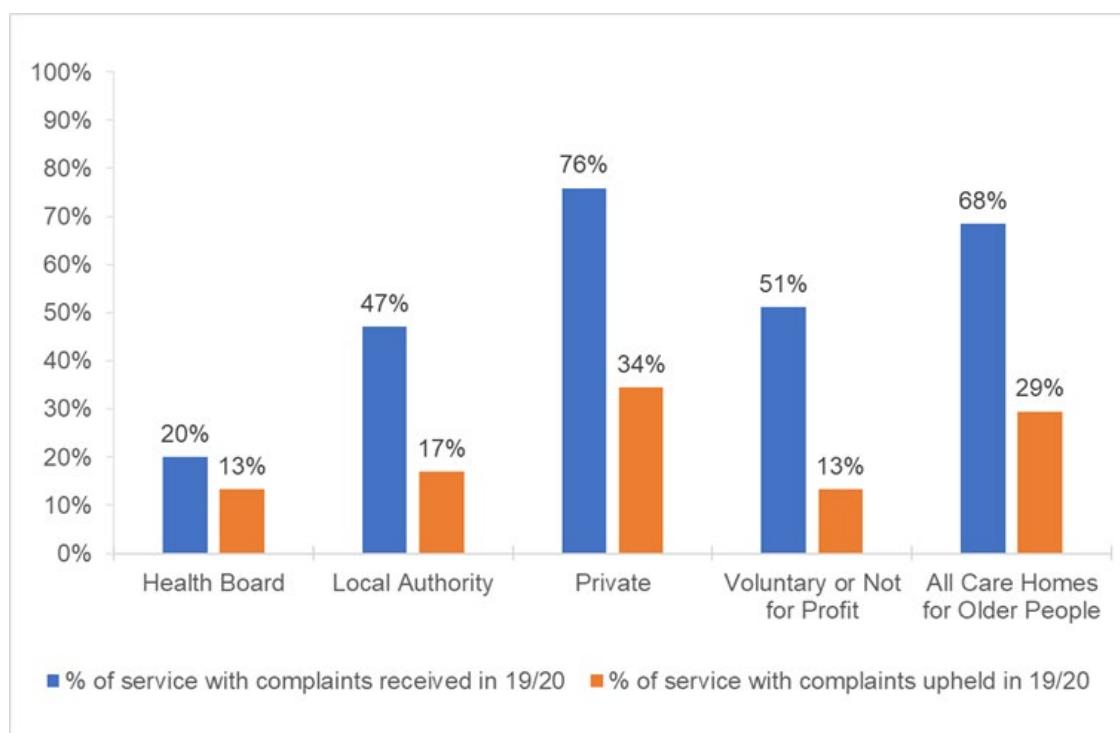


Figure 8: Care homes for older people at 31 March 2020 – % services with a complaint received or upheld about them



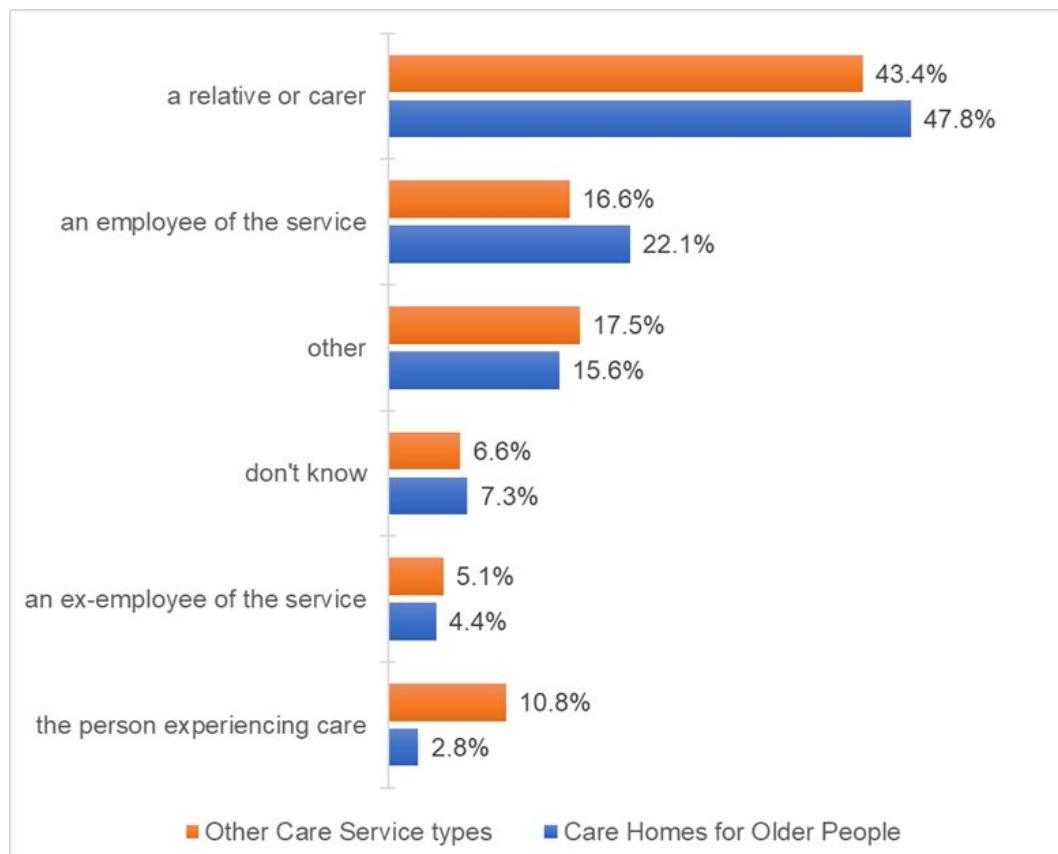
Further breakdown of areas of complaint for care homes for older people (Figure 9) shows that specific healthcare issues formed the largest group of complaints (33%). This includes problems with medication, continence care, tissue viability, nutrition, hydration and inadequate care and treatment. Full details of this breakdown are in the Appendix, (Table E).

Figure 9: Care homes for older people – by area of complaint 2019/20

Summary area of complaint	Number of areas of complaint upheld	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Healthcare	304	33.3%
Wellbeing	116	12.7%
Staff	113	12.4%
Communication	102	11.2%
Choice	67	7.3%
Environment	55	6.0%
Policies and procedures	39	4.3%
Protection of people	35	3.8%
Record keeping	26	2.8%
Privacy and dignity	19	2.1%
Food	16	1.8%
Property	13	1.4%
User participation	5	0.5%
Access	4	0.4%

Just over half of all complaints received in 2019/20 about care homes for older people were from relatives and carers of people living in the service – 4% higher than in other types of service (Figure 10). The proportion of complaints received from employees of the service was also higher for care homes for older people than for other service types by around 5%. While complaints from ex-employees was lower for care home for older people than in other service types by just under 1%. People experiencing care made around 3% of all complaints about care homes for older people – compared with almost 11% for all other types of service.

Figure 10: Complaints received 2019/20 by relationship of the person making the complaint – care homes for older people compared with all other complaints received



8. Complaints about childminders

Childminders are exempt from provider resolution as they are sole providers so, where we receive a complaint about a childminder, most are investigated. At 31 March 2020 there were 4,656 registered childminders. Although this is the largest single category of registered services, during 2019/20 we had received a complaint about only 4% of childminders. We upheld a complaint about 0.9% of these childminders.

Of the childminders with an upheld complaint, 93% had only one upheld complaint during the year with the remainder having 2 upheld during the year.

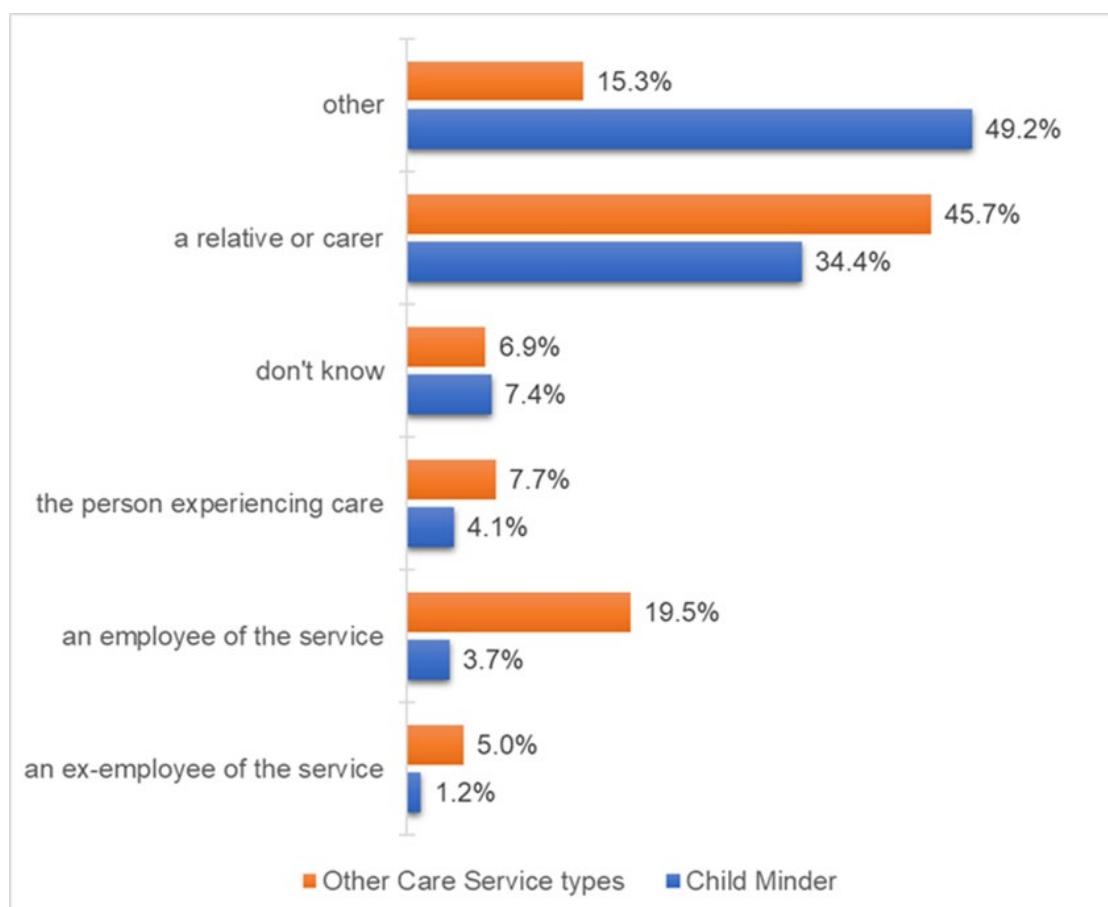
Further breakdown of areas of complaint about childminders (Figure 11) shows that wellbeing was the most frequent area of complaint, followed by issues about conditions of registration, in particular exceeding the maximum permitted capacity.

Figure 11: Childminders – by area of complaint 2019/20

Summary area of complaint	Number of areas of complaint upheld	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Wellbeing	25	34.7%
Conditions of registration	19	26.4%
Communication	6	8.3%
Protection of people	5	6.9%
Environment	4	5.6%
Policies and procedures	3	4.2%
Choice	3	4.2%
Staff	2	2.8%
Record keeping	2	2.8%
Privacy and dignity	2	2.8%
Healthcare	1	1.4%

The proportion of complaints about childminders that came from relatives or carers of a person experiencing care is considerably lower (by 11%) than for other types of services (Figure 12). Compared with other types of service, ‘Other’ complainant types are considerably more likely to complain about a childminder than about any other type of service – 49% of complaints about childminders came from these types of complainants (a third higher than other types of service). These will be members of the public who have been shown historically to be most likely to complain about childminders.

Figure 12: Complaints received 2019/20 by relationship of person making the complaint – childminders compared with all other complaints received



9. What we found when investigating complaints

Once our investigation is complete, the inspector decides if the complaint should be upheld or not upheld. We say we have not upheld a complaint where we have investigated and found there is a lack of evidence to validate the complaint. Where we have investigated and found evidence that the cause of the complaint is valid, the complaint will be upheld and we will take action, letting both the person making the complaint and the care service know about any requirements or areas for improvement that we have made. It may be that one complaint contains many parts – which we call areas of complaint – each of which may be either upheld or not upheld.

The table below (Figure 13) shows that in 2019/20 we upheld 61% of the 1,520 complaints completed, which is a slight increase from 58% in 2018/19. This may be due to our new procedure as only those complaints that were high-risk were taken forward for investigation.

The percentage of complaints upheld varies by type of service. In 2019/20, 61% of the 679 complaints investigations completed about care home services, 73% of the 209 complaints completed about combined housing support and care at home services, and 76% of the 144 complaints completed about standalone care at home services were upheld. This compares to less than half (45%) of the 218 complaints investigated about daycare of children services and 40% of the 116 complaints investigated about childminders upheld.

Figure 13: The number of completed complaint investigations by complaint outcome, 2015/16– 2019/20

Complaint outcome	Year investigation completed				
	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Upheld	59%	57%	56%	58%	61%
Not upheld	41%	43%	44%	42%	39%

Figure 14: Percentage of complaints upheld by service type, 2019/20

Care service type	Number of complaints completed	Number of complaints upheld	% of all complaints upheld
Adoption	0	0	0.0%
Adult placement	0	0	0.0%
Care home	679	415	61.1%
of which, care home for older people	623	390	62.6%
Childminding	116	46	39.7%
Daycare of children	218	97	44.5%
Fostering	4	2	50.0%
Housing support (standalone service)	39	31	79.5%
Nurse agency	3	1	33.3%
Offender accommodation service	0	0	0.0%
School care accommodation	24	13	54.2%
Secure accommodation	2	2	100.0%
Support service (standalone) – care at home	144	110	76.4%
Support service (standalone) – other than care at home	5	2	40.0%
Combined housing support and care at home service	286	209	73.1%
All care service types	1520	928	61.1%

10. Supporting improvement following complaints

Complaints give a valuable and personal insight into how services are caring for the thousands of people who use them every day. We realise that, for many people, making a complaint to us can be a big step and indicates that there is something not right that really matters to them.

We look carefully at all the information we receive from complaints and decide the best way to proceed. This might be through a formal complaint investigation, or we may look at the issues raised during the service's next inspection. Alternatively, we may attempt direct service action, where we communicate with the service and facilitate a resolution that the person making the complaint is satisfied with. Or we may pass the complaint to the service provider for them to investigate. Some issues raised with us are the responsibility of other organisations to look at, such as the Scottish Social Services Council or the Nursing and Midwifery Council. In such cases, we refer people to the appropriate organisation, ensuring we are clear how their concerns will be best addressed.

Where we do investigate formally, the purpose is not just to establish the facts and determine whether the care provided was good enough but to also seek to improve the quality of care provided to the person making the complaint and other people. It is essential that our investigations lead to meaningful change and improvements that provide positive outcomes for people experiencing care.

Following a complaint investigation where the complaint was upheld, our inspectors consider how we can support a service to make improvements. Depending on the seriousness of what we have found during our investigation, actions might include signposting to good practice; advising an area for improvement; or making a requirement setting out what the service must do to improve and by when. Progress against areas for improvement and requirements is reported on at the next inspection. We may review grades and regrade the service as a result of an upheld complaint and might also consider whether we need to prioritise an inspection of the service to look at wider aspects of care.

Where the complaint identifies very serious concerns, we may serve an improvement notice under Section 62 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 that may lead to the closure of the service with the agreement of a sheriff.

However, we also recognise that part of our role is to work with services and providers collaboratively to support improvement. Our inspectors and our improvement support team may spend time with care services and providers to build capacity and capability for improvement and help to make sure the experiences and outcomes for people are the best they can be.

Where we see a number of complaints about the same issue we will meet with the service, support them to identify what changes will lead to improvement and support them to make the improvements.

11. Conclusion

This report has presented a range of statistical information from complaints about care services over the past five years. The recent introduction of a new complaint app will have had an impact on how we categorise the statistical information in this report. This is due to some slight changes in how we categorise the person making the complaint to be more streamlined. We also recategorised the reasons for complaints to encourage more specific recording and to reduce the large number historically recorded under general health and welfare.

The volume of complaints received over the past five years has increased from 4,089 received in 2015/16 to 5,831 in 2019/20. Over the same period, the quality of care overall has remained consistent with the percentage of services graded good, very good or excellent in all quality themes has remained fairly constant at 88% for 2016/17 and just over 87% in 2019/20.

We upheld the majority of the complaints we investigated – 61% of 1,520 complaint investigations completed were upheld in 2019/20. This varies by type of service, with 61% of the 679 complaints investigations completed about care home services and 73% of the 286 complaints about combined housing support and care at home services upheld, while 40% of the 116 complaints investigations completed about childminders, were upheld.

We received, investigated and upheld more complaints about care homes for older people than for any other type of service – 63% of care homes for older people had at least one complaint upheld during 2019/20. Specific healthcare issues such as medication, continence care, inadequate care and treatment, tissue viability, nutrition and hydration are the most frequent types of complaints upheld about care homes for older people.

Our focus in all areas of our work, including complaints, is on improving the quality of care and outcomes for people who experience care services. We do this both in the course of the investigation and in using intelligence from complaint investigations to help us focus our scrutiny, assurance and improvement support resources.

The new complaints app introduced this year enables us to fully report on all complaint work and the different methods used to resolve complaints. It will provide better intelligence on the nature of complaints, links to our new self-evaluation frameworks and Health and Social Care Standards. Having access to better intelligence on the nature of complaints will enable us to identify where, as an organisation, we need to support improvement for better outcomes for people who experience care.

In March 2020, the emergence of Covid-19 pandemic in Scotland resulted in changes to how services operate. Many services closed, whilst others restricted non-essential visitors. This meant for the two weeks in March, we were required to change how we responded to any concerns and complaints we received, while also having to deal with complaints already open for investigation in other ways. Using our risk assessment process, discussion with the person making the complaint on how they would like us to proceed and working with the service provider, we were able to utilise the alternative pathways to resolution in our complaints process where

appropriate. As this occurred in the final weeks of this reporting period, these changes have had a minimal impact on the trends provided in this report.

Appendix: Complaints about care services in Scotland, 2015/16 to 2019/20 – Detailed tables

Table A: Complaints received and completed about care services by relationship of complainant with service.

Complaints received

Relationship of complainant	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		5-year total		% change compare 15/16 to 19/20
	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	No. of complt. received	% of complt. received	
other	392	9.6%	479	11.2%	669	14.2%	710	14.4%	977	16.8%	3227	13.5%	149.2%
the person experiencing care	312	7.6%	363	8.5%	391	8.3%	442	8.9%	441	7.6%	1949	8.2%	41.3%
unknown	776	19.0%	598	14.0%	365	7.8%	341	6.9%	401	6.9%	2481	10.4%	-48.3%
a relative or carer	1784	43.6%	1932	45.2%	2214	47.1%	2269	45.9%	2635	45.2%	10834	45.5%	47.7%
Employee, ex-employee	825	20.2%	905	21.2%	1057	22.5%	1178	23.8%	1377	23.6%	5342	22.4%	66.9%
All complainant categories	4089	100.0%	4277	100.0%	4696	100.0%	4940	100.0%	5831	100.0%	23833	100.0%	42.6%

Complaint investigations completed

Relationship of complainant	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		5-year total		% change compare 15/16 to 19/20
	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	
other	161	9.2%	183	11.0%	181	12.6%	164	11.7%	216	26.1%	905	11.7%	34.2%
the person experiencing care	132	7.6%	113	6.8%	87	6.1%	82	5.9%	96	6.3%	510	6.6%	-27.3%
unknown	246	14.1%	208	12.5%	113	7.9%	77	5.5%	62	4.1%	706	9.1%	-74.8%
a relative or carer	895	51.2%	870	52.4%	798	55.6%	784	56.1%	869	45.3%	4216	54.3%	-2.9%
Employee, ex-employee	314	18.0%	288	17.3%	256	17.9%	290	20.8%	277	18.2%	1425	18.4%	-11.8%
All complainant categories	1748	100.0%	1662	100.0%	1435	100.0%	1397	100.0%	1520	100.0%	7762	100.0%	-13.0%

Table B: Complaints completed by service type

Care service type	2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		5-year total		% change comparing 15/16 to 19/20
	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	No. of complt. complete	% of complt. complete	
Adoption	2	0.1	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	3	0.0%	-100.0%
Adult placement	0	0.0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0.0%
Care home	864	49.4	768	46.2%	635	44.3%	696	49.8%	679	44.7%	3642	46.9%	-21.4%
Childminding	145	8.3	132	7.9%	126	8.8%	104	7.4%	116	7.6%	623	8.0%	-20.0%
Daycare of children	336	19.2	365	22.0%	294	20.5%	229	16.4%	218	14.3%	1442	18.6%	-35.1%
Fostering	4	0.2%	4	0.2%	5	0.3%	1	0.1%	4	0.3%	18	0.2%	0.0%
Housing support (standalone service)	30	1.7%	29	1.7%	21	1.5%	31	2.2%	39	2.6%	150	1.9%	30.0%
Nurse agency	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	3	0.2%	7	0.1%	50.0%
Offender accommodation	1	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	-100.0%
School care accommodation	15	0.9%	9	0.5%	18	1.3%	12	0.9%	24	1.6%	78	1.0%	60.0%
Secure accommodation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	5	0.4%	2	0.1%	8	0.1%	200.0%
Support service (standalone) - care at home	114	6.5%	107	6.4%	104	7.2%	109	7.8%	144	9.5%	578	7.4%	26.3%
Support service (standalone) – other than care at home	10	0.6%	13	0.8%	12	0.8%	4	0.3%	5	0.3%	44	0.6%	-50.0%
Combined housing support and care at home service	225	12.9%	235	14.1%	219	15.3%	202	14.5%	286	18.8%	1167	15.0%	27.1%
All care service types	1748	100.0%	1662	100.0%	1435	100.0%	1397	100.0%	1520	100.0%	7762	100.0%	-13.0%

Note: % change based on fewer than 20 complaints each year should be used with caution.

Table C: All service types by area of complaint, complaints upheld in 2019/20

Each complaint can have many areas, each of which has a separate outcome recorded. This table includes only those areas where the outcome was upheld.

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld areas of complaint	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Healthcare	Healthcare > Inadequate healthcare or healthcare treatment	130	6.2%
	Healthcare > Medication issues	114	5.5%
	Healthcare > Continence care	51	2.4%
	Healthcare > Other	43	2.1%
	Healthcare > Nutrition	41	2.0%
	Healthcare > Tissue viability	33	1.6%
	Healthcare > Hydration	21	1.0%
	Healthcare > Infection control issues	12	0.6%
	Healthcare > Oral health	10	0.5%
	Healthcare > Palliative care	5	0.2%
	Healthcare > Mental health care	4	0.2%
	Healthcare > Clinical governance	2	0.1%
Wellbeing	Wellbeing > Other	237	11.3%
	General health and welfare ²	91	4.4%
	Wellbeing > Emotional	34	1.6%
	Wellbeing > Developmental	16	0.8%
	Wellbeing > Behaviour	12	0.6%
	Wellbeing > Social	11	0.5%
Communication	Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	262	12.5%
	Communication > Other	34	1.6%
	Communication > Information about the service	17	0.8%
	Communication > Language difficulties	2	0.1%
Staff	Staff > Levels	105	5.0%
	Staff > Other	70	3.3%
	Staff > Training/qualifications	66	3.2%
	Staff > Other fitness issues	16	0.8%
	Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	15	0.7%
	Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people	2	0.1%
	Staff > Registration with professional bodies	2	0.1%
Choice	Choice > Care and treatment	86	4.1%
	Choice > Activities	24	1.1%
	Choice > Dignity and privacy	23	1.1%
	Choice > Other	6	0.3%
	Choice > Service not meeting religious, cultural, faith, social needs	1	0.0%
Policies and procedures	Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	79	3.7%
	Policies and procedures > Other	51	2.4%
Record keeping	Record keeping > Personal plans/agreements	51	2.4%
	Record keeping > Other	29	1.4%

² General health and welfare category still appears for cases which were received prior to introduction of the new categories in the complaints app.

**Table C: All service types by area of complaint, complaints upheld in 2019/20
(continued)**

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld areas of complaint	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Protection of people	Protection of people > Adults	45	2.2%
	Protection of people > Children	15	0.7%
	Protection of people > Policies and procedures	8	0.4%
	Protection of people > Other	7	0.3%
	Protection of people > Restraint	3	0.1%
Environment	Environment > Fitness of premises /environment	29	1.4%
	Environment > Other	21	1.0%
	Environment > Inadequate facilities	17	0.8%
	Environment > Security	7	0.3%
Privacy and dignity	Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	36	1.7%
Food	Food > Other	16	0.8%
	Food > Quality	7	0.3%
	Food > Choice	4	0.2%
	Food > Availability	3	0.1%
Conditions of registration	Conditions of registration > Exceeding capacity	13	0.6%
	Conditions of registration > Other	13	0.6%
	Conditions of registration > Type of service provided	1	0.0%
Property	Property > Care of	12	0.6%
	Property > Other	2	0.1%
	Property > Loss of/missing	2	0.1%
Participation	User participation > Other	10	0.4%
	User participation > In managing/developing the service	2	0.1%
Financial	Financial issues > Financial issues	6	0.3%
Access	Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	2	0.1%
	Access > Other	2	0.1%

Table D: Areas of complaint upheld, by type of care service 2019/20

	Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering Service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse agency		School care accommodation service		Secure accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) - other than care at home	Combined housing support/care at home service		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Detailed area of complaint	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Healthcare > Inadequate healthcare or healthcare treatment	96	4.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13	0.6%	1	0.0%	17	0.8%
Healthcare > Medication issues	50	2.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	29	1.4%	0	0.0%	30	1.4%
Healthcare > Continence care	31	1.5%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	13	0.6%
Healthcare > Other	31	1.5%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%
Healthcare > Nutrition	29	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	9	0.4%
Healthcare > Tissue viability	25	1.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%
Healthcare > Hydration	21	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Healthcare > Oral health	9	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Healthcare > Infection control issues	7	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%
Healthcare > Palliative care	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Healthcare > Mental health care	4	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Healthcare > Clinical governance	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Wellbeing > Other	72	3.4%	12	0.6%	30	1.4%	0	0.0%	9	0.4%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	39	1.9%	0	0.0%	73	3.5%
General health and welfare	37	1.8%	1	0.0%	7	0.3%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	0.4%	1	0.0%	27	1.3%
Wellbeing > Emotional	4	0.2%	10	0.5%	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%
Wellbeing > Developmental	4	0.2%	1	0.0%	6	0.3%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Wellbeing > Behaviour	7	0.3%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Wellbeing > Social	8	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	87	4.2%	4	0.2%	17	0.8%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	50	2.4%	1	0.0%	97	4.6%
Communication > Other	13	0.6%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%
Communication > Information about the service	3	0.1%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	7	0.3%
Communication > Language difficulties	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%

Table D: Areas of complaint upheld, by type of care service 2019/20 (continued)

	Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering Service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse agency		School care accommodation service		Secure accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) - other than care at home	Combined housing support/care at home service		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Detailed area of complaint	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Staff > Levels	67	3.2%	0	0.0%	13	0.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	22	1.1%
Staff > Training/qualifications	29	1.4%	0	0.0%	7	0.3%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.5%	0	0.0%	16	0.8%
Staff > Other	10	0.5%	1	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.5%	1	0.0%	40	1.9%
Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%
Staff > Other fitness issues	5	0.2%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%
Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
Staff > Registration with professional bodies	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Choice > Care and treatment	40	1.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	29	1.4%	0	0.0%	14	0.7%
Choice > Activities	17	0.8%	3	0.1%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Choice > Dignity and privacy	12	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	0.4%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
Choice > Service not meeting religious,cultural,faith,social needs	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Choice > Other	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	30	1.4%	1	0.0%	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	0.7%	0	0.0%	24	1.1%
Policies and procedures > Other	12	0.6%	2	0.1%	13	0.6%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	0.5%	0	0.0%	11	0.5%
Environment > Fitness of premises / environment	22	1.1%	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Environment > Other	21	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Environment > Inadequate facilities	12	0.6%	1	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Environment > Security	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
Protection of people > Adults	31	1.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%
Protection of people > Children	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	10	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Protection of people > Other	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Protection of people > Policies and procedures	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
Protection of people > Restraint	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%

Table D: Areas of complaint upheld, by type of care service 2019/20 (continued)

	Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering Service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse agency		School care accommodation service		Secure accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) - other than care at home	Combined housing support/care at home service		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Detailed area of complaint	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Record keeping > Personal plans/agreements	18	0.9%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	0.5%	0	0.0%	19	0.9%
Record keeping > Other	9	0.4%	2	0.1%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	8	0.4%
Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	20	1.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%
Conditions of registration > Other	0	0.0%	7	0.3%	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Conditions of registration > Type of service provided	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Conditions of registration > Exceeding capacity	0	0.0%	12	0.6%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Food > Other	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%
Food > Quality	6	0.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
Food > Choice	4	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Food > Availability	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%
Property > Care of	10	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Property > Loss of/missing	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Property > Other	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%
User participation > Other	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%	0	0.0%	3	0.1%
User participation > In managing/developing the service	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Access > Other	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Financial issues > Financial issues	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.3%

Table E: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld in 2019/20 by area of complaint

Note: each overall complaint can have several areas - this table only includes those areas that were upheld.

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld complaints	% of upheld complaints
Healthcare	Healthcare > Inadequate healthcare or healthcare treatment	96	10.5%
	Healthcare > Medication issues	46	5.0%
	Healthcare > Continence care	31	3.4%
	Healthcare > Other	30	3.3%
	Healthcare > Nutrition	28	3.1%
	Healthcare > Tissue viability	25	2.7%
	Healthcare > Hydration	21	2.3%
	Healthcare > Oral health	9	1.0%
	Healthcare > Infection control issues	7	0.8%
	Healthcare > Palliative care	5	0.5%
	Healthcare > Mental health care	4	0.4%
	Healthcare > Clinical governance	2	0.2%
Wellbeing	Wellbeing > Other	66	7.2%
	General health and welfare	34	3.7%
	Wellbeing > Social	7	0.8%
	Wellbeing > Behaviour	4	0.4%
	Wellbeing > Emotional	4	0.4%
	Wellbeing > Developmental	1	0.1%
Staff	Staff > Levels	65	7.1%
	Staff > Training/qualifications	27	3.0%
	Staff > Other	10	1.1%
	Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	5	0.5%
	Staff > Other fitness issues	5	0.5%
	Staff > Registration with professional bodies	1	0.1%
Communication	Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	86	9.4%
	Communication > Other	12	1.3%
	Communication > Information about the service	3	0.3%
	Communication > Language difficulties	1	0.1%
Choice	Choice > Care and treatment	39	4.3%
	Choice > Activities	16	1.8%
	Choice > Dignity and privacy	11	1.2%
	Choice > Other	1	0.1%
Environment	Environment > Fitness of premises/environment	22	2.4%
	Environment > Other	21	2.3%
	Environment > Inadequate facilities	11	1.2%
	Environment > Security	1	0.1%
Policies and procedures	Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	30	3.3%
	Policies and procedures > Other	9	1.0%

Table E: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld in 2019/20 by area of complaint (continued)

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld complaints	% of upheld complaints
Protection of people	Protection of people > Adults	28	3.1%
	Protection of people > Policies and procedures	3	0.3%
	Protection of people > Other	3	0.3%
	Protection of people > Restraint	1	0.1%
Record keeping	Record keeping > Personal plans/agreements	17	1.9%
	Record keeping > Other	9	1.0%
Privacy and dignity	Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	19	2.1%
Food	Food > Quality	6	0.7%
	Food > Other	5	0.5%
	Food > Choice	4	0.4%
	Food > Availability	1	0.1%
Property	Property > Care of	10	1.1%
	Property > Loss of/missing	2	0.2%
	Property > Other	1	0.1%
User participation	User participation > Other	3	0.3%
	User participation > In managing/developing the service	2	0.2%
Access	Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	2	0.2%
	Access > Other	2	0.2%

Table F: Complaints investigated over the past five years by outcome

Year investigation completed	Upheld		Not upheld	
	number of complaints	% of investigations completed	number of complaints	% of investigations completed
2015/16	1027	58.8%	720	41.2%
2016/17	952	57.3%	710	42.7%
2017/18	805	56.1%	630	43.9%
2018/19	809	58.0%	588	42.0%
2019/20	928	61.1%	592	38.9%
All years	4521	58.3%	3240	41.7%

Table G: Complaints investigated over the past five years by outcome and service type

Care service	number of complaints	Upheld		Not upheld		Total number
		% of investigations completed	number of complaints	% of investigations completed	number of complaints	
Adoption	1	33.3%	2	66.7%	3	
Adult placement	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	
Care home	2152	59.1%	1489	40.9%	3641	
Childminding	258	41.4%	365	58.6%	623	
Daycare of children	671	46.5%	771	53.5%	1442	
Fostering	10	55.6%	8	44.4%	18	
Housing Support (standalone service)	95	63.3%	55	36.7%	150	
Nurse agency	5	71.4%	2	28.6%	7	
Offender accommodation	0	0.0%	1	100.0%	1	
School care accommodation	46	59.0%	32	41.0%	78	
Secure accommodation	4	50.0%	4	50.0%	8	
Support service (standalone) – care at home	438	75.8%	140	24.2%	578	
Support service (standalone) – other than care at home	19	43.2%	25	56.8%	44	
Combined housing support and care at home service	822	70.4%	345	29.6%	1167	
All care service types	4521	58.3%	3240	41.7%	7761	

Note: excludes a small number of cases that were withdrawn before the investigation was completed.

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