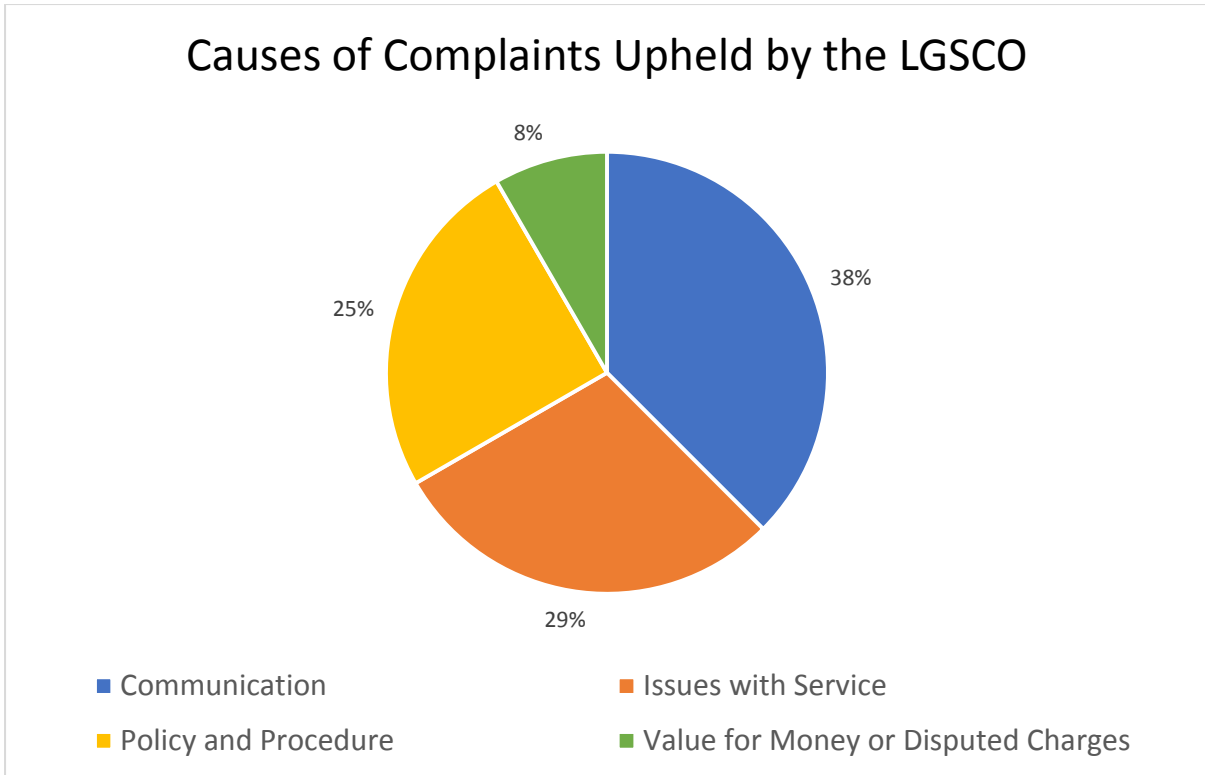


APPENDIX 5 – LGSCOs for ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2020/21

Kent Adult Social Care and Health completed a total of 45 complaints which were escalated to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) in 2020-21. Of these, 18 were closed following initial enquiries as no further action or because the complaint fell outside of the LGSCO's jurisdiction, and two were referred for local resolution as they had not previously been through the Council's own complaints process. A further six cases were closed with an outcome of Not Upheld, and 19 complaints assessed by the LGSCO were found to be Upheld.

Division	Closed after initial enquiries	Referred back for local resolution	Not upheld: No Maladmi-nistration	Upheld: Maladmi-nistration	Upheld: No further action	Total
Ashford & Canterbury	3	0	0	3	0	6
Thanet & South Kent Coast	3	2	2	2	0	9
North Kent	1	0	3	6	0	10
West Kent	4	0	1	2	0	7
County	3	0	0	1	0	4
BDU	4	0	0	2	1	7
Finance	0	0	0	1	1	2
Total	18	2	6	17	2	45

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Problem category	Upheld Cases
Communication	9
Issues with Service	7
Policy and Procedure	6
Value for Money or Disputed Charges	2
Total	24

*Some complaints have multiple problem categories.

38% of complaints upheld by the LGSCO related to communications issues. Two of these cases were in relation to Blue Badge applications which had not been successful. The LGSCO found that the communications with the applicants lacked sufficient detail to explain why their applications, which related to ‘hidden’ disabilities, had been refused. As a result, the Blue Badge Team reviewed its communications and, in particular, the contents of refusal letters, to ensure that these are specific to the individual’s circumstances and to enable the applicant to provide relevant additional information, if applicable, in support of their Blue Badge Appeal.

In order to communicate effectively with service users, it is important for practitioners to consider individuals’ specific communication and support needs. In a

APPENDIX 5 – LGSCOs for ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2020/21

case where the complainant was supported by an advocate to make their complaint the LGSCO found that the Council was at fault for failing to seek expert advice to inform the care needs assessment for the client, who was diagnosed with both autism and impaired hearing. Around the time that the complaint was raised by the LGSCO a new social worker was assigned to conduct a further assessment of the client's care and support needs. This social worker worked tirelessly with the client, his mother, and the independent advocate, to ensure that all of his eligible social care needs were fully met and that the entire process was transparent and understood by the client. This enabled a new and comprehensive care and support plan to be completed to the satisfaction of all parties, and the Council has since received the thanks of the client for this.

Another complaint upheld by the LGSCO related to concerns raised about the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) procedure and record keeping. In this case, the client was admitted to hospital and the ward submitted an incomplete DOLS application, however the DOLS Team did not chase this up with the hospital in a timely manner to ensure that it had sufficient information to appropriately prioritise and progress the application. In addition, a social worker who was attending the hospital in relation to another client was asked on an ad hoc basis by the ward staff to attend the discharge meeting, and that social worker did not make any record about the meeting, which later led to some confusion over whether it was a member of Council or hospital staff that attended. This case highlighted the need to keep accurate records, to ensure that information is documented in a timely manner, and to maintain good communication with other organisations such as hospitals, to be able to provide the best service for clients and their families.

One case where the LGSCO found that the Council was not at fault related to an elderly lady who had been residing in Gravesham Place Care Centre for several years. She became a resident in the home at a time when long-term residents were accepted, and initially when the remit of the home changed it was decided that she would be allowed to remain, as long as her care needs did not significantly increase. However, when her needs began to increase significantly, Gravesham Place were unable to continue safely meeting her care and support needs, and therefore, following a care needs assessment, it was decided to make arrangements to move the client to a home where her higher needs could be met. Unfortunately, the client's family were concerned about this decision and escalated their complaint to the LGSCO, however following a robust response detailing all of the Council's actions to meet this lady's needs and safeguard her wellbeing, the LGSCO found that there was no evidence of fault.