

West Dunbartonshire
Health & Social Care Partnership

Annual Complaints Report 2022/2023

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Introduction

West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) aims to provide the best services possible for our citizens, however there will be instances where people feel dissatisfied with, or let down by, the service they receive. As an organisation we value any and all feedback we receive. Making a complaint to the HSCP gives us the opportunity to put things right for individuals and to improve our services. By investigating complaints and looking at any trends or patterns in complaints received, we can identify areas for improvement, gaps in service provision, training needs within the organisation or where particular groups may be experiencing similar dissatisfaction with our services. Often complaints can give us a fresh perspective: identifying issues or problems which we, working within the organisation, have not fully considered from a service user's point of view.

How we handle our complaints is essential to restoring positive relationships with people who feel let down by our services. This report will outline how we handled complaints during the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Model Complaints Handling Procedures

All public authorities in Scotland are required to produce, operate and report on a Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's MCHP and Performance Framework.

There are two stages to both the Council and NHS MCHPs:

Stage 1 Frontline Resolution

We aim to respond to complaints quickly. This could mean an on-the-spot apology and explanation if something has clearly gone wrong, or immediate action to resolve the problem. We will respond to a stage 1 complaint within five working days or less, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the person making the complaint is not satisfied with the response they are given at this stage, they can choose to take their complaint to stage 2.

Stage 2 Investigation

Stage 2 deals with two types of complaint: those that have not been resolved at stage 1 and have been escalated to stage 2; and those complaints that clearly require investigation and so are handled from the onset as stage 2. For a stage 2 we will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within three working days and provide a full response as soon as possible, normally within 20 working days. If our investigation will take longer than 20 working days, we will inform the person making the complaint of our revised time limits and keep them updated on progress.

Complaints about the functions and operation of West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Board are dealt with through the HSCP Board's MCHP which was developed during 2020/21 and was approved by the Board at their meeting on 26th November 2020. The HSCP Board's MCHP can be found on our website at [HSCP Board MCHP](#). The HSCP has a duty to report on any complaints managed under the HSCP Board's MCHP. There were no complaints received about the functions of the HSCP Board during 2022/23.

When a complaint is received by West Dunbartonshire HSCP about our services, and not the functions of the HSCP Board, a decision is taken whether to process the complaint under either West Dunbartonshire Council's MCHP or NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde's MCHP depending upon which service areas are covered. For example a complaint about service provided by Children's Social Work Services would be managed under the Council's MCHP but a complaint about a Psychiatry service would be managed under the NHS MCHP. West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde will include these HSCP complaints in their Annual Complaints Reports however in the interests of openness and transparency and to fully reflect on the HSCP's handling of complaints they will also be included in this report.

SPSO Performance Framework

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) have developed a standardised set of complaints performance indicators which organisations are required to use to understand and report on performance in line with the MCHP. The consistent application and reporting of performance against these indicators will also be used to compare, contrast and benchmark complaints handling with other organisations, and in doing so will drive shared learning and improvements in standards of complaints handling performance.

Indicator 1: Learning From Complaints

Complaints are routinely reported to our Senior Management Team and through the HSCP's Clinical and Care Governance meetings. These reports cover volume of complaints, compliance with timescales and outcomes by service area. Further detail at this level is available at Appendix 1. Detail is also provided about the nature of each complaint by theme and any actions taken as a result of the complaint investigation and resolution.

During 2022/23 learning from complaints contributed to the following agreed actions:

- An improvement action plan and monitoring put in place in relation to Blue Badge application waits.
- Staff reminded to ensure care plans are updated at the time of any changes being identified.
- Clearer guidance on escalating workload concerns.
- Clearer guidance given to MSK Physiotherapy team members on how to remove themselves from a situation where they feel they are being met with aggressive behaviour.
- Changes to orthopaedic plans to be highlighted to physiotherapy directly.

In addition a reflective learning session was held within Community Health and Care to review a specific case and consider how one family's experience of services could have been better and what improvements could be made going forward. This session was productive and staff were able to share their decision making and views in a safe environment to consider how a more responsive outcome could have been provided and identify gaps in service availability to inform decision making.

Outcomes included:

- Enhancing pathways of communication across District Nursing and Social Work staff with support from Local Authority residential care homes.
- The reinstatement on a trial basis of an 'admission avoidance' bed within one of the HSCP's care homes.
- An emergency admission pathway being included in the new Area Resource Group process.

More general learning which was agreed and was to be disseminated through team meetings and briefings was:

- Importance of staff communicating timeously, clearly and respectfully with service users and family members.
- The need to follow Data Protection Legislation in relation to sharing personal data with third parties.

Indicator 2: Volume of Complaints Received

This indicator counts all stage 1 complaints, whether they were escalated to stage 2 or not, plus all complaints which were treated on receipt as stage 2. West Dunbartonshire HSCP received a total of 117 complaints during 2022/23 however 2 stage 2 complaints were withdrawn by those making the complaint prior to the investigation stage.

Indicator 3: Complaints Closed Within Timescale

Stage 1 complaints: 79 Stage 1 complaints received. The accurate recording of Stage 1 complaints, their outcomes and timescales across both West Dunbartonshire Council and NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde systems is in early development stages and we will be improving our recording mechanisms during 2023/24 to more accurately report this figure.

For those stage 1 complaints that were not referred through the Information Team, who manage complaints, but made directly with frontline services, it would be anticipated that most would be dealt with as they arose however we do not yet have the data to evidence this.

Stage 2 complaints: 36% were closed within 20 working days, 13 of the 36 investigated. Complex complaints that cut across services often take longer to co-ordinate a response. We endeavour to keep people informed of any extension to timescales required to make a full response however this has not been carried out in every case during 2022/23.

Complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2: There were no complaints recorded as escalated from stage 1 to stage 2 however it is likely that many of the concerns within stage 2 complaints will have been raised with the service area involved in some form prior to the stage 2 complaints.

Indicator 4: Average Time to Full Response

Stage 1 complaints: Due to the gaps in recording we are unable to report this for stage 1 complaints.

Stage 2 complaints: The average time to full response was 26 working days.

Complaints escalated from stage 1 to stage 2: No complaints were recorded as escalated from stage 1 to stage 2.

Indicator 5: Outcomes of Complaints

Stage 1 complaints: Due to the gaps in recording we are unable to report this for stage 1 complaints however those complaints which have not been escalated to stage 2 have been resolved in some way.

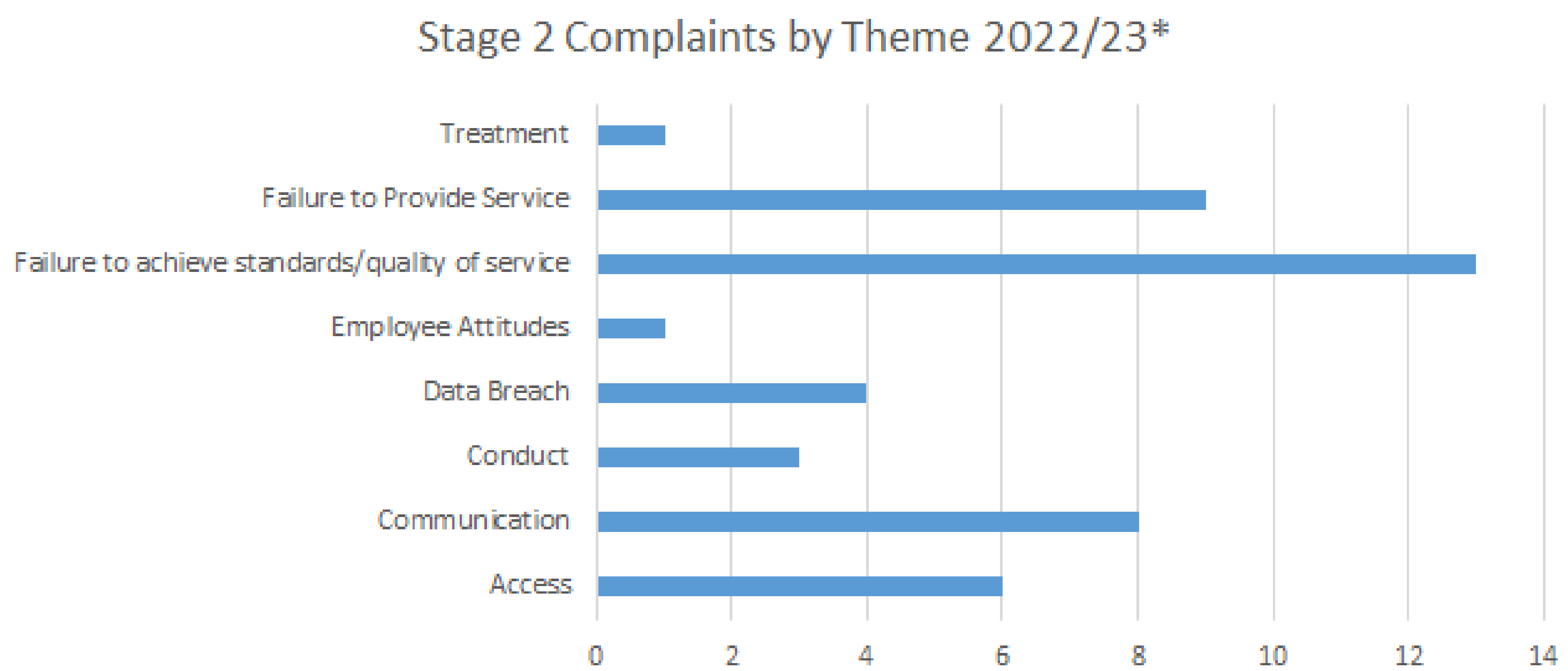
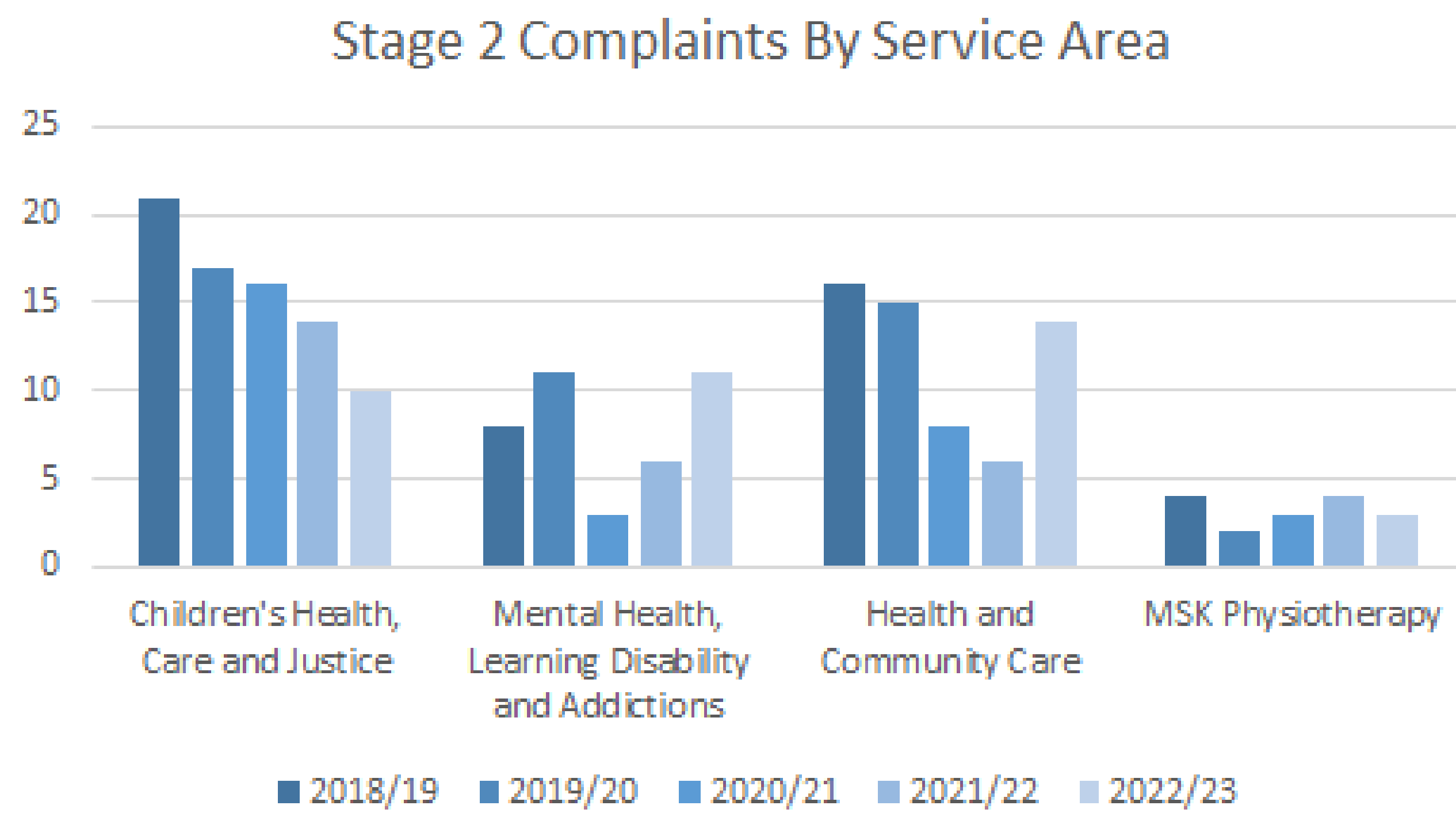
Outcome	Stage 2		Escalated to Stage 2	
	Number	%	Number	%
Upheld	4	11%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	12	33%	0	0%
Not Upheld	18	50%	0	0%
Unsubstantiated	0	0%	0	0%
Ongoing	2	6%	0	0%
Total	36		0	

There are a further 3 indicators which are not required to be reported on but are recommended by the SPSO. These relate to raising awareness of complaints handling, lessons learned and identifying any barriers to making a complaint; staff training in frontline resolution, complaints handling and investigations; and customer satisfaction with their experience of making a complaint and their response.

During 2022/23 we have been continuing to review our processes and online and training resources should have an impact on these areas. We are also exploring ways to gather feedback on the complaints experience and whether this is feasible across both stage 1 and stage 2 complaints.

The HSCP is committed to making the complaints experience as easy and accessible as possible and to use our complaints as a valuable resource to improve services for the people of West Dunbartonshire.

Appendix 1: Stage 2 Complaints



* More than one theme may apply per complaint.

Upheld Complaints

Service Area	Themes	Upheld	Partially Upheld
Children's Health, Care & Criminal Justice	Access	1	
	Failure to achieve standards/quality of service/ Data Breach	1	
	Failure to achieve standards/quality of service/ Failure to Provide Service	2	
Community Health and Care Services	Communication	2	
	Communication/Failure to Provide Service		1
	Failure to achieve standards/quality of service	4	
Mental Health, Learning Disability & Addictions	Access		2
	Access/Treatment	1	
	Data Breach		1
MSK Physiotherapy	Conduct	1	
Total		12	4