

**TO: The Executive Member  
APRIL 2024**

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**ANNUAL REPORT – ADULTS SOCIAL CARE  
COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS  
APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to present the Annual report of the Statutory Complaints function for Adults Social Care for approval by the Executive Member.

**2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Executive Member, notes the report and endorses any recommendations

**3 Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1 The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009 (as amended) state that Complaints Services should produce an annual report for consideration.
- 3.2 The Complaints Service performs an important role in assuring the quality of response to vulnerable adults and families and Bracknell residents who make complaints. The annual report supports the continuing development and review of the service and learning from complaints.
- 3.3 The Annual Report will be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Adults and the Local Safeguarding Adult Board following the approval of the Executive Member

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None considered

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The reports provide an overview of the work of the Complaints Manager and identifies some of the key issues arising in terms of complaints during 2023/24. In addition to complaints, the report outlines compliments received.
- 5.2 We have continued to improve the consistency and approach with which we learn from complaints. In the year ahead we will work to improve this further including our ability to understand the impact of learning.
- 5.4 Overall, there were 45 complaints received during the period of 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, this compares to 39 across Adults Social Care in 2022/23.
- 5.5 Overall cost for individual investigations within adults complaints was £4.4k.
- 5.6 There were 337 compliments recorded during the year which is an increase from 201 in the previous year.

**7 Consultation and Other Considerations**

Legal Advice

**1 PEOPLE DIRECTORATE**

- 7.1 The legal issues are addressed within the report.

The legal framework and requirement for monitoring and preparing an annual report is set out in *the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009* (as amended).

#### Financial Advice

- 7.2 The Executive Director: Resources is satisfied that no significant financial implications are anticipated from this report on 2023/24 activity.

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.3 The Complaints Procedure is available to all those who meet the specified criteria for making a complaint using the Statutory or the Local Authority Procedure.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.4 None identified in connection with the annual report. It should be noted that complex complaints are carefully managed with support from the Borough Solicitor where relevant, to address and minimise risks with individual cases.

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 7.5 None identified

#### Climate Change Implications

- 7.6 This is in line with the council's impact assessment

#### Health & Wellbeing Considerations

- 7.7 None outside the remit of this report

#### Background Papers

- Adults Social Care Compliments and Complaints Annual Report 2023/24

#### Contact for further information

Kogie Perumall  
Head of Service



People Directorate

# Compliments, Complaints and Concerns

## Adult Social Care

### Annual Report

1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

<i>Report Author</i>	<i>Alison Keeling</i>
<i>Head of Service</i>	<i>Kogie Perumall</i>
<i>Assistant Director</i>	<i>Thom Wilson (until 15 March 2024) Sonia Johnson (from 15/3/2024 under interim arrangements)</i>

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## 1. Background and Context

This report sets out information regarding compliments and complaints made by, or on behalf of, people who receive support or services from the Local Authority's Adult Social Care teams.

It is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report which will be published on the Council's website. Monitoring and preparing an annual report are set out in *the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints Regulations 2009* (as amended).

The current legislation requires local authorities to appoint a 'responsible person' with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the following arrangements:

- Managing, developing, and administering the complaints procedure
- Giving assistance and advice to those who wish to complain
- Liaising with services regarding the investigation of complaints where appropriate
- Supporting and training existing and new members of staff
- Monitoring and reporting on complaints activity

Staff will always try to resolve problems or concerns before they escalate into complaints, and this ensures that investigations are kept to a minimum.

Bracknell Forest Council has set procedures for resolving complaints to ensure that: -

- The views and experiences of people who use the services are heard
- Positive feedback is used to develop services and highlight good practice
- We continually learn as an organisation and resolve matters/issues
- We can sustain a quality focus on our customers

Our aims are to:

- Resolve complaints quickly and where possible using informal measures
- Offer early resolution of complaints
- Learn lessons from complaints

## 2. Statutory Adults Social Care Complaints Procedure

The complaints process aims to be as accessible as possible. Complaints can be made by telephone, in writing, by email or using our online complaints form on the Bracknell Forest Council website.

All complaints received are acknowledged within 3 working days and we aim to respond within 10 working days. More complex complaints may be responded to within 20 working days, with the complainant being kept informed during the process.

- Our principles for responding to complaints in adult social care are that all complaints are dealt with efficiently.
- Complaints are properly investigated.
- Complainants receive a timely and appropriate response.

- Complainants are told the outcome regarding the investigation of the complaint.
- An apology is given if required.
- Appropriate response is taken where necessary.

The Adults Statutory procedure starts with an internal investigation. A response will be sent from the manager within the service area. If no resolution is achieved a further investigation will be carried out, this can sometimes involve an external investigator being appointed and a report will be sent to the complainant of the findings.

In most cases, if a complaint is upheld or partially upheld, an apology will be offered, and information will be given to the complainant outlining actions the service will take to ensure the situation does not arise again for the complainant or individuals in the future. The apology is made by the manager on behalf of the service area complained about.

If the complainant is not happy with the outcome of their complaint, they may refer the matter to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) for consideration. Representations may be made to the LGSCO at any time and any member of the public is able to complain to the Ombudsman if they feel there has been maladministration or injustice, however, the LGSCO will not normally accept the complaint until the Council has had a chance to complete the investigation internally first.

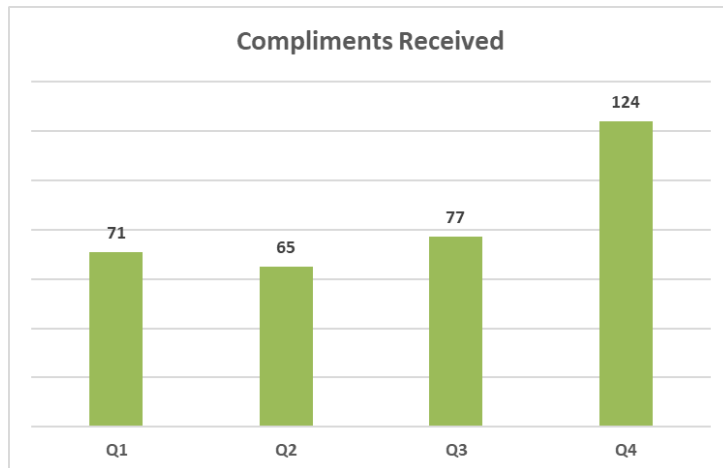
### 3. Adult Social Care Compliments

Compliments are received from a wide range of sources via surveys, feedback forms and directly to the staff involved.

All compliments received are sent to the individual’s line manager to support the appraisal process and personal development of employees.

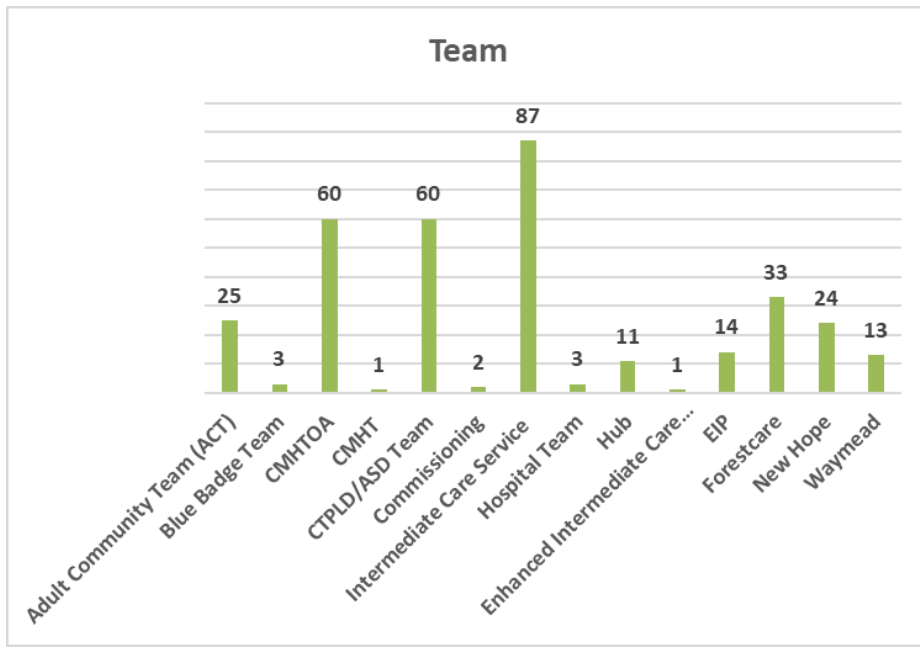
During 2023/2024 there were 337 compliments received across Adult Social Care service areas, compared to 201 received during 2022/2023. This is an increase of 68%.

The increase is due to more feedback forms being received from individuals regarding the service received from Adult Social Care.



	Number of compliments
2018/19	73
2019/20	197
2020/21	207
2021/22	261
2022/23	201
2023/24	337

This table shows who the compliments have come from.



The above table is a breakdown of the individual teams receiving the compliment.

**Some examples of the 337 compliments received**

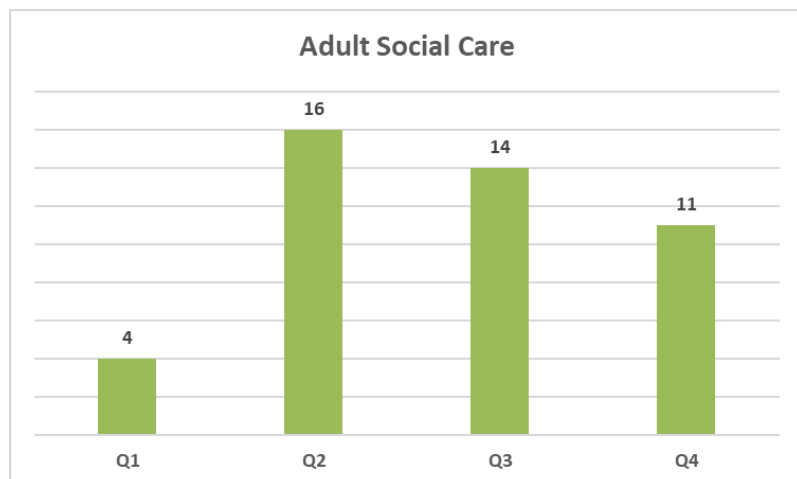
- My mother died recently so I am writing to you about one of your employees, who worked tirelessly to make sure my mother had the best care at home, coordinating with the nurses and financial people and others, to ensure everything was setup and running smoothly. I found her very hardworking and conscientious and did an outstanding job and surely is a credit to your council.
- Thank you so much for everything you have done for mum, she is so happy with the equipment you provided, and it has made a huge difference to her life. Mum also said how respectfully you had treated her during your visits so thank you very much.
- The client attended her 1:1 recovery support session and thanked me for the advice I gave to her around her alcohol misuse, anxiety, stress and eating issues.

- Our family really appreciate your continued support in achieving mum’s goals of getting off the bed and into a chair, and fingers crossed into a wheelchair very soon. You have been so supportive and always responsive.
- I've received my email about my blue badge. I just want to say a big thanks to you all. So lovely to me when I rung, and the badge was done so quickly.
- I have felt motivated to write some kind words regarding ASD team based at Bracknell Council. I have experience of working with them as an autistic adult on and off over several years. They are an outstanding service who are genuinely motivated to help their clients which they do very well. If you need help with something and they can help you, they will. If you really need help as a matter of urgency, they will prioritize you if they can.
- Had a lovely phone call just now, she wanted to say a massive thank you for helping her last night said you could not have been more helpful, she went on to say all the staff are lovely to her and you all deserve gold medals.
- Family member expressed her heartfelt gratitude for the exceptional support and care that the social care team has provided to her husband and the family during the challenging journey of his dementia. They have all consistently gone above and beyond to ensure her husband's comfort, safety, and well-being.
- With respect, with help, with everything. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate them, because they are brilliant at what they do. They are being good to me. I was a carer for 20 odd years, the way these girls treat me, they treat me the same, they don't look at my name or where I came from. For a single person like me, they just treat me with respect and care. Nothing is too much. All of them treat me with dignity.
- As these staff are the front line, public face of your organisation you obviously want the best first impression and they have certainly achieved that. Never have I come across a public sector organisation with front line staff so supremely efficient and personable. (And I have worked in the NHS for 27 years!)

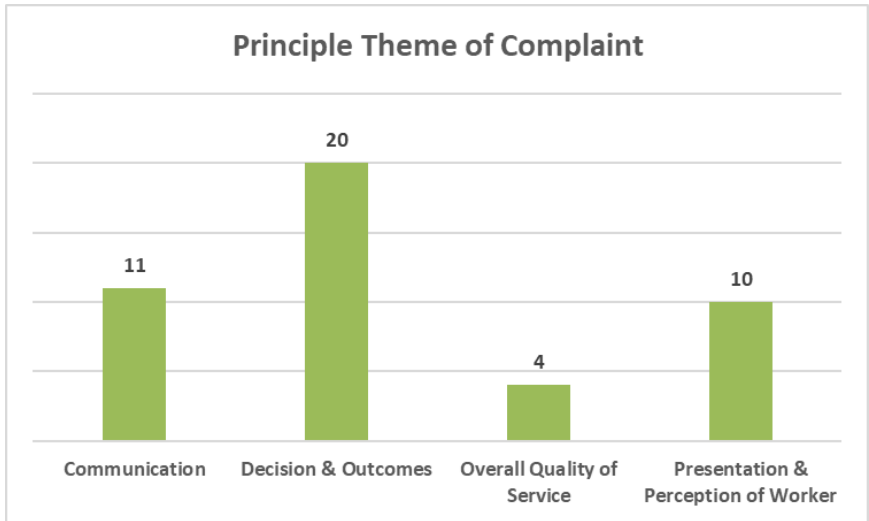
#### 4. Complaints Received for Adults Social Care

During 2023/24 there were 45 complaints received across Adult Social Care service areas, compared to 39 received during 2022/23. This is an increase of 15%.

Although there were 45 complaints these were from 41 complainants.

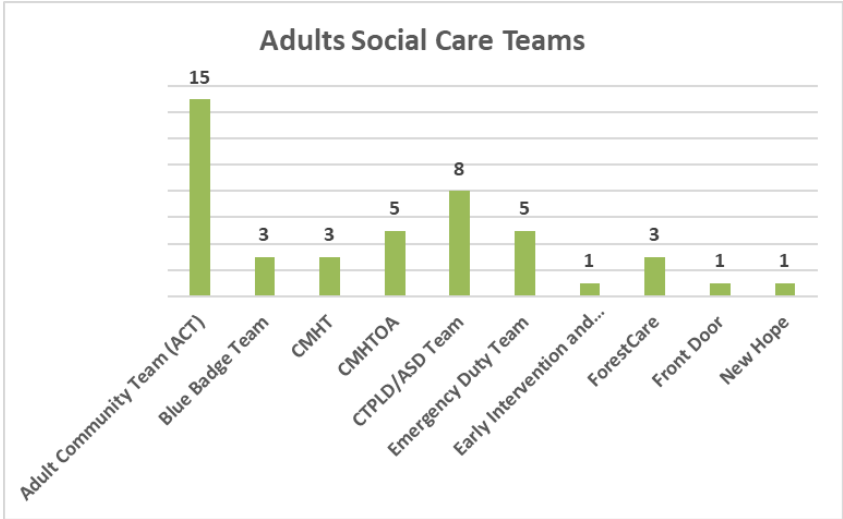


	Number of complaints
2018/19	41
2019/20	47
2020/21	36
2021/22	49
2022/23	39
2023/24	45

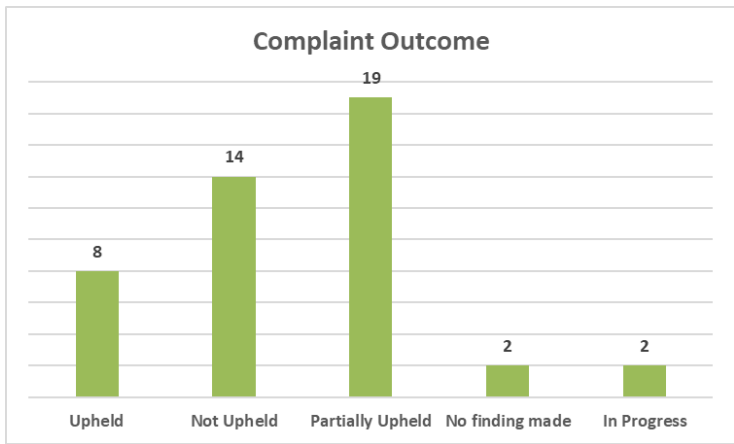


“Decisions & Outcome” had the most complaints, in this reporting year this is still the most common reason for complaints.

This table shows the numbers of complaints for individual services within Adults Social Care.



### 5. Analysis of Complaints



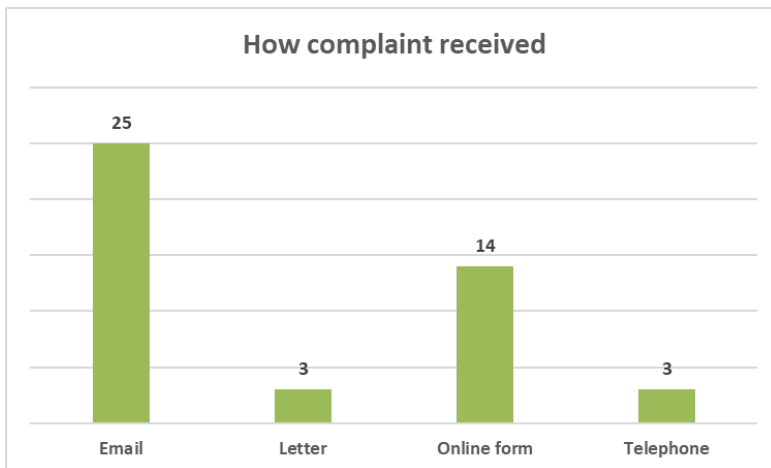
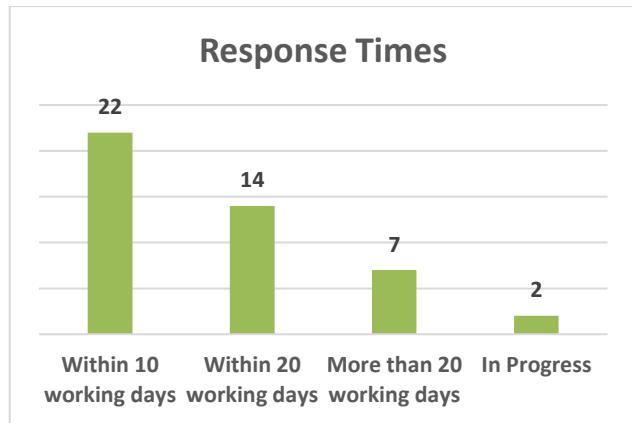
In total 17% of complaints were upheld which is an increase from 10% in 2022/23.

A further 31% of complaints were not upheld compared to 41% in 2022/23.

42% of complaints were partially upheld compared to 36% during 2022/23.

### Timeliness of Complaints

49% of complaints were responded to within 10 working days during this reporting year. Whilst it is the aim to respond to most complaints within 10 working days, 32% were responded to within 20 working days, which we do allow for more complex complaints. 16% of complaints were responded to over 20 working days, this is due to meeting with complainants, further investigation, or information was required.



Although the online form was a popular avenue for complainants during 2023/24, a large number of complainants have opted to email the Adults Social Care mailbox directly at [ASC.Complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:ASC.Complaints@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) as shown in this table.

## 6. Concerns

During 2023/24 we received 12 complaints which were not the responsibility of the Local Authority, these included NHS trusts and Care Homes outside of the borough. These were forwarded to the relevant bodies and logged as concerns.

## 7. Cost of Complaints Service & Investigations

Most investigations within Adult’s Social Care are dealt with internally, this reporting year we had one external investigation costing £4484.00. Two complaints escalated to the LGSCO during this reporting year, one was not upheld and the other was withdrawn by the complainant. There were no costs involved within these LGSCO investigations.

## 8. Learning from Complaints

During the past year we have improved our processes for learning from complaints, and these continue to develop within Adults Social Care. Since October 2023 we have been capturing the learning from complaints within a new form.

Below is a collection of learning from these forms:

- *Bracknell Forest Council has recently reviewed its Blue Badge procedures and as part of that review specialist teams are required to review applicants who have what is described as hidden disability including mental health problems.*
- *Improve Communication with people while in hospital and their relatives.*
- *It is now mandatory for the hospital team staff to carry out an in person, face to face visit with those people coming out of hospital and where necessary, we will be visiting weekly.*
- *Where we are discharging people back home who have been in interim placements, we remember to include LAP- Locality Access Point – to alert Health to the person coming home and maybe needing GP, community nursing support.*
- *Wrist pendant - Ensure the weekly low battery report is saved down and actioned.*
- *Practitioners to be prompt making even brief notes in case notes of their discussions and formal /informal agreements. Ideally this should be then followed up with an email to the person and the email uploaded in internal system.*
- *Personality Disorder training to be arranged for the team.*
- *Admin to start sending out copies of assessments and reviews to avoid practitioner oversight.*
- *We should keep a clear audit trail of what work was being completed by various teams involved such as finance.*
- *New Scanning process has been implemented to ensure that documentation does not get lost.*
- *Who to communicate with and how when sending correspondence. To ensure that when using jargon and technical information, all staff to ensure they are using the terminology correctly.*
- *We have reminded all our staff that wherever and whenever, our number one aim is to ensure an accurate review of needs takes place by offering to visit everyone in their home, on the wards or care home, seeing the person and family face to face to get a true account of the circumstances being experienced by everyone involved.*

Complaints regarding 'decisions & outcomes' do not always provoke learning as these are issues with assessments, care plans, more social care for support which have been taken to panels where panel members have made the decisions on behalf of the Local Authority.

The complaints manager is working with our Adults Social Care teams to ensure complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and that learning from complaints is taken forward across all of Adults Social Care. Complaint's themes and learning from them are presented at the Adults Social Care Learning Events which takes place yearly.

The complaints manager is on hand to offer procedural advice and guidance when required and is regularly accessed by staff in Adult Social Care.

The complaints manager attends team meetings throughout the year to offer support and explain the complaints process.

## 9. Update on forward plan from 2023/24

<b>Learning from complaints</b>	Reflective/learning sessions to take place with the relevant team involved to capture and agree a specific learning plan	After each upheld complaint	<i>Not completed</i>
	Work closely with the Adults Principal Social Worker to capture the learning points to support workforce improvements	Through the year	<i>Not completed</i>
	Attend team meetings to discuss compliments and complaints received for individual teams	1 team meeting per team for 2023/24	<i>Completed</i>
<b>Governance</b>	Provide quarterly reports to Assistant Director, Head of Service and Team Managers during the year	Every quarter	<i>Completed</i>
<b>Policy update</b>	Update complaints policy for Adults Social Care	30.7.2023	<i>Not completed</i>
<b>Timeliness</b>	Ensure responses to all complaints are within the required timescales	Within 20 days of receipt of complaint	<i>Not completed</i>

## 10. Forward plan for 2024/25

<b>Learning from complaints</b>	Reflective/learning sessions to take place with the relevant team involved to capture and agree a specific learning plan.	After each upheld complaint
	Work closely with the adult's principal social worker to capture the learning points to support workforce improvements	Through the year
	Attend team meetings to discuss compliments and complaints received for individual teams	1 team meeting per team for 2024/25
	Complaints Manager to meet with Assistant Director to discuss how the learning from complaints will be actioned and disseminated to the service	Meeting to be arranged by October 2024
<b>Governance</b>	Provide quarterly reports to Assistant Director, Head of Service and Team Managers during the year	Every quarter
<b>Policy update</b>	Update complaints policy for Adults Social Care	30.7.2024
<b>Timeliness</b>	Ensure responses to all complaints are within the required timescales	Within 20 days of receipt of complaint

End