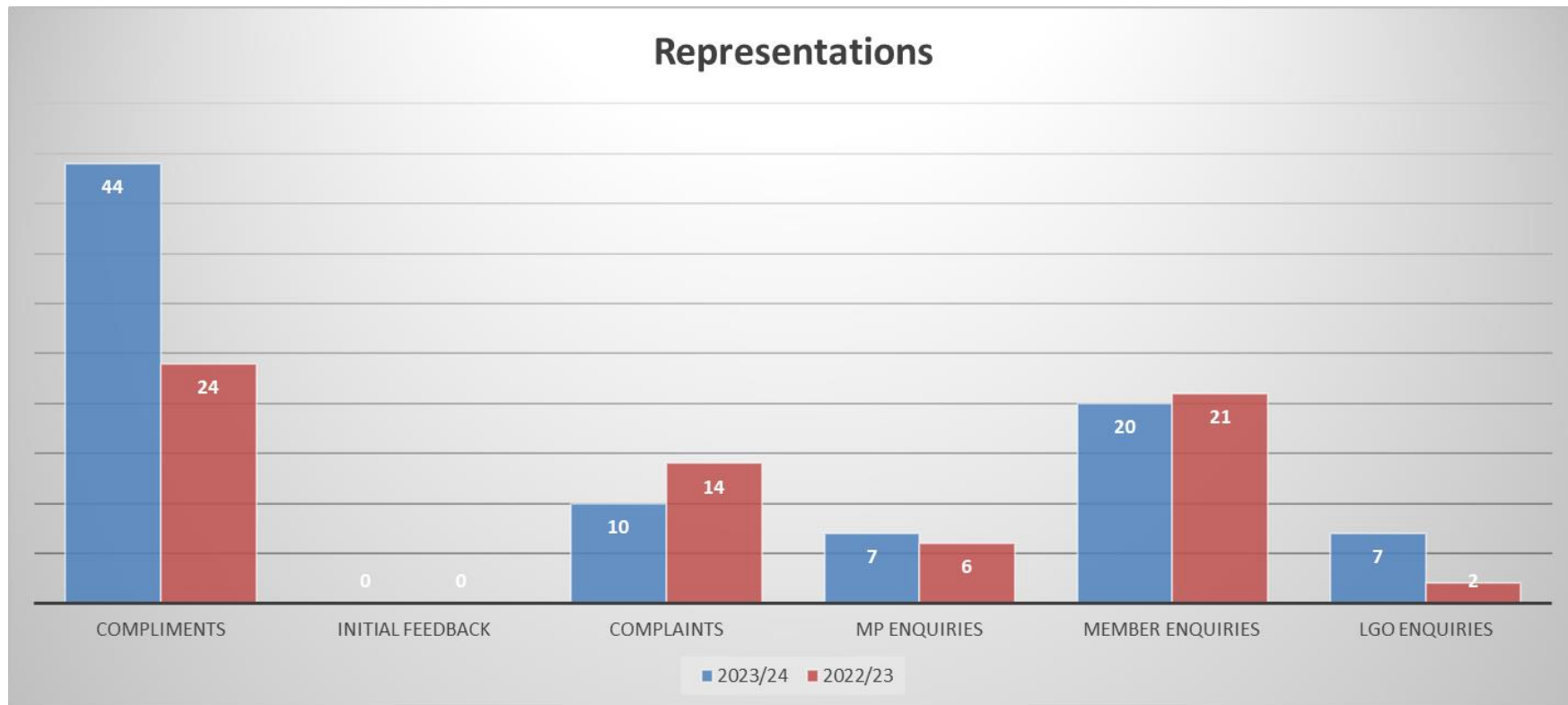


Appendix - 2023/24 Children's Social Care Complaints & Representations

1. Volume of Representations – 2023/24 vs 2022/23:

Below is a comparison of all representations received during both years. A total of **88** representations were received in 2023/24 compared with **67** for 2022/23.



2. Complaints Responded To – 2023/24 vs 2022/23:

Below is the comparison between the two years with additional details provided. There were no escalations beyond stage 1 for both periods:

Feedback:	Initial Feedback	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Stage 3 complaints	Alternative Dispute Resolution Cases	% of responded to complaints upheld	% timeliness of response
2023/24	0	9	0	0	0	56%	67%
2022/23	0	15	0	0	0	47%	93%
Difference	0	-6	0	0	0	+9%	-26%

*For 2023/24:

- 9 complaints were responded to in the reporting period. These are shown in section 4 below.
- 6 of these 9 complaints (67%) were responded to within timeframe.
- 5 of 9 these complaints (56%) were upheld. These are shown in section 5 and the learning is detailed within section 3.

3. Learning and/or outcomes from upheld complaints:

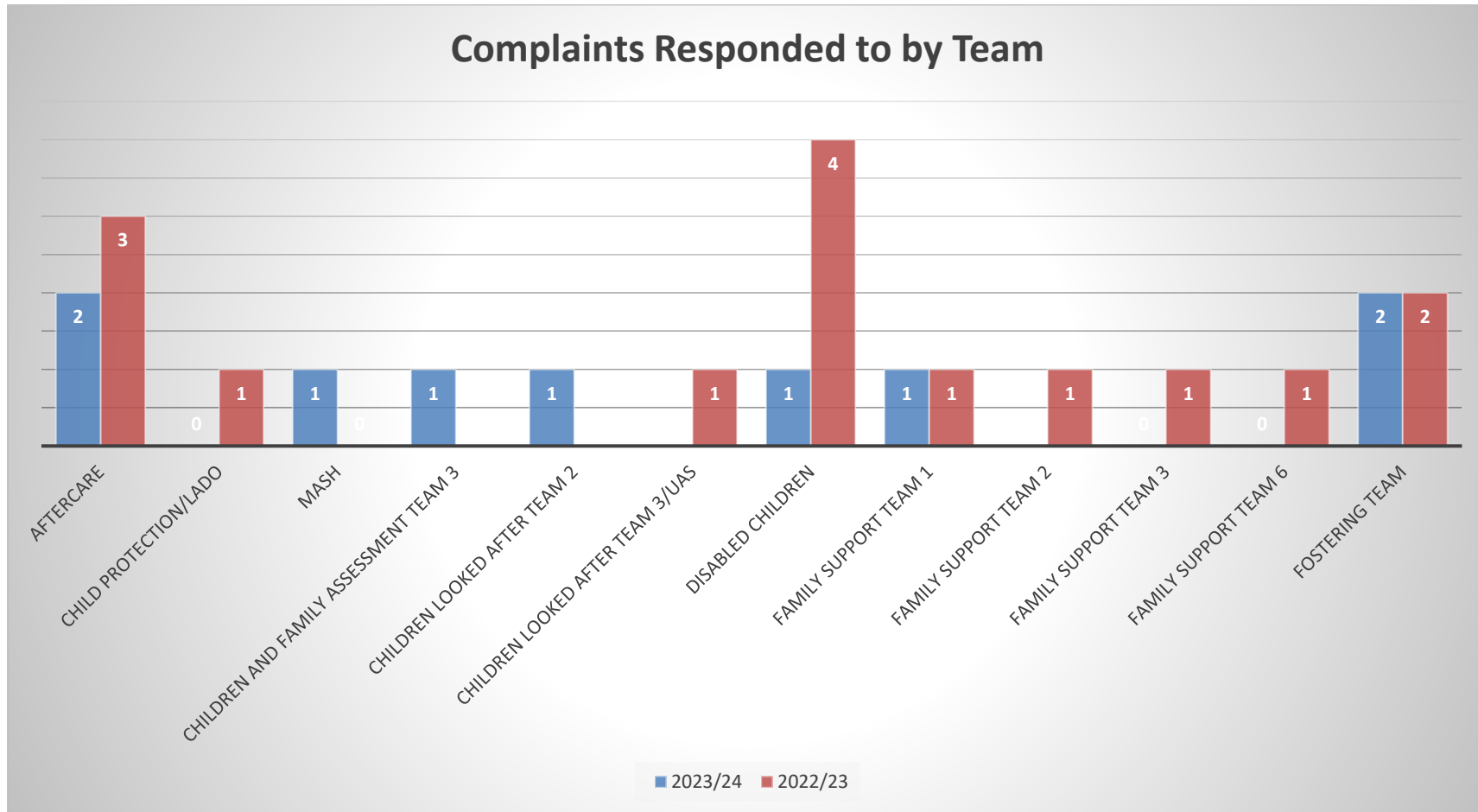
Root cause analysis and learning from upheld complaints is detailed in the table below.

Complaint Number	Team	Complaint	Learning
Complaint 1	Disabled Children	Parent was concerned that the social worker did not listen to them when they raised concerns and feels that the relationship with them has broken down.	A change of social worker was put in place.
Complaint 2	Aftercare	Service user felt that they were not being fully supported. They requested financial support with obtaining a refrigerator for a new property they had moved into. They were left without a fridge whilst waiting for the new fridge to be delivered.	Going forward the service will ensure that in the event of a similar situation, a fridge will be sourced (loaned) until the new one is delivered.
Complaint 3	Fostering Team	Concerns that new beginnings are not meeting the basic needs of the service user, including access to sanitary items, cultural needs, and travel costs.	The service will aim to be clearer with the young person and the care provider from the outset of a placement, of what the young person's allowance will cover. When a contract is resubmitted, it will also be reviewed to account for cost of living increases. It will also be explicit

			in how the allowance should be spent. An additional clause will also be added to the specification to cover cultural and religious practices in order to ensure that the young person is given the appropriate support to participate in these activities, should they wish to do so.
Complaint 4	Aftercare	During a conversation about aftercare, the service user attempted to share their experiences around being in care but felt that they were not being listened to and that their experiences and concerns were not handled fairly, when they shared some of their negative experiences.	Work is being done to prepare a regular forum for care leavers. This forum will allow them to share their experiences and help shape what the service looks like and what support is provided to all service users.
Complaint 5	MASH	Parent requested an assessment to determine their child's care needs, however this was not actioned	Revised the expected response of MASH when parents are requesting an assessment of their care for a child with an additional support need. This change in expected response was then shared with the team.

4. Breakdown of complaints responded to:

Below is a comparison of the complaints responded to during the last two reporting periods.



5. Upheld Complaints:

Below is a comparison of the number of complaints upheld from those responded to during the last reporting period.

Complaint Area	Volume Closed 2023/24	Upheld	Volume Closed 2022/23	Upheld
Aftercare	2	2	3	1
Child Protection/LADO	0	0	1	0
MASH	1	1	0	0
Children and Family Assessment Team 3	1	0	0	0
Children Looked After Team 2	1	0	0	0
Children Looked After Team 3/UAS	0	0	1	1

Disabled Children	1	1	4	3
Family Support Team 1	1	0	1	0
Family Support Team 2	0	0	1	0
Family Support team 3	0	0	1	0
Family Support Team 6	0	0	1	0
Fostering Team	2	1	2	2

6. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Complaints:

There were 7 enquiries from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), where they reached a final decision on cases within the reporting period.

Area	Issue Nature	LGO Findings	Financial Remedy	Learning where relevant	Did the council respond to the LGSCO timeframes
Childrens	The complainant related to the Council refusing to accept a complaint regarding its actions towards the family of a third party.	LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - no further action	N/A	N/A	Yes

Childrens	Resident complaints about the Council's involvement with their children's case and raised concerns about bias towards their father	LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.	N/A	N/A	Yes
Childrens	Resident complained that the Council delayed sorting out their immigration status while they were in care and failed to deal with their complaint properly.	LGSCO Upheld: Fault and Injustice.	£1,000	Council to obtain relevant documentation and information from parents, about a child's immigration status, at the time a child becomes looked after.	Yes

<p>Children's Social Care (Children Looked After Team 1)</p>	<p>Complaint regarding contact arrangements in place to see children which is causing the parent financial loss. The complainant has to take time off work to attend contact sessions during the week and they require the Council to allow contact sessions to take place at weekends.</p>	<p>LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - out of jurisdiction.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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Children's Social Care (Family Support Team 1)	Complainant stated social workers threatened to call the Police and are harassing them via phone calls and emails.	LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.	N/A	N/A	Yes
Children's Services (Prevention / Support Service)	Complaint that the Council trivialised their daughter's disclosures, discriminated against them and colluded with a partner in alienating their children.	LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - out of jurisdiction.	N/A	N/A	Yes
Family Support Team	A complaint that the Council has not investigated a complaint about misconduct by the social worker dealing with their family's case.	LGSCO Closed after initial enquiries - no further action.	N/A	N/A	Yes

7. Initial Feedback:

The council receives feedback which following assessment does not constitute a formal complaint but still requires addressing. Those within scope of an 'Initial Feedback' are sent to the service with a request that swift action takes place to resolve the issue. This should negate the need for a formal complaint taking place. For the reporting period a total of **0** 'Initial Feedback' have been recorded:

8. Enquiries

During the reporting period the following enquiries were received:

- 20 Cllr/Member enquiries
- 7 MP Enquiries

Member/Cllr Enquiries	Feedback Total
MASH	5
Disabled Children	3
Youth Services	3
Aftercare	3
Prevention/Support Service	1
Support for Childminders	1
Registration	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 2	1
Permanency/Court Team	1

Operation of Homes	1
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MP Enquiries	Feedback Total
Family Support Team 1	2
Family Support Team 6	1
Permanency/Court Team	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 3	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 4	1
MASH	1

9. External Compliments:

44 compliments have been received during this period compared to 24 in the same period last year, breakdown of teams is below.

Service Area (2023/24)	Total Received	Service Area (2022/23)	Total Received
Family Support Team 2	9	Family Support team 4	3
Children and Family Assessment Team 4	4	Children Looked After Team 1	3
Youth Services	4	Family Support Team 3	2
Disabled Children	4	Children Looked After Team 3	2
Family Support Team 7	3	Children and Family Assessment Team 4	2
Children Looked After Team 3	3	Fostering Team	2
Fostering Team	3	Aftercare	1
Family Support Team 4	2	Family Support Team 2	1
Prevention/Support Services	2	Family Support Team 7	1

Children and Family Assessment Team 1	2	All Services	1
Family Support Team 3	2	Prevention/Support Service	1
Adoption Team	2	Family Support Team 6	1
Family Support Team 6	1	Children and Family Assessment Team 3	1
Child Protection/LADO	1	Disabled Children	1
Children and Family Assessment Team 2	1	MASH	1
MASH	1	Child Protection/LADO	1

10. Examples of External Compliments

Prevention/Support Service (PASS)

PASS Teams complimented by two different professionals: "PASS offer a high level of support"; "Social workers and PASS workers usually have great interpersonal skills and can keep the conversation on route in meetings. They praise everyone in the meeting and lift the spirits of others in difficult situations. They have a good understanding of threshold and help to sign post staff to other agencies if needed".

Children and Family Assessment Team 1

I have never in my 30 years of childcare experience such a warm, understanding, professional, engaging, serious, committed, passionate, interested and truly kind approach to a family who need support.

Fostering Team

X who is our Financial Assessment officer is a credit to your Council she is always pleasant, helpful, and very knowledgeable when we have spoken to her, and we would like our thanks to be passed on to her.

11. Benchmarking

Complaints benchmarking information is summarised below.

Council	Complaints Received	% Of complaints upheld	% Responded to within timeframe
Thurrock	10	56%	67%
London Borough of Redbridge	157	38%	49%