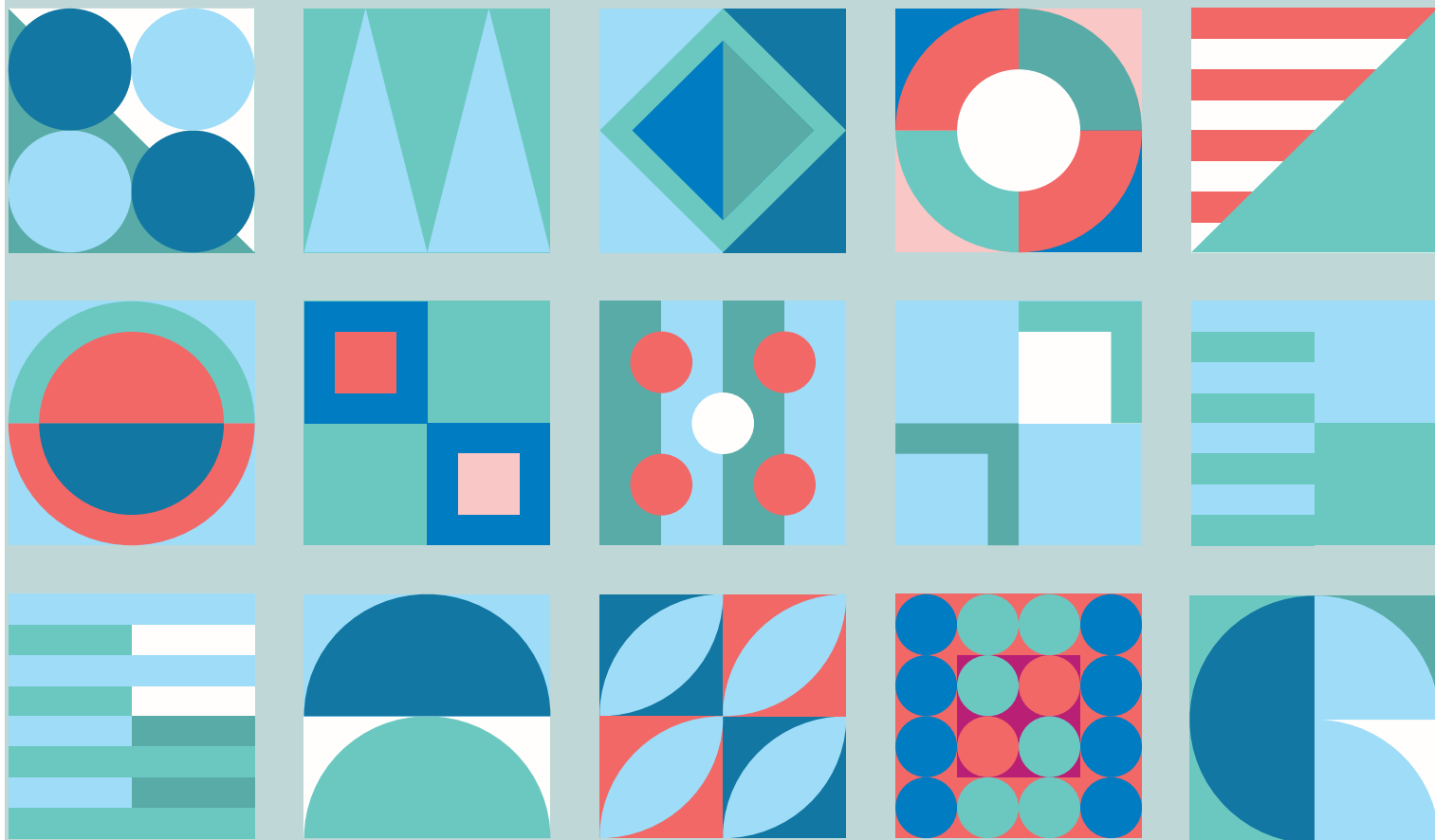




Complaints about care services in Scotland, 2019/20 to 2025/26

A statistical bulletin

Published August 2026



**Keeping The Promise at
the heart of what we do**

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Executive summary

This statistical bulletin is the latest in our series on complaints about care services registered with the Care Inspectorate in Scotland. The report includes complaints received and investigated between April 2019 and March 2026, the seven years over which our current complaints procedure and data collection system have been operating. The report focusses on the most recent year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

The statistics reflect how the Care Inspectorate actioned every complaint that it received using our risk-based assessment process to resolve complaints as quickly as possible for complainants.

Summary of main points

- In 2025/26, we received 5,721 complaints about care services. This was an increase of 418 (8%) on the previous year and most of that increase was due to complaints about standalone care at home support services which increased by 28% on the previous year.
- Over the past seven years since our new digital system was introduced, complaint levels have fluctuated within a relatively consistent range (5,300 to 5,900). The trend during that seven-year period is slightly decreasing.
- We assess all complaints received to ensure that they are within the remit of the Care Inspectorate to investigate, to ensure we have sufficient information about the complaint and to ensure that the complainant wishes to proceed. If it is determined we cannot proceed, then these complaints are revoked. In 2025/26 we revoked 21% of complaints received, a decrease from 23% in 2024/25.
- A total of 4,502 complaints were resolved using our four resolution pathways in 2025/26. In 48% of these, the information given to us by the complainant was passed to the inspector for that service to be used to inform and focus future scrutiny activity; 17% were resolved by the service directly; in 15% we required the service provider to investigate via their own complaint procedure; 20% were deemed high risk and were investigated by the Care Inspectorate.
- We upheld 70% of the complaints where the Care Inspectorate conducted an investigation in 2025/26.
- As reported in previous years, we continue to receive and uphold more complaints about care homes for older people than for any other type of service – 71% of care homes for older people received at least one complaint, while 25% had at least one complaint upheld during 2025/26. As with previous years, specific healthcare issues such as nutrition, medication, hydration, tissue viability, continence care and inadequate care and treatment were the most frequent types of complaints upheld about care homes for older people during 2025/26.

1. Introduction

This statistical bulletin is the latest in our series on complaints about care services in Scotland. It presents data about complaints received and investigated over a seven-year period between April 2019 and March 2026, focussing on the year 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Care services operating in Scotland must be registered with the Care Inspectorate and there are currently 10,593 services on our register. The largest groups of care services in Scotland are children's daycare (for example, nurseries), childminders, care homes, care at home and housing support services.

We register, inspect and provide quality improvement support across these care services, aiming to ensure that the standard of care provided is high. Where standards fall below acceptable levels, we take enforcement action. Anyone who has concerns or is unhappy about a care service can complain directly to the Care Inspectorate. We have a complaints procedure which sets out how we handle each complaint raised with us.

External factors impacting these statistics

We introduced our current digital complaints system in March 2019. This change has improved the statistics we can present but has disrupted longer-term trends. For this reason, we have limited the period covered by most of this report to the last seven years to ensure meaningful comparisons which we can build on in future reports.

How we deal with complaints

Our complaints handling procedure is available on our website.

[How we deal with complaints about care \(careinspectorate.com\)](https://www.careinspectorate.com)

In summary, our complaints procedure is designed to be open, transparent, risk-based and focused on people's experiences. We aim to resolve simple matters quickly and focus our attention on more serious issues. This approach is based on complaint handling guidance from the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, in its Model Complaints Handling Procedure. The aim of this model is to standardise and streamline complaints-handling procedures across all sectors. The guidance shows that complaints about a service are best resolved as close to the point of service delivery as possible. Therefore, our approach includes direct service action or investigation by the provider, where we encourage the service to resolve the complaints directly.

We use a risk assessment process that considers what else we know about the service, including findings from our regulatory activity, like inspections and intelligence logged from previous complaints, to help us decide how to proceed and what action we need to take to achieve the best outcome for people experiencing care.

Before we act on complaints, we assess them to ensure that they fall within our remit to investigate and that we have enough information to understand the substance of the complaints raised. If the complainant has provided contact details, we clarify the substance of the complaint with them and get agreement that they wish us to proceed. If there is any reason we cannot proceed, the complaint is **revoked**, which means no further action is taken. All revoked complaints are still shared with the inspector of the service as intelligence. All complaints (including those that were revoked) are logged and included in the count of **complaints received**. We assess all complaints for any child or adult protection issues. We log and report any protection concerns to the relevant statutory body, for example, social work or Police Scotland. This means we revoke that element of the complaint.

Once we decide to proceed, there are four pathways we can take to reach a complaint resolution:

- **Intelligence:** where we record the information given to us and highlight it to the inspector for that service. This approach is only used for lower-risk complaints and/or complaints where we may not have enough information to proceed. This helps our inspectors develop a broad overview of complaints about a service, which in turn informs the timing and focus of our inspections. For example, additional intelligence from one or several complaints may result in the inspector bringing forward an inspection.
- **Direct service action:** where we contact the service and ask them to engage directly with the person making the complaint to resolve it. Typically, this is used for straightforward matters where people are unsatisfied with their experiences, and we intervene quickly with a care service to achieve a positive outcome.
- **Investigation by the care provider:** where the risk assessment suggests the issue is suitable for the complaint to be investigated via the service's own complaints procedure. Where possible, we obtain consent to share the person's contact details with the service. We contact the service provider and require them to investigate and respond to the complaint, and a copy of their response is sent to the Care Inspectorate.
- **Investigation by the Care Inspectorate:** where our risk assessment identifies more serious complaints, we conduct an investigation.

Digital complaints system

In March 2019, we introduced a digital complaints system, which is used to record complaints, including progress and outcomes. This recording system has resulted in improvements to the quality and definition of the data presented. As a result, we can provide a clear account of how complaints have been resolved using our pathways over the past seven years.

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

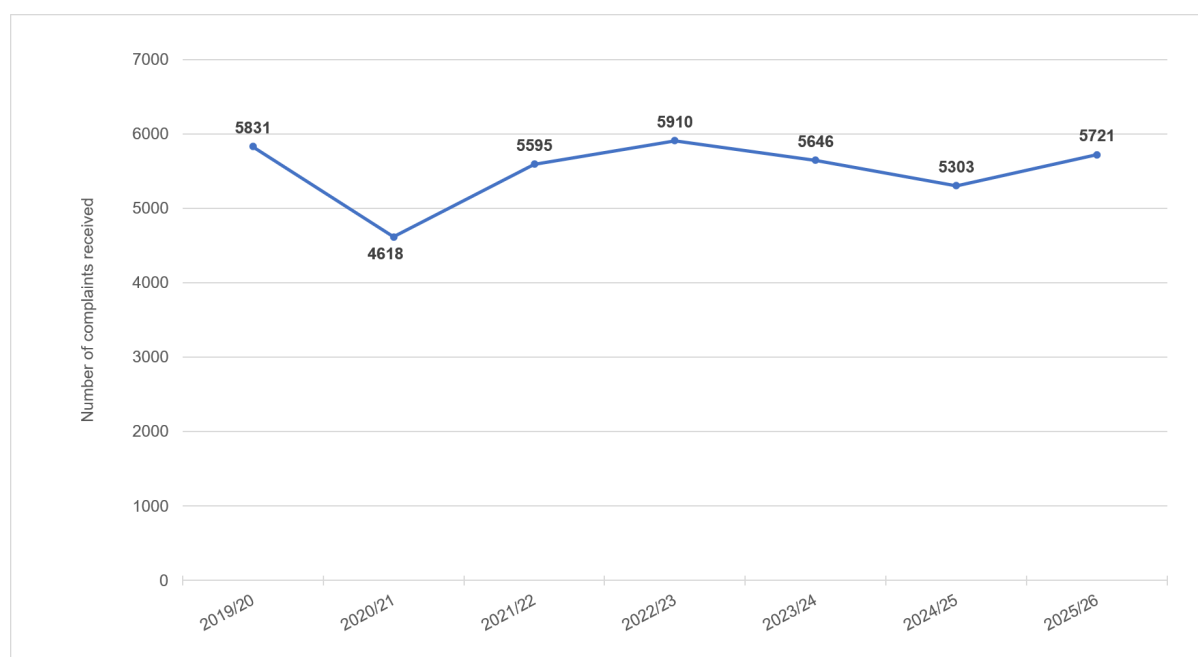
Complaints received

In 2025/26, we received 5,721 complaints about care services. This was an increase of 418 (8%) on the previous year. Over the past seven years since the new digital system was introduced, complaint levels have fluctuated within a relatively consistent range (5,300 to 5,900) and only fell below this figure in 2020/21 (see Figure 1). This trend during that seven-year period, excluding 2020/21, is slightly decreasing.

The decrease in 2020/21 was due to the impact of the pandemic. For example, many services closed (particularly early learning and childcare services) before re-opening in 2021/22.

In 2025/26, we received 110 fewer complaints than in 2019/20 (2% decrease), largely driven by a reduction in complaints about care homes. There were 366 fewer complaints about care homes than in 2019/20, representing a 13% decline. Complaints relating to care homes for older people—which accounted for more than one-third of all complaints received in 2025/26—fell by 15% over the same period. Reductions were also seen across several other service types, including childminders, standalone support services and housing support services. A detailed breakdown of complaints by care service type is provided in the Appendix (Table A).

Figure 1: Complaints received 2019/20 to 2025/26



Once we have confirmed that a complaint falls within our remit and have sufficient information to proceed, we undertake a risk assessment and determine the most appropriate resolution pathway. During 2025/26, we resolved 4,502 complaints, an increase of 447 (11%) compared with 2024/25. These can be broken down as follows:

- **Intelligence:** Use of the information given by the person making the complaint as intelligence about the service, to help inform future scrutiny activity and improvement support. For example, bringing forward a full, unannounced inspection of a service. In 2025/26, we resolved 2,175 (48% of all complaints resolved) as intelligence, an increase compared to 46% of all complaints resolved last year. Over the last seven years, 51% of all complaints resolved have been resolved in this way.
- **Direct service action:** In 2025/26, 768 complaints (17% of all complaints resolved) were assessed as suitable to be resolved by the service directly and quickly, compared to 18% last year. Over the last seven years, 17% of all complaints resolved have been resolved in this way.
- **Investigation by the care provider:** In 2025/26, 655 complaints (15% of all complaints resolved) were assessed as suitable for the complaint to be investigated via the service's complaints procedure, and we required the provider to investigate. This was an increase from the 14% of all complaints resolved last year. Over the last seven years, 13% of all complaints resolved have been resolved in this way.
- **Investigation by the Care Inspectorate:** Where our initial assessment indicates a higher risk, we may decide that we need to conduct an investigation. In 2025/26, we completed investigations of 904 complaints (20% of all complaints resolved). This is a decrease from the 22% of all complaints resolved last year. Over the last seven years, 19% of all complaints resolved have been resolved in this way.

Revoked complaints

The gap between the complaints received and the complaints resolved is mainly due to complaints we may still be processing, especially those received at the end of the year which may not be resolved by 31 March 2026; and complaints that are revoked, which means we take no further action.

Reasons to revoke a complaint include: the complaint not being within the remit of the Care Inspectorate to investigate, the complainant not wishing to proceed with the complaint, the complainant wishing to go through the service provider's complaints process, or criminal and protection issues that are reported to other agencies. In the latter case, the complaint inspector will follow this up with relevant agencies and ensure the service acts. All information from revoked complaints is shared with the lead inspector for the service as intelligence. We provide advice to complainants on the correct agency to take their complaint to, for example, the NHS or health and social care partnerships, and signpost people on how to do this.

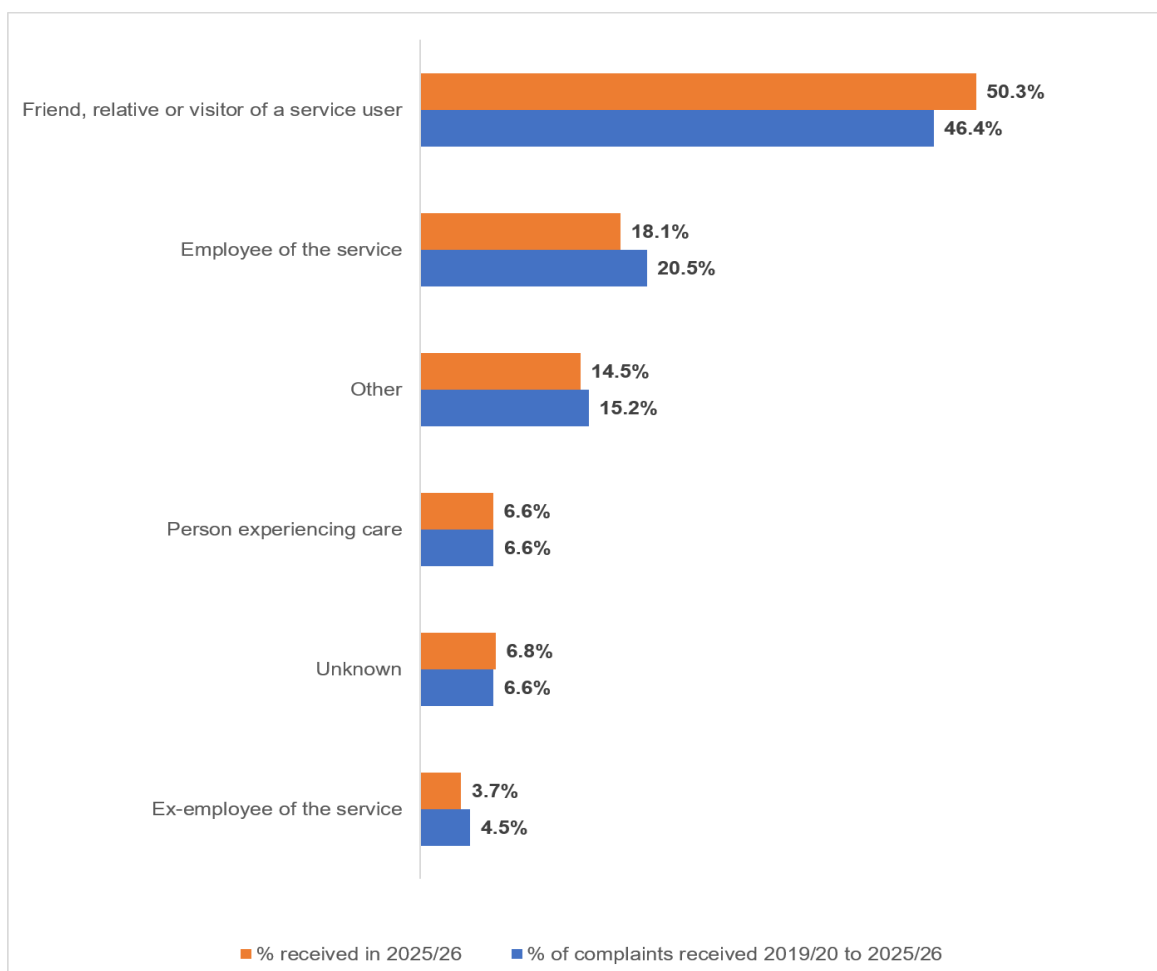
Of the 5,721 complaints received in 2025/26, by the end of the year, 1,174 were revoked (21% of all cases received, a decrease from 23% last year).

3. Who makes complaints?

Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of all complaints received over the last seven years by the relationship of the person making the complaint to the service compared to 2025/26 alone.

There has been minimal change in the distribution of who makes complaints over the last seven years, and the same trend continued in 2025/26. Of all the complaints received, friends, relatives or visitors of people who experience care and employees of the service have consistently made the highest numbers of complaints. Friends, relatives and visitors continue to account for most complainants, with 46% of complaints received in the last seven years and 50% (2,875) in 2025/26. This was followed by employees of the service, who accounted for 21% in the last seven years and 18% (1,036) in 2025/26.

Figure 2: Complaints received 2019/20 to 2025/26 and 2025/26 alone, by relationship to service



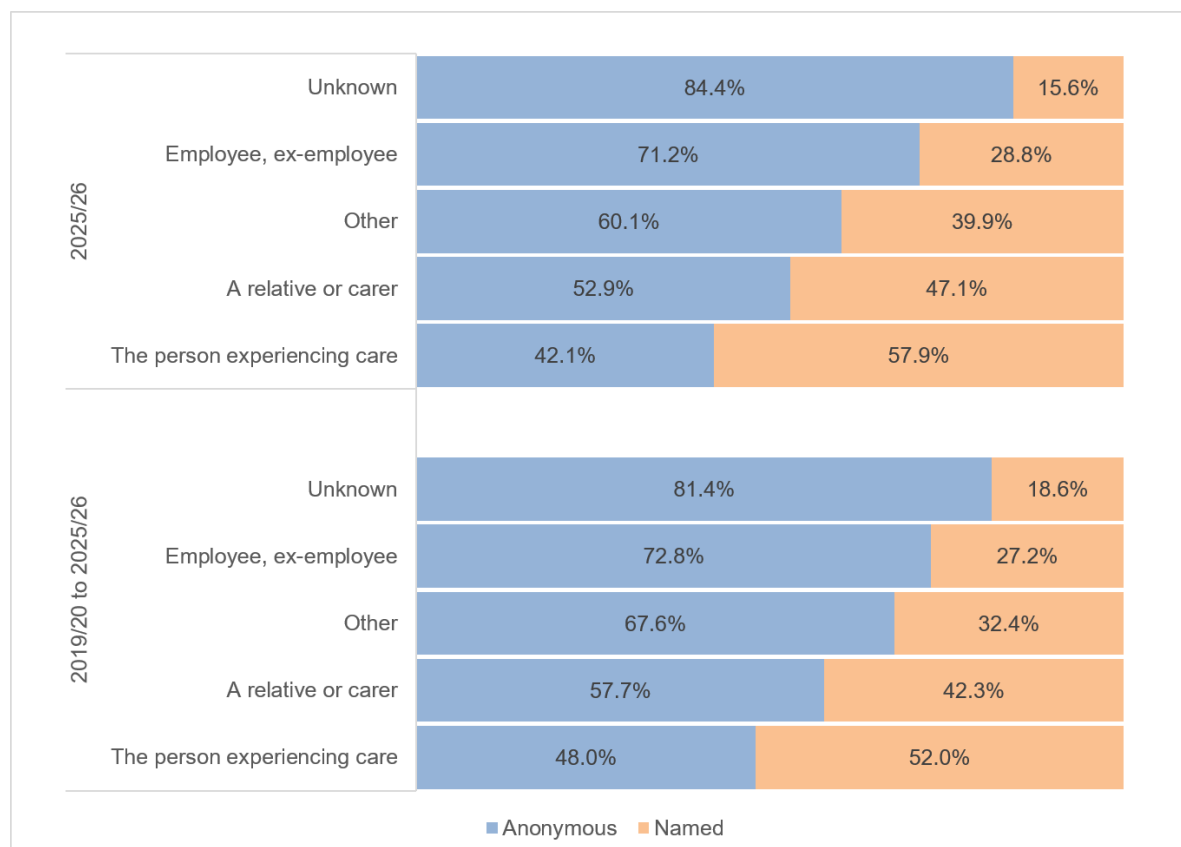
When someone makes a complaint, they can choose to remain completely anonymous. An anonymous complaint, where we cannot communicate or clarify complaints with the person raising the complaint, may limit our assessment of the complaint or any investigation we may undertake. Complainants can remain confidential, where we will not disclose their identity to the service complained against, but we can contact them if required.

The proportion of complaints submitted anonymously remained high, although it decreased slightly compared with the previous year. In 2025/26, 59% of all complaints were received anonymously, compared with 62% in 2024/25.

There was a reduction in the proportion wishing to remain anonymous among almost all complainant types. Among employees and former employees, 71% chose to remain anonymous in 2025/26, compared with 73% in 2024/25. Similarly, the proportion of relatives and carers wishing to remain anonymous fell from 56% to 53%. The largest decrease was seen among people experiencing care, with 42% choosing to remain anonymous in 2025/26, down from 51% in the previous year.

Figure 3 below shows the breakdown of anonymous complaints received over the last seven years by the relationship of the person making the complaint to the service, compared to 2025/26 alone. The same trends remain over both periods. Based on all the complaints received over this seven-year period, the group most likely to remain anonymous was those whose relationship to the service was also unknown – 81% did not wish to be named, compared to 84% (330) in 2025/26. 73% of employees and ex-employees did not wish to be named over the seven-year period compared with 72% (888) in 2025/26 alone. 68% of ‘other’ complainant types wished to remain anonymous over the seven-year period compared to 60% (159) in 2025/26 alone. In contrast, 52% of people who experienced care agreed to be named over the seven-year period, compared to 58% (219) in 2025/26. It is important to note that in anonymous complaints, the relationship of the complainant to the service is based on the information provided by the complainant and is not verifiable by us.

Figure 3: Complaints received 2019/20 to 2025/26 and 2025/26 alone, that were anonymous, by relationship to service.

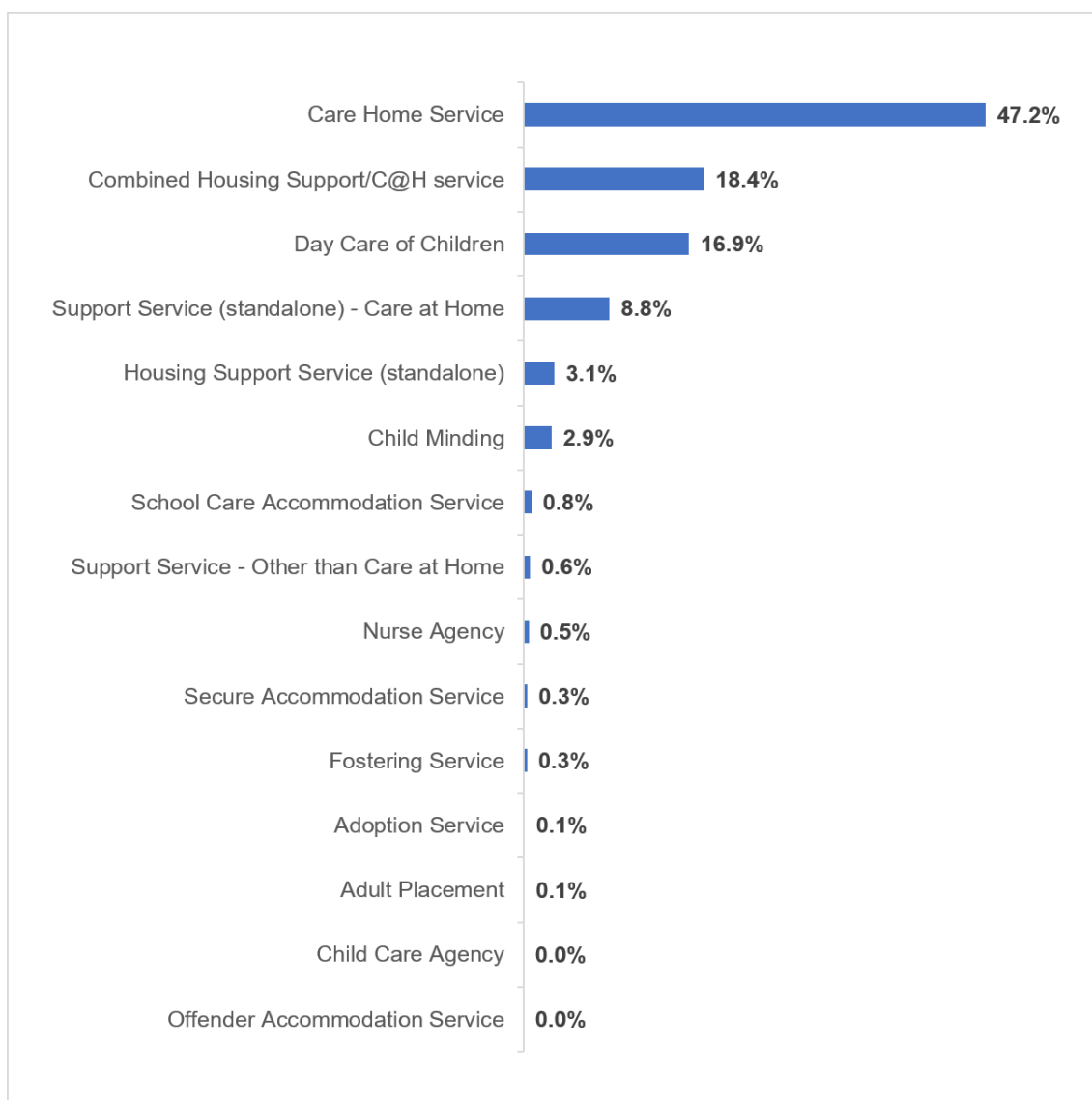


4. What types of care services do people complain about?

The largest number of complaints we received over the seven-year period was about care homes. Although making up only 13% of the 10,593¹ registered services, care homes account for 47% of the total number of complaints received – we received a total of 18,234 complaints about care homes over the last seven years.

Over the seven years, 18% of the complaints received were about combined housing support and care at home services, 17% were about daycare of children services and 9% were about standalone care at home services.

Figure 4: Complaints received 2019/20-2025/26 by type of service



These trends remain similar when looking at 2025/26 alone. Care home services continued to account for most complaints (41%), followed by combined housing support and care at home services (22%) and day care of children services (21%). A detailed breakdown by year and service type can be found in Table A of the appendix.

¹ Data source: Care Inspectorate service list register as of 31 March 2026.

5. What do people complain about?

When we investigate a complaint, we capture detailed information about what we investigated – we call these areas of complaint. Each complaint investigated can be about several different areas, each of which will be either upheld or not upheld.

In 2025/26, 31% of all areas of complaints upheld were about healthcare concerns in a service (for example, medication, nutrition or tissue viability), 15% were about staff (such as staff levels, training or recruitment procedures), 12% were about communication (either between staff and people experiencing care/relatives/carers or on information about the service), and 11% were about wellbeing (stress/distress, developmental, emotional or social). These have been a consistent top four over the past seven years. There is a more detailed list of areas of complaint in the Appendix (Table B and Table C).

Figure 5: All service types, by area of complaint for investigations conducted in 2025/26

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	612	30.7%
Staff	298	14.9%
Communication	244	12.2%
Wellbeing	219	11.0%
Policies and procedures	163	8.2%
Record keeping	120	6.0%
Choice	89	4.5%
Protection of people	76	3.8%
Environment	55	2.8%
Property	31	1.6%
Food	30	1.5%
Privacy and dignity	28	1.4%
Access	19	1.0%
User participation	5	0.3%
Conditions of registration	4	0.2%
Financial issues	1	0.1%
Equality issues	0	0.0%

6. Complaints received – children and young people

Children and young people's services include care home services for children and young people, adoption, fostering, school care accommodation and secure accommodation services. In 2025/26, we received 279 complaints about these services, the majority of which (66%) were about care homes for children and young people. The 279 complaints received were equivalent to 5% of complaints received across all service types during the year, staying consistent over the seven-year period.

The volume of complaints received about care homes for children and young people decreased by 11% (23 complaints) compared to last year and we received 25 fewer complaints (8% decrease) across all types of service for children and young people. While complaints received about fostering services increased compared with last year, only two required investigation and only one of these was upheld.

Figure 6: Complaints about children and young people's services received in 2025/26

Service type	Care service type	All complaints received 2025/26	All complaints received 2024/25
Children and young people services	Care home service for children and young people	183	206
	Schoolcare accommodation service	42	37
	Fostering service	27	10
	Secure accommodation service	22	42
	Adoption service	5	9
All care service types		279	304

Of the 279 complaints received about services for children and young people in 2025/26, 25% (70) came from an employee of the service, an increase from 23% in 2024/25. Complaints received from relatives or carers decreased from 36% (109) in 2024/25 to 30% (83) in 2025/26. The number of complaints made by young people themselves remains low. Only 9% of complaints about services for children and young people came directly from a young person in 2025/26, a slight increase compared to 6% in 2024/25. During 2026/27, we will be undertaking specific work to strengthen and raise the profile of our complaint's procedure for children and young people linked to The Promise, UNCRC and trauma-informed approaches.

7. Complaints about care homes for older people

In total, 35% (2,000) of the 5,721 complaints we received in 2025/26 were about care homes for older people and this is consistently the service type we receive most complaints about.

The number of complaints about care homes for older people has decreased over the last seven years. Over the same period, the number of registered places in care homes has also varied; therefore, to make meaningful comparisons we have presented this as the rate of complaints per 1,000 registered places.

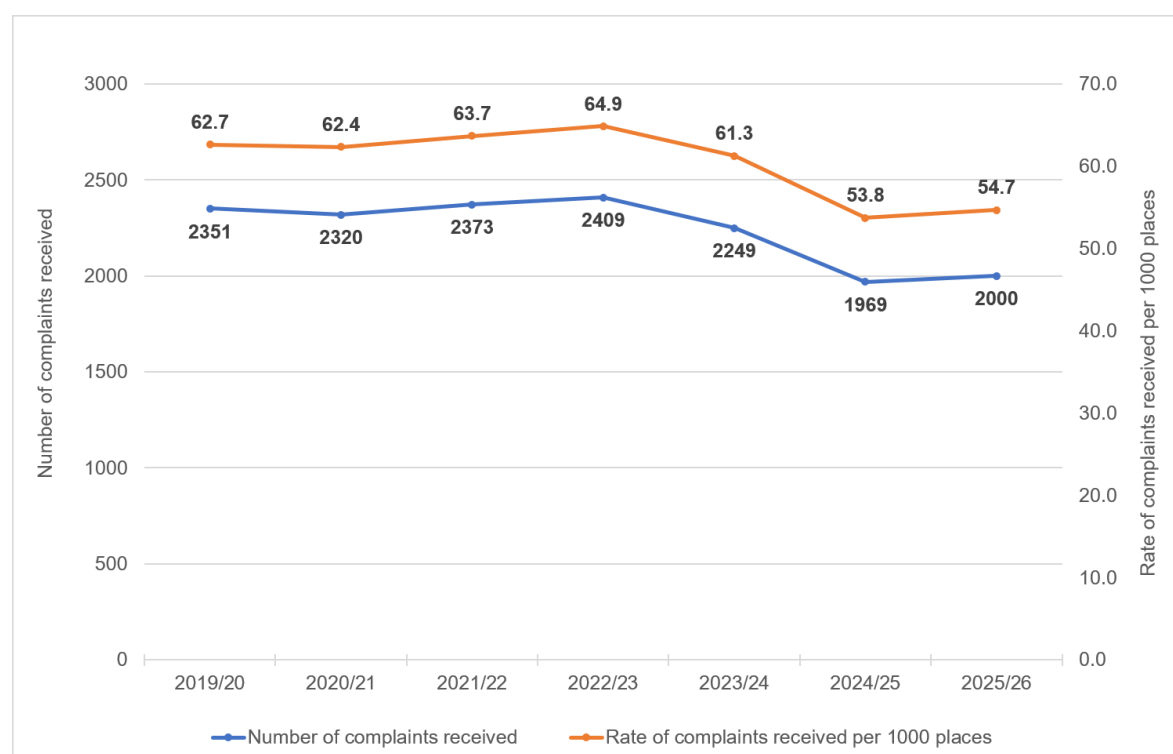
The rate of complaints received per 1,000 places in care homes for older people across Scotland was 54.7 in 2025/26. This is an increase from 53.8 last year but is still one of the lowest points it has been at over the seven-year period examined in this report as shown in Figure 7.

There was considerable variation in rate across geographical areas of Scotland – we have used services based in each local authority area to illustrate geographical variation.

- The local authority area with the highest rate per 1000 places in 2025/26 was Dumfries & Galloway, which had a rate of 113.0, more than double the rate across Scotland as a whole. This was due to the number of complaints received about a very small number of services, which accounted for over a third of the complaints in the area.
- City of Edinburgh had the most consistently low rates over the seven-year period.
- The island areas of Scotland also tend to have low rates, although the small numbers of places mean that the rates fluctuate considerably, even if there is only a small change in the number of complaints.

A breakdown by local authority area, which includes the numbers received, is provided in the Appendix (Table D).

Figure 7: Number of complaints received about care homes for older people and rate per 1000 places in Scotland 2019/20 to 2025/26



Over the year, we received at least one complaint about 71% of the 763 care homes for older people registered as of 31 March 2026.

During 2025/26, following our risk assessment process, we resolved 1,633 complaints about care homes for older people using the different pathways. This was an increase from 1,552 last year. These were as follows:

- **Intelligence:** In 2025/26, there were 839 complaints where the information given to us by the complainant was assessed and provided to the inspector for that service to be used to help inform future scrutiny activity. This was 51% of all complaints resolved – an increase from 50% last year.
- **Direct service action:** In 2025/26, 202 complaints were able to be resolved by the service directly and quickly. This is the same as last year.
- **Investigation by the care provider:** In 2025/26, 251 complaints (15%, up from 13% last year) were suitable for the complaint to be investigated via the service's complaints procedure, and we required the provider to investigate.
- **Investigation by the Care Inspectorate:** In 2025/26, 341 complaints (21%, down from 25% last year) were deemed serious enough for us to decide that we needed to conduct an investigation. A further breakdown by local authority area is provided in the Appendix (Table E).

Over the year, we conducted an investigation into at least one complaint in 30% of all care homes for older people and went on to uphold a complaint in 25%.

Of the care homes for older people that had a complaint upheld in 2025/26, 72% had one upheld complaint, 20% had two upheld complaints, and the remaining 8% had three or more upheld complaints during the year.

Most care homes for older people are operated by the private sector (78%), with the public sector providing 14% and the remaining 8% provided by voluntary organisations (Figure 8). Rates of complaints received and upheld are highest in the private sector: in 2025/26, we received at least one complaint about 78% of private sector care homes for older people and upheld a complaint about 29% of them (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Proportion of care homes for older people on 31 March 2026 – by sector

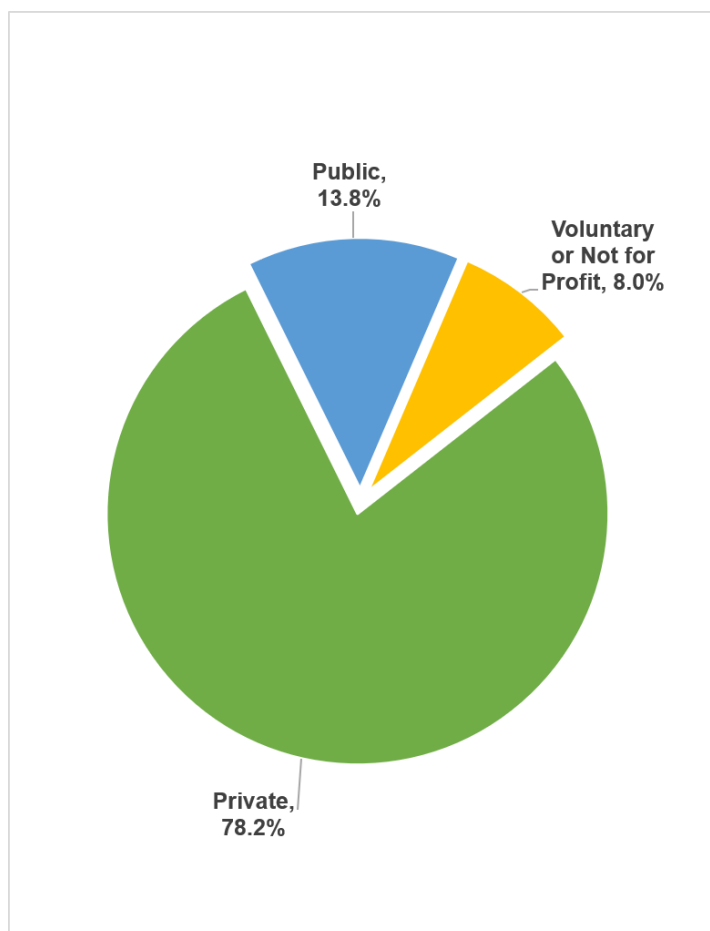
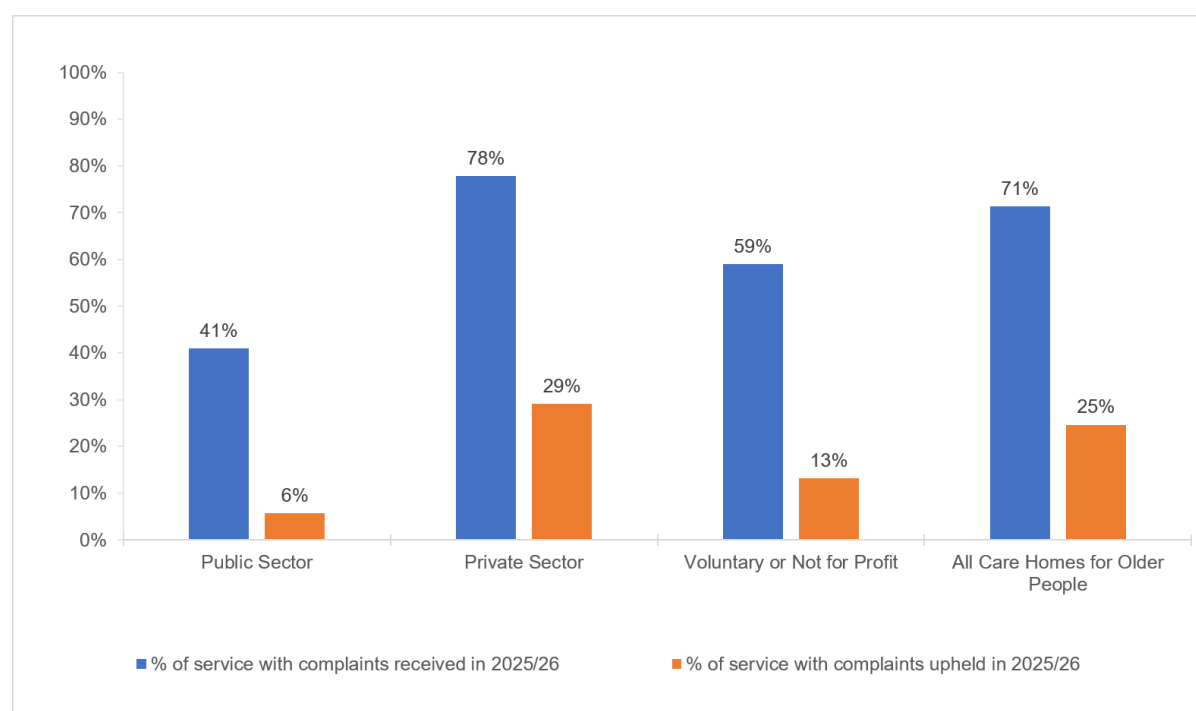


Figure 9: Care homes for older people on 31 March 2026 – Percentage of services with a complaint received or upheld about them



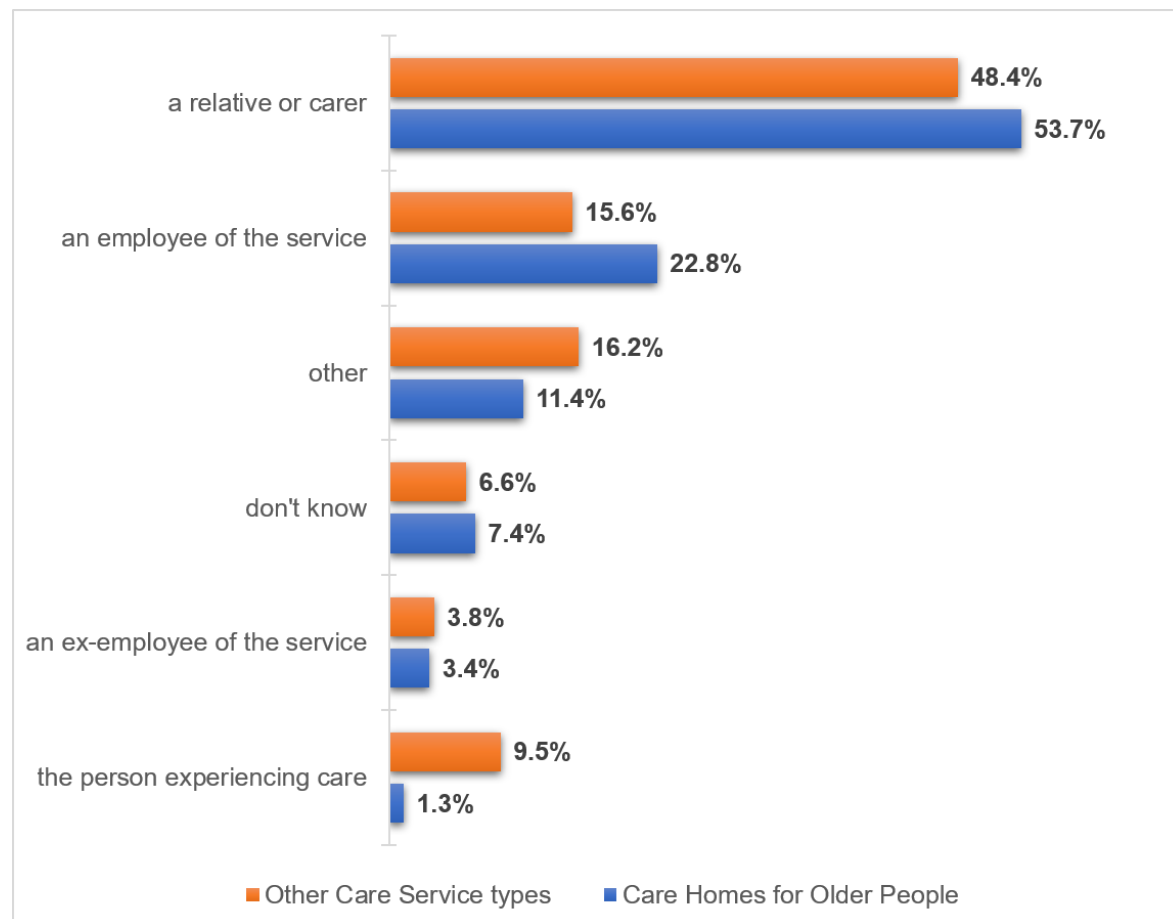
Further breakdown of areas of complaint about care homes for older people (Figure 10) shows that specific healthcare issues formed the largest group of complaints (39%). This includes complaints about nutrition, medication, tissue viability, continence care and inadequate care and treatment. This is consistently the case over the past seven years. Full details of this breakdown are in the Appendix (Table F) with a further breakdown by year (Table G).

Figure 10: Care homes for older people – by area of complaint 2025/26

Summary area of complaint	Number of areas of complaint upheld	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Healthcare	389	38.7%
Staff	123	12.2%
Communication	112	11.1%
Wellbeing	70	7.0%
Record keeping	56	5.6%
Choice	54	5.4%
Policies and procedures	53	5.3%
Environment	34	3.4%
Protection of people	33	3.3%
Property	28	2.8%
Food	20	2.0%
Privacy and dignity	16	1.6%
Access	14	1.4%
User participation	4	0.4%

In 2025/26, most of all complaints received about care homes for older people continued to be from relatives and carers of people living in the service: 54% compared to 48% for all other types of service (Figure 11). The proportion of complaints received from employees of the service was 7.2 percentage points higher for care homes for older people than for other service types. Only 1% of all complaints about care homes for older people were from people experiencing care, compared with almost 10% for all other types of service.

Figure 11: Complaints received 2025/26 by relationship of the person making the complaint – care homes for older people compared with all other complaints received



8. What we found when conducting investigations

Following our risk assessment process, we may, due to the nature and seriousness of the complaint, decide that an investigation is required. Once that investigation is complete, the inspector decides if the complaint should be upheld or not. Where we have investigated and found evidence that supports the complaint, the complaint will be upheld; otherwise, the complaint will be not be upheld. 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.

When we uphold a complaint, we inform both the person making the complaint and the care service about any requirements or areas for improvement. Where a complaint is upheld and we make requirements, the complaint inspector follows this up by inspecting the service against the set requirements and produces a public inspection report.

Figure 12 below shows that in 2025/26, we upheld 70% of the investigations we conducted, the same as last year. This proportion reflects, at least in part, our risk-based procedures. Complaints taken forward for investigation are those that are serious about failings in care that have led to or are likely to lead to poor outcomes for an individual or individuals. As such, where proven, these are more likely to be upheld.

The percentage of complaints upheld varies by type of service, although percentages based on small numbers of complaints should be interpreted with caution. For those service types with more than 20 complaints investigated this year, the highest proportion of complaints upheld was about combined housing support and care at home services (83%). This was followed by care homes for older people (80%) then by standalone care at home services (78%).

Figure 12: The number of complaint investigations conducted by complaint outcome, 2019/20 – 2025/26

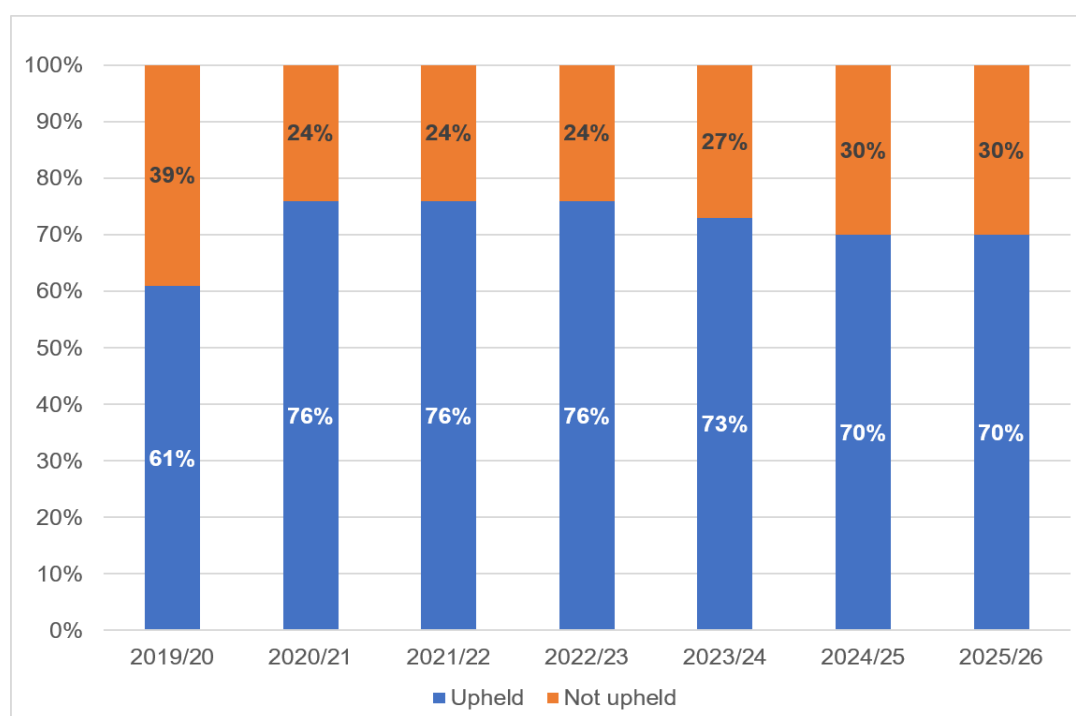


Figure 13: Percentage of complaints upheld by service type, 2025/26

Care service type	Number of complaints where investigation conducted	Number of complaints upheld	% of all complaints upheld
Adoption	1	1	*100.0%
Adult placement	0	0	
Care home	385	292	75.8%
of which, care home for older people	341	273	80.1%
Childminding	48	23	47.9%
Daycare of children	222	124	55.9%
Fostering	2	1	*50.0%
Housing support (standalone service)	8	5	*62.5%
Nurse agency	2	1	*50.0%
Offender accommodation service	0	0	
School care accommodation	6	1	*16.7%
Secure accommodation	3	0	*0.0%
Support service (standalone) – care at home	64	50	78.1%
Support service (standalone) – other than care at home	4	2	*50.0%
Combined housing support and care at home service	159	132	83.0%
All care service types	904	632	69.9%

*Based on fewer than 20 investigations

9. Supporting improvement following complaints

Complaints give a valuable insight into how services are caring for people who experience them every day. We realise that, for many people, making a complaint, whether directly to the service or to us, can be a big step and indicates that there is something not right that really matters to them. We look carefully at the information we receive from all complaints and decide the best way to proceed. As outlined above, some issues raised with us are the responsibility of other organisations to look at. In such cases, we refer people to the appropriate organisation, ensuring we are clear why we think this is how their complaints 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 also to seek to improve the quality of care provided for 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 is 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, we might signpost to good practice, issue an area for improvement, or make a requirement setting out what the service must do to improve and by when. Where requirements are given, the complaints inspector will follow this up within the given timescale, do a follow-up inspection against the requirements set, and publish an inspection report. We may re-evaluate the service because of an upheld complaint and might also consider whether we need to prioritise a full inspection of the service to look at any wider aspects of care.

Where the complaint identifies very serious issues, we may issue a letter of serious concern, which we share with relevant partners such as local health and social care partnerships and directors of nursing to ensure services receive support for improvement. We may also serve an improvement notice under Section 62 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 if we are not satisfied that sufficient improvement is achieved and sustained.

A key part of our role is to work with services and providers collaboratively to support improvement. Our inspectors and quality improvement teams 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.

Our assurance and quality improvement teams work in close collaboration to identify, prioritise, and respond to areas requiring improvement across care services. These areas are identified through a range of assurance activities, including inspections and complaints. By targeting the areas of greatest need, we ensure that improvement interventions have the maximum possible impact.

Following an analysis of complaint trends over several years, we identified a key opportunity to support the development of better complaints handling within the care home sector. From this, the complaints team developed an intervention to work alongside care home providers. The aim of this was to use an appreciative enquiry methodology to help co-create better complaints handling processes aligned to direct service action and investigation by the provider. Through this work, we aim to

promote and support the development and consistent application of robust complaints policies, helping services to improve their complaint handling practices. This, in turn, will increase confidence in how complaints are managed and resolved using direct service action or investigation by the provider. This improvement work was initiated in June 2026, has already been rolled out to three care home providers and continues to be offered to others.

10. Conclusions

This report has presented a range of statistical information from complaints about care services over the past seven years. The statistics show the number of complaints received and how they have been resolved using our risk-based assessment process.

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 by resolving complaints quickly and by using all the intelligence we gather to focus our inspections as well as the wider scrutiny, assurance and improvement support work we carry out across all care services.

Summary of main points

- In 2025/26, we received 5,721 complaints about care services. This was an increase of 418 (8%) on the previous year and most of that increase was due to complaints about support services.
- Over the past seven years since our new digital system was introduced, complaint levels have fluctuated within a relatively consistent range (5,300 to 5,900). The trend during that seven-year period is slightly decreasing.
- We resolved a total of 4,502 complaints during 2025/26
 - In 48%, the information given to us by the complainant was provided to the inspector for that service to be used to inform and focus future scrutiny activity and improvement support.
 - 17% were resolved by the service directly.
 - 15% were investigated through the service's own complaints procedure where we required the provider to investigate.
 - 20% were assessed as serious enough for us to decide that we needed to conduct an investigation.
- We upheld most of the complaints we investigated – 70% of investigations were upheld in 2025/26.
- As reported in previous years, we continue to receive and uphold more complaints about care homes for older people than for any other type of service – 71% of care homes for older people received at least one complaint while 25% had at least one complaint upheld during 2025/26. As with previous years, specific healthcare issues such as nutrition, medication, hydration, tissue viability, continence care and inadequate care and treatment were the most frequent types of complaints upheld about care homes for older people during 2025/26.

Appendix: Complaints about care services in Scotland, 2019/20 to 2025/26– Detailed tables

Table A: Complaints received by service type, 2019/20 to 2025/26

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		7-year total		% change 2019/20 to 2025/26
Care service type	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	No. of complt received	% of complt received	No. of complt received	% of complt received	
Adoption	3	0.1%	2	0.0%	1	0.0%	9	0.2%	4	0.1%	9	0.2%	5	0.1%	33	0.1%	66.7%
Adult placement	3	0.1%	3	0.1%	2	0.0%	3	0.1%	5	0.1%	4	0.1%	6	0.1%	26	0.1%	100.0%
Care home service	2718	46.6%	2629	56.9%	2747	49.1%	2814	47.6%	2636	46.7%	2338	44.1%	2352	41.1%	18234	47.2%	-13.5%
Child care agency	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.0%	0.0%
Childminding	244	4.2%	126	2.7%	142	2.5%	145	2.5%	146	2.6%	138	2.6%	160	2.8%	1101	2.9%	-34.4%
Daycare of children	850	14.6%	426	9.2%	857	15.3%	1084	18.3%	1076	19.1%	1049	19.8%	1184	20.7%	6526	16.9%	39.3%
Fostering	26	0.4%	10	0.2%	15	0.3%	13	0.2%	20	0.4%	10	0.2%	27	0.5%	121	0.3%	3.8%
Housing support (standalone)	266	4.6%	171	3.7%	152	2.7%	177	3.0%	162	2.9%	149	2.8%	130	2.3%	1207	3.1%	-51.1%
Nurse agency	26	0.4%	29	0.6%	21	0.4%	31	0.5%	26	0.5%	33	0.6%	23	0.4%	189	0.5%	-11.5%
Offender accommodation	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	100.0%
School care accommodation	67	1.1%	34	0.7%	27	0.5%	55	0.9%	40	0.7%	37	0.7%	42	0.7%	302	0.8%	-37.3%
Secure accommodation	11	0.2%	9	0.2%	13	0.2%	19	0.3%	19	0.3%	42	0.8%	22	0.4%	135	0.3%	100.0%
Support service (standalone) - care at home	509	8.7%	468	10.1%	598	10.7%	545	9.2%	435	7.7%	364	6.9%	465	8.1%	3384	8.8%	-8.6%
Support service (standalone) – other than care at home	58	1.0%	10	0.2%	31	0.6%	30	0.5%	35	0.6%	26	0.5%	57	1.0%	247	0.6%	-1.7%
Combined housing support and care at home service	1050	18.0%	700	15.2%	989	17.7%	985	16.7%	1041	18.4%	1104	20.8%	1247	21.8%	7116	18.4%	18.8%
All care service types	5831	100.0%	4618	100.0%	5595	100.0%	5910	100.0%	5646	100.0%	5303	100.0%	5721	100.0%	38624	100.0%	-1.9%

Table B: All service types by area of complaint, complaints upheld in 2025/26

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	212	10.6%
	Healthcare > Medication issues	106	5.3%
	Healthcare > Continence care	62	3.1%
	Healthcare > Tissue viability	52	2.6%
	Healthcare > Nutrition	44	2.2%
	Healthcare > Other	41	2.1%
	Healthcare > Hydration	31	1.6%
	Healthcare > Infection control issues	25	1.3%
	Healthcare > Oral health	20	1.0%
	Healthcare > Palliative care	8	0.4%
	Healthcare > Clinical governance	6	0.3%
	Healthcare > Mental health care	5	0.3%
Staff	Staff > Training / qualifications	83	4.2%
	Staff > Levels	82	4.1%
	Staff > Other	73	3.7%
	Staff > Other fitness issues	46	2.3%
	Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	8	0.4%
	Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people	3	0.2%
	Staff > Registration with professional bodies	2	0.1%
	Staff > Unfit to be in proximity of children	1	0.1%
Communication	Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	221	11.1%
	Communication > Other	19	1.0%
	Communication > Information about the service	3	0.2%
	Communication > Language difficulties	1	0.1%
Wellbeing	Wellbeing > Other	124	6.2%
	Wellbeing > Emotional	36	1.8%
	Wellbeing > Social	21	1.1%
	Wellbeing > Developmental	15	0.8%
	Wellbeing > Visiting	12	0.6%
	Wellbeing > Behaviour	11	0.6%
Policies and Procedures	Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	135	6.8%
	Policies and procedures > Other	28	1.4%
Record keeping	Record keeping > Personal plans/ agreements	95	4.8%
	Record keeping > Other	25	1.3%

Table B: All service types by area of complaint, complaints upheld in 2025/26 (cont.)

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld areas of complaint	% of all upheld areas of complaint
Choice	Choice > Care and treatment	42	2.1%
	Choice > Activities	21	1.1%
	Choice > Dignity and privacy	13	0.7%
	Choice > Other	8	0.4%
	Choice > Service not meeting religious, cultural, faith, social needs	5	0.3%
Protection of people	Protection of people > Adults	47	2.4%
	Protection of people > Children	17	0.9%
	Protection of people > Policies and procedures	6	0.3%
	Protection of people > Restraint	4	0.2%
	Protection of people > Other	2	0.1%
Environment	Environment > Fitness of premises / environment	30	1.5%
	Environment > Other	14	0.7%
	Environment > Inadequate facilities	7	0.4%
	Environment > Security	4	0.2%
Property	Property > Loss of/missing	22	1.1%
	Property > Care of	6	0.3%
	Property > Other	3	0.2%
Food	Food > Other	17	0.9%
	Food > Availability	6	0.3%
	Food > Choice	4	0.2%
	Food > Quality	3	0.2%
Privacy and dignity	Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	28	1.4%
Access	Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	12	0.6%
	Access > Other	7	0.4%
User participation	User participation > Other	5	0.3%
Conditions of registration	Conditions of registration > Exceeding capacity	3	0.2%
	Conditions of registration > Other	1	0.1%
Financial issues	Financial issues > Financial issues	1	0.1%

Table C: Number and % of complaint investigations that were upheld, by area of complaint and type of care service 2025/26

	Adoption service		Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse Agency		School care accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) – other than care at home		Combined housing support/care at home service	
Detailed area of complaint	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Healthcare > Inadequate healthcare or healthcare treatment		0.0%	141	7.1%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%	10	0.5%		0.0%	56	2.8%
Healthcare > Medication issues		0.0%	43	2.2%	1	0.1%	3	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	16	0.8%		0.0%	43	2.2%
Healthcare > Continence care		0.0%	46	2.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	14	0.7%
Healthcare > Tissue viability		0.0%	35	1.8%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%	3	0.2%		0.0%	13	0.7%
Healthcare > Other		0.0%	35	1.8%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%	3	0.2%
Healthcare > Nutrition		0.0%	35	1.8%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	8	0.4%
Healthcare > Hydration		0.0%	28	1.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%
Healthcare > Infection control issues		0.0%	12	0.6%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	7	0.4%		0.0%	4	0.2%
Healthcare > Oral health		0.0%	19	1.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Healthcare > Palliative care		0.0%	8	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Healthcare > Clinical governance		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%
Healthcare > Mental health care		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Staff > Levels		0.0%	54	2.7%		0.0%	12	0.6%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	15	0.8%
Staff > Training / qualifications		0.0%	39	2.0%		0.0%	5	0.3%		0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.1%		0.0%	10	0.5%		0.0%	26	1.3%
Staff > Other		0.0%	16	0.8%	4	0.2%	22	1.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	9	0.5%		0.0%	22	1.1%
Staff > Other fitness issues		0.0%	17	0.9%	2	0.1%	14	0.7%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	6	0.3%		0.0%	7	0.4%
Staff > Registration with professional bodies		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%
Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people		0.0%	3	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Staff > Unfit to be in proximity of children		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%

Table C: Number and % of complaint investigations that were upheld, by area of complaint and type of care service 2025/26 (cont.)

	Adoption service		Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse Agency		School care accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) – other than care at home		Combined housing support/care at home service	
Detailed area of complaint	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Wellbeing > Other		0.0%	50	2.5%	12	0.6%	42	2.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%	10	0.5%		0.0%	8	0.4%
Wellbeing > Emotional		0.0%	6	0.3%	3	0.2%	24	1.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%	2	0.1%
Wellbeing > Social		0.0%	19	1.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Wellbeing > Developmental		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	14	0.7%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Wellbeing > Behaviour		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	8	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%
Wellbeing > Visiting		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%	8	0.4%
Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	1	0.1%	103	5.2%	7	0.4%	48	2.4%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	10	0.5%	4	0.2%	47	2.4%
Communication > Other		0.0%	12	0.6%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	5	0.3%
Communication > Information about the service		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Communication > Language difficulties		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	1	0.1%	51	2.6%		0.0%	5	0.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	16	0.8%	1	0.1%	61	3.1%
Policies and procedures > Other		0.0%	6	0.3%	1	0.1%	15	0.8%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	4	0.2%
Record keeping > Personal plans/ agreements		0.0%	48	2.4%	1	0.1%	7	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	13	0.7%		0.0%	26	1.3%
Record keeping > Other		0.0%	12	0.6%	1	0.1%	7	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	3	0.2%
Choice > Care and treatment		0.0%	25	1.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	6	0.3%		0.0%	11	0.6%
Choice > Activities		0.0%	17	0.9%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%
Choice > Dignity and privacy		0.0%	7	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	5	0.3%
Choice > Other		0.0%	7	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Choice > Service not meeting religious, cultural, faith, social needs		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	3	0.2%

Table C: Number and % of complaint investigations that were upheld, by area of complaint and type of care service 2025/26 (cont.)

	Adoption service		Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse Agency		School care accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) – other than care at home		Combined housing support/care at home service	
Detailed area of complaint	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Protection of people > Adults		0.0%	28	1.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	7	0.4%		0.0%	12	0.6%
Protection of people > Children		0.0%	1	0.1%	5	0.3%	11	0.6%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Protection of people > Policies and procedures		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%
Protection of people > Restraint		0.0%	3	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Protection of people > Other		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Environment > Fitness of premises / environment		0.0%	19	1.0%		0.0%	10	0.5%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Environment > Other		0.0%	11	0.6%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Environment > Inadequate facilities		0.0%	7	0.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Environment > Security		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Property > Loss of/missing		0.0%	22	1.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Property > Care of		0.0%	6	0.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Property > Other		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Food > Other		0.0%	13	0.7%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	3	0.2%
Food > Choice		0.0%	2	0.1%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%
Food > Quality		0.0%	3	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Food > Availability		0.0%	2	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4	0.2%
Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity		0.0%	17	0.9%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	9	0.5%

Table C: Number and % of complaint investigations that were upheld, by area of complaint and type of care service 2025/26 (cont.)

	Adoption service		Care home service		Childminding		Daycare of children		Fostering service		Housing support service (standalone)		Nurse Agency		School care accommodation service		Support service (standalone) - care at home		Support service (standalone) – other than care at home		Combined housing support/care at home service	
Detailed area of complaint	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health		0.0%	9	0.5%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%	2	0.1%
Access > Other		0.0%	5	0.3%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		0.0%
User participation > Other		0.0%	4	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%
Conditions of registration > Exceeding capacity		0.0%		0.0%	3	0.2%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
Conditions of registration > Other		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%		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%	1	0.1%

Table D: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaints received about care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26

Note: Local authority areas where fewer than five complaints were received have been suppressed to maintain anonymity. Where there were no complaints the entry will be blank.

	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
Local Authority area	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places
Aberdeen City	66	1344	49.1	81	1336	60.6	79	1316	60.0	68	1400	48.6	70	1372	51.0
Aberdeenshire	75	1748	42.9	68	1683	40.4	92	1672	55.0	119	1660	71.7	100	1611	62.1
Angus	80	1070	74.8	98	1068	91.8	86	1067	80.6	98	1051	93.2	89	1049	84.8
Argyll & Bute	54	502	107.6	32	503	63.6	29	564	51.4	23	523	44.0	43	515	83.5
City of Edinburgh	169	3171	53.3	149	3079	48.4	142	3042	46.7	133	3005	44.3	84	3000	28.0
Clackmannanshire	12	282	42.6	21	282	74.5	21	282	74.5	8	282	28.4	20	282	70.9
Dumfries & Galloway	73	1050	69.5	108	1050	102.9	96	1005	95.5	92	1038	88.6	111	1040	106.7
Dundee City	54	1046	51.6	68	1028	66.1	48	1005	47.8	85	1005	84.6	60	948	63.3
East Ayrshire	65	887	73.3	67	880	76.1	52	880	59.1	48	851	56.4	52	851	61.1
East Dunbartonshire	82	895	91.6	90	840	107.1	66	840	78.6	101	920	109.8	47	920	51.1
East Lothian	41	671	61.1	31	724	42.8	22	711	30.9	43	781	55.1	81	761	106.4
East Renfrewshire	46	735	62.6	37	769	48.1	44	603	73.0	41	603	68.0	37	670	55.2
Falkirk	52	953	54.6	58	962	60.3	82	962	85.2	65	962	67.6	100	957	104.5
Fife	228	2990	76.3	162	2950	54.9	259	2950	87.8	219	2945	74.4	190	2980	63.8
Glasgow City	254	4178	60.8	270	4150	65.1	236	4123	57.2	211	4016	52.5	234	3935	59.5
Highland	92	1782	51.6	97	1774	54.7	91	1858	49.0	93	1777	52.3	82	1670	49.1
Inverclyde	38	735	51.7	44	688	64.0	45	688	65.4	45	688	65.4	28	683	41.0
Midlothian	39	555	70.3	41	523	78.4	46	523	88.0	43	523	82.2	38	523	72.7
Moray	48	584	82.2	36	584	61.6	21	584	36.0	35	588	59.5	36	587	61.3
Na h-Eileanan Siar	9	214	42.1	5	214	23.4	<5	214	-	11	214	51.4	<5	210	-
North Ayrshire	61	1002	60.9	52	942	55.2	69	954	72.3	64	939	68.2	67	894	74.9

Table D: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaints received about care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

Local Authority area	2024/25			2025/26		
	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places
Aberdeen City	54	1371	39.4	82	1372	59.8
Aberdeenshire	61	1556	39.2	65	1550	41.9
Angus	88	1018	86.4	99	1018	97.2
Argyll & Bute	30	515	58.3	30	515	58.3
City of Edinburgh	74	2856	25.9	87	2769	31.4
Clackmannanshire	19	280	67.9	10	240	41.7
Dumfries & Galloway	73	1041	70.1	117	1035	113.0
Dundee City	59	948	62.2	46	948	48.5
East Ayrshire	54	850	63.5	67	847	79.1
East Dunbartonshire	28	923	30.3	34	923	36.8
East Lothian	35	782	44.8	45	782	57.5
East Renfrewshire	28	670	41.8	31	734	42.2
Falkirk	154	955	161.3	70	952	73.5
Fife	170	3069	55.4	180	3023	59.5
Glasgow City	245	4024	60.9	268	4029	66.5
Highland	105	1644	63.9	76	1701	44.7
Inverclyde	24	683	35.1	39	647	60.3
Midlothian	12	512	23.4	17	566	30.0
Moray	25	586	42.7	11	584	18.8
Na h-Eileanan Siar	<5	210	-		210	0.0
North Ayrshire	66	906	72.8	88	904	97.3

Table D: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaints received about care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
Local Authority area	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places
North Lanarkshire	95	1718	55.3	98	1719	57.0	120	1719	69.8	110	1697	64.8	80	1656	48.3
Orkney Islands	<5	110	-		109	0.0	<5	109	-	<5	109	-	<5	109	-
Perth & Kinross	73	1330	54.9	70	1329	52.7	96	1375	69.8	92	1339	68.7	89	1339	66.5
Renfrewshire	82	1387	59.1	98	1407	69.7	83	1462	56.8	106	1462	72.5	117	1422	82.3
Scottish Borders	63	739	85.3	68	746	91.2	54	747	72.3	60	748	80.2	64	746	85.8
Shetland Islands	<5	149	-		149	0.0	<5	149	-	<5	149	-	<5	149	-
South Ayrshire	108	1111	97.2	77	1107	69.6	65	1155	56.3	79	1204	65.6	76	1201	63.3
South Lanarkshire	165	2525	65.3	164	2521	65.1	184	2483	74.1	162	2482	65.3	130	2390	54.4
Stirling	39	546	71.4	35	546	64.1	24	625	38.4	15	607	24.7	28	672	41.7
West Dunbartonshire	31	647	47.9	40	665	60.2	27	665	40.6	48	648	74.1	43	648	66.4
West Lothian	55	861	63.9	55	861	63.9	86	920	93.5	89	920	96.7	43	920	46.7

Table D: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaints received about care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

Local Authority area	2024/25			2025/26		
	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places	No. of complaint received	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint received per 1000 places
North Lanarkshire	72	1655	43.5	82	1637	50.1
Orkney Islands	<5	109	-	<5	109	-
Perth & Kinross	71	1396	50.9	75	1534	48.9
Renfrewshire	125	1422	87.9	50	1380	36.2
Scottish Borders	34	746	45.6	44	730	60.3
Shetland Islands		149	0.0	<5	149	-
South Ayrshire	55	1197	45.9	61	1148	53.1
South Lanarkshire	104	2306	45.1	117	2295	51.0
Stirling	24	674	35.6	34	674	50.4
West Dunbartonshire	43	622	69.1	31	622	49.8
West Lothian	31	956	32.4	36	951	37.9

Table E: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaint investigations completed by the Care Inspectorate for care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26

Note: Local authority areas where fewer than five complaint investigations have been completed have been suppressed to maintain anonymity. Where there were no complaints the entry will be blank.

	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
Local Authority area	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places
Aberdeen City	17	1344	12.6	8	1336	6.0	11	1316	8.4	17	1400	12.1	13	1372	9.5
Aberdeenshire	8	1748	4.6	<5	1683	-	6	1672	3.6	12	1660	7.2	22	1611	13.7
Angus	19	1070	17.8	7	1068	6.6	20	1067	18.7	16	1051	15.2	18	1049	17.2
Argyll & Bute	8	502	15.9	<5	503	2.0	5	564	8.9	<5	523	-	<5	515	-
City of Edinburgh	39	3171	12.3	10	3079	3.2	16	3042	5.3	27	3005	9.0	22	3000	7.3
Clackmannanshire	<5	282	-		282	0.0	<5	282	-	<5	282	-	<5	282	-
Dumfries & Galloway	17	1050	16.2	<5	1050	-	11	1005	10.9	6	1038	5.8	9	1040	8.7
Dundee City	10	1046	9.6	9	1028	8.8	12	1005	11.9	17	1005	16.9	19	948	20.0
East Ayrshire	10	887	11.3	<5	880	-	<5	880	-	9	851	10.6	10	851	11.8
East Dunbartonshire	16	895	17.9	<5	840	-	9	840	10.7	9	920	9.8	9	920	9.8
East Lothian	5	671	7.5	<5	724	-	5	711	7.0	6	781	7.7	15	761	19.7
East Renfrewshire	9	735	12.2	<5	769	-	<5	603	-	<5	603	-	<5	670	-
Falkirk	6	953	6.3	<5	962	-	11	962	11.4	12	962	12.5	15	957	15.7
Fife	59	2990	19.7	13	2950	4.4	26	2950	8.8	50	2945	17.0	42	2980	14.1
Glasgow City	38	4178	9.1	23	4150	5.5	30	4123	7.3	36	4016	9.0	35	3935	8.9
Highland	18	1782	10.1	7	1774	3.9	8	1858	4.3	11	1777	6.2	<5	1670	-
Inverclyde	13	735	17.7	<5	688	-	5	688	7.3	6	688	8.7	<5	683	-
Midlothian	10	555	18.0	7	523	13.4	8	523	15.3	7	523	13.4	7	523	13.4
Moray	13	584	22.3	<5	584	-	<5	584	-	5	588	8.5	7	587	11.9
Na h-Eileanan Siar	<5	214	-	<5	214	-	<5	214	-	<5	214	-		210	0.0

Table E: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaint investigations completed by the Care Inspectorate for care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

Local Authority area	2024/25			2025/26		
	No. of complaint investigations complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investigations complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investigations complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investigations complete per 1000 places
Aberdeen City	12	1371	8.8	15	1372	10.9
Aberdeenshire	11	1556	7.1	5	1550	3.2
Angus	19	1018	18.7	12	1018	11.8
Argyll & Bute	<5	515	7.8	<5	515	-
City of Edinburgh	19	2856	6.7	19	2769	6.9
Clackmannanshire	<5	280	-		240	0.0
Dumfries & Galloway	12	1041	11.5	15	1035	14.5
Dundee City	19	948	20.0	12	948	12.7
East Ayrshire	7	850	8.2	14	847	16.5
East Dunbartonshire	7	923	7.6	7	923	7.6
East Lothian	9	782	11.5	11	782	14.1
East Renfrewshire	6	670	9.0	6	734	8.2
Falkirk	22	955	23.0	5	952	5.3
Fife	44	3069	14.3	39	3023	12.9
Glasgow City	37	4024	9.2	35	4029	8.7
Highland	23	1644	14.0	16	1701	9.4
Inverclyde	7	683	10.2	<5	647	-
Midlothian	<5	512	-	5	566	8.8
Moray	<5	586	-	6	584	10.3
Na h-Eileanan Siar		210	0.0		210	0.0

Table E: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaint investigations completed by the Care Inspectorate for care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

	2019/20			2020/21			2021/22			2022/23			2023/24		
Local Authority area	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investgate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investgate complete per 1000 places
North Ayrshire	10	1002	10.0		942	0.0	11	954	11.5	14	939	14.9	8	894	8.9
North Lanarkshire	11	1718	6.4	11	1719	6.4	16	1719	9.3	20	1697	11.8	18	1656	10.9
Orkney Islands		110	0.0	<5	109	-		109	0.0		109	0.0		109	0.0
Perth & Kinross	12	1330	9.0	7	1329	5.3	14	1375	10.2	11	1339	8.2	28	1339	20.9
Renfrewshire	6	1387	4.3	7	1407	5.0	9	1462	6.2	11	1462	7.5	15	1422	10.5
Scottish Borders	10	739	13.5	5	746	6.7	<5	747	-	6	748	8.0	10	746	13.4
Shetland Islands		149	0.0		149	0.0		149	0.0		149	0.0	<5	149	-
South Ayrshire	27	1111	24.3	<5	1107	-	8	1155	6.9	9	1204	7.5	18	1201	15.0
South Lanarkshire	30	2525	11.9	7	2521	2.8	36	2483	14.5	26	2482	10.5	27	2390	11.3
Stirling	9	546	16.5	<5	546	-	<5	625	-	5	607	8.2	5	672	7.4
West Dunbartonshire	6	647	9.3	<5	665	-	<5	665	-	11	648	17.0	7	648	10.8
West Lothian	9	861	10.5	<5	861	-	17	920	18.5	14	920	15.2	9	920	9.8

Table E: Rate (per 1000 registered places in care homes for older people) and number of complaint investigations completed by the Care Inspectorate for care homes for older people, by local authority area. 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

Local Authority area	2024/25			2025/26		
	No. of complaint investigate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investigate complete per 1000 places	No. of complaint investigate complete	No. of registered places available	Rate of complaint investigate complete per 1000 places
North Ayrshire	9	906	9.9	16	904	17.7
North Lanarkshire	21	1655	12.7	19	1637	11.6
Orkney Islands		109	0.0		109	0.0
Perth & Kinross	18	1396	12.9	18	1534	11.7
Renfrewshire	16	1422	11.3	7	1380	5.1
Scottish Borders	7	746	9.4	10	730	13.7
Shetland Islands		149	0.0		149	0.0
South Ayrshire	11	1197	9.2	7	1148	6.1
South Lanarkshire	17	2306	7.4	17	2295	7.4
Stirling	6	674	8.9	<5	674	-
West Dunbartonshire	8	622	12.9	11	622	17.7
West Lothian	7	956	7.3	5	951	5.3

Table F: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld in 2025/26 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	134	13.3%
	Healthcare > Continence care	44	4.4%
	Healthcare > Medication issues	40	4.0%
	Healthcare > Tissue viability	35	3.5%
	Healthcare > Other	32	3.2%
	Healthcare > Nutrition	32	3.2%
	Healthcare > Hydration	28	2.8%
	Healthcare > Oral health	18	1.8%
	Healthcare > Infection control issues	11	1.1%
	Healthcare > Palliative care	8	0.8%
	Healthcare > Clinical governance	4	0.4%
	Healthcare > Mental health care	3	0.3%
Staff	Staff > Levels	51	5.1%
	Staff > Training / qualifications	38	3.8%
	Staff > Other fitness issues	16	1.6%
	Staff > Other	14	1.4%
	Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people	3	0.3%
	Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	1	0.1%
Communication	Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	98	9.7%
	Communication > Other	12	1.2%
	Communication > Information about the service	2	0.2%
Wellbeing	Wellbeing > Other	45	4.5%
	Wellbeing > Social	18	1.8%
	Wellbeing > Emotional	5	0.5%
	Wellbeing > Behaviour	2	0.2%
Record keeping	Record keeping > Personal plans/ agreements	44	4.4%
	Record keeping > Other	12	1.2%
Choice	Choice > Care and treatment	24	2.4%
	Choice > Activities	14	1.4%
	Choice > Other	7	0.7%
	Choice > Dignity and privacy	7	0.7%
	Choice > Service not meeting religious,cultural,faith,social needs	2	0.2%
Policies and procedures	Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	47	4.7%
	Policies and procedures > Other	6	0.6%

Table F: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld in 2025/26 by area of complaint (cont.)

Area of complaint	Detailed area of complaint	No. of upheld complaints	% of upheld complaints
Environment	Environment > Fitness of premises / environment	16	1.6%
	Environment > Other	9	0.9%
	Environment > Inadequate facilities	7	0.7%
	Environment > Security	2	0.2%
Protection of people	Protection of people > Adults	28	2.8%
	Protection of people > Other	2	0.2%
	Protection of people > Policies and procedures	2	0.2%
	Protection of people > Children	1	0.1%
Property	Property > Loss of/missing	21	2.1%
	Property > Care of	6	0.6%
	Property > Other	1	0.1%
Food	Food > Other	13	1.3%
	Food > Quality	3	0.3%
	Food > Availability	2	0.2%
	Food > Choice	2	0.2%
Privacy and dignity	Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	16	1.6%
Access	Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	9	0.9%
	Access > Other	5	0.5%
User participation	User participation > Other	4	0.4%

Table G: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld by detailed area of complaint, 2019/20 to 2025/26

Detailed area of complaint	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Access > Other		2	3	4	4	1	5
Access > To other services e.g. advocacy/health	2		1	9	8	8	9
Choice > Activities	9	7	6	18	23	18	14
Choice > Care and treatment	26	14	23	45	44	28	24
Choice > Dignity and privacy	8	6	9	14	7	11	7
Choice > Other		2	1	8	3	3	7
Choice > Service not meeting religious, cultural, faith or social needs		1		3	1	1	2
Communication > Between staff and service users/relatives/carers	61	55	111	129	129	108	98
Communication > Information about the service		2	3	1	2	3	2
Communication > Language difficulties	1		1	1	1	1	
Communication > Other	9	4	6	5	12	11	12
Conditions of registration > Other				3	1	1	
Environment > Fitness of premises / environment	21	3	16	26	20	32	16
Environment > Inadequate facilities	11	1	3	13	13	20	7
Environment > Other	12	1	6	12	11	10	9
Environment > Security	1			4	6	4	2
Equality issues > Equality issues					1	2	
Financial issues > Financial issues		2	1	1			
Food > Availability	1	1	5	2	5	7	2
Food > Choice	3	1	1	7	7	9	2
Food > Other	4	3	5	15	10	9	13
Food > Quality	5		3	5	8	11	3
Healthcare > Clinical governance	2	3	4	4	4	6	4
Healthcare > Continence care	23	10	17	33	52	43	44
Healthcare > Hydration	15	9	20	36	37	33	28
Healthcare > Inadequate healthcare or healthcare treatment	76	35	104	185	214	163	134
Healthcare > Infection control issues	6	7	17	14	14	10	11
Healthcare > Medication issues	35	13	25	55	73	59	40
Healthcare > Mental health care	4		2	1	7	4	3
Healthcare > Nutrition	20	18	26	43	54	40	32
Healthcare > Oral health	4	7	9	12	11	15	18
Healthcare > Other	25	20	30	47	45	45	32
Healthcare > Palliative care	3	3	7	12	17	13	8
Healthcare > Tissue viability	18	10	22	37	47	26	35
Policies and procedures > Complaints procedure	19	14	12	38	41	52	47
Policies and procedures > Other	9	4	15	10	19	17	6
Privacy and dignity > Privacy and dignity	14	8	24	31	20	32	16

Table G: Care homes for older people, complaints upheld by detailed area of complaint, 2019/20 to 2025/26 (cont.)

Detailed area of complaint	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Property > Care of	7	3	15	15	7	10	6
Property > Loss of/missing		6	28	25	34	14	21
Property > Other		1	4	2	4		1
Protection of people > Adults	23	11	31	54	36	31	28
Protection of people > Children							1
Protection of people > Other	2	1	1	2	3	1	2
Protection of people > Policies and procedures	2	1		2		4	2
Protection of people > Restraint					2	1	
Record keeping > Other	7	5	5	3	11	10	12
Record keeping > Personal plans/ agreements	13	4	9	22	32	24	44
Staff > Levels	52	19	24	42	48	46	51
Staff > Other	7	2	3	9	6	2	14
Staff > Other fitness issues	3	4	4	5	5	7	16
Staff > Recruitment procedures (including disclosure checks)	3	1	1		2	1	1
Staff > Registration with professional bodies	1			1			
Staff > Training / qualifications	13	9	11	34	47	34	38
Staff > Unfit to work with vulnerable people			1				3
User participation > In managing/developing the service		2		1			
User participation > Other	3	2	6	1	5	3	4
Wellbeing > Behaviour	4	1	6	2	3	3	2
Wellbeing > Developmental	1						
Wellbeing > Emotional	4	2	9	13	17	13	5
Wellbeing > Other	58	28	51	51	62	51	45
Wellbeing > Social	6	1	6	9	15	23	18
Wellbeing > Visiting			17	5	3	10	

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