



# Abertay University

## ANNUAL REPORT TO COURT ON THE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE FOR SESSION 2019/2020

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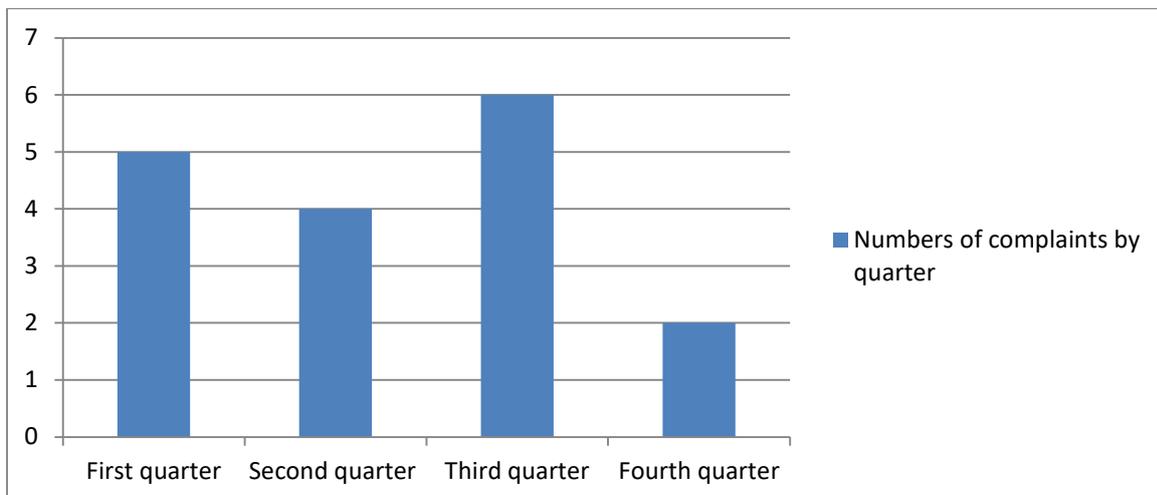
### Introduction

The Ombudsman requires Scottish Universities to report on a variety of Key Performance Indicators, which have been considered in detail by the Scottish Universities' Complaints Forum and also by the Universities' Scotland Secretaries' Group.

The University's Complaints Handling Procedure ("CHP") emphasizes the quick resolution of complaints, at the point nearest to wherever they arise within the University. This is in preference to lengthy investigations. However, some complaints may either commence at the Investigation stage (if complex, time-consuming, or special categories of) or alternatively may proceed to stage 2 investigation after stage 1 frontline resolution (if the complainant is still dissatisfied; in effect as an internal appeal). Under the CHP, there is no automatic progression from stage 1 frontline resolution to stage 2 investigation, although this is possible if a complaint is dissatisfied after completion of stage 1 frontline resolution.

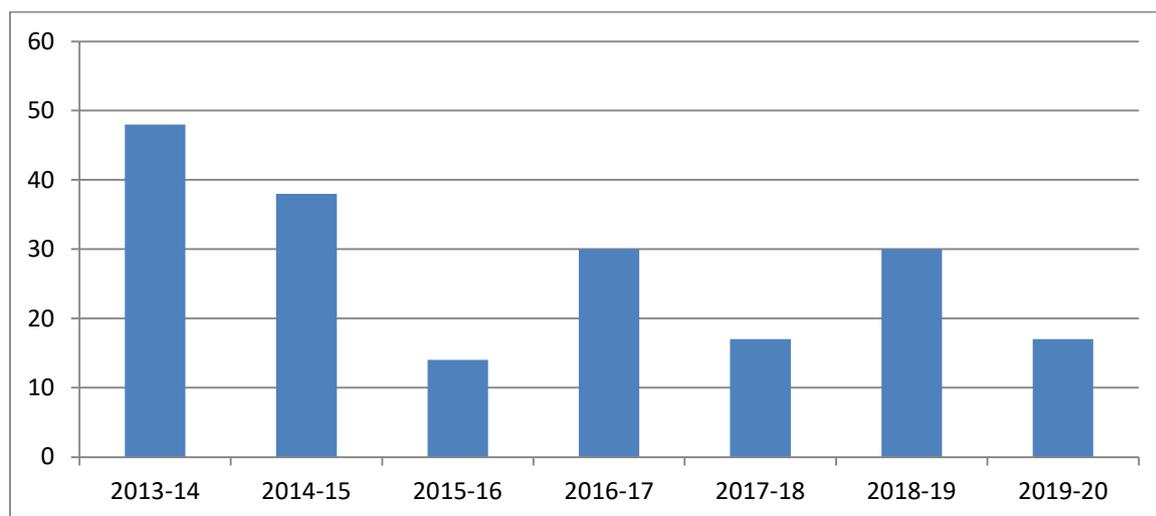
Note: in this report where figures less than 5 occur, neither numbers, nor (where the numbers involved are less than 10) percentages, have been included as a matter of policy, where there is a risk of identification. This applies where (i) arithmetic distortions in percentages/trends due to low numbers may occur and/or (ii) where there is a risk of identification of any individuals' personal data (and/ or special categories of personal data) under data protection legislation.

### Number of complaints recorded in the 2019/2020 year by quarter (totals received):



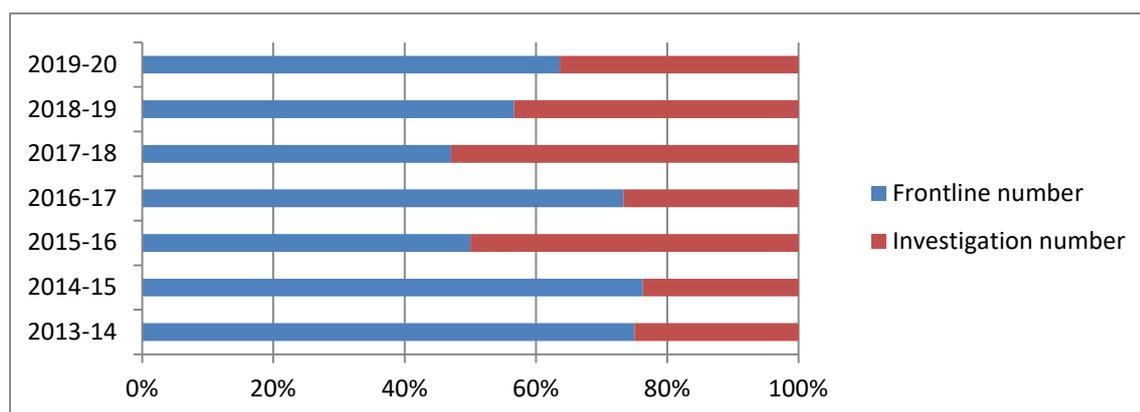
Note: first quarter refers to September – November; second quarter refers to December – February; third quarter refers to March – May, and Fourth quarter refers to June – August.

Total numbers of complaints recorded by academic year:



Note: Prior to Autumn 2013, a different complaints procedure was in operation: data prior to Autumn 2013 are not comparable, and are not shown for that reason.

Frontline or investigation procedure: proportion of total complaints by year (%):

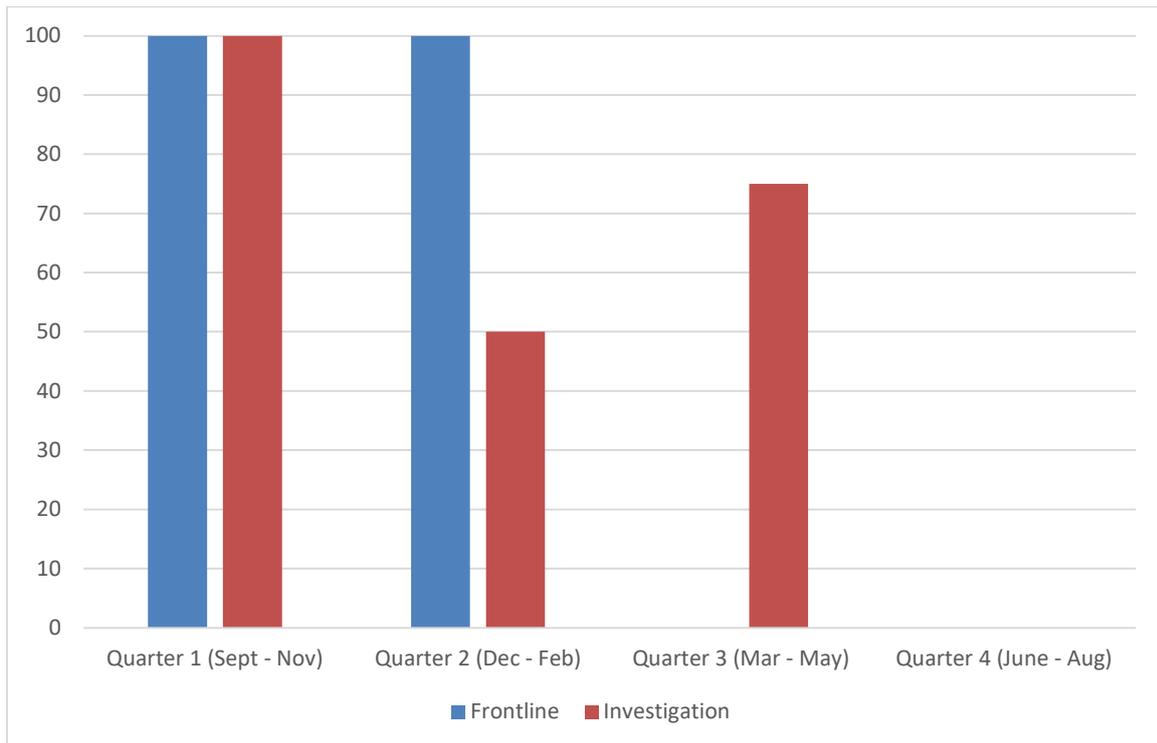


Notes: Where low numbers are concerned, percentage information can be misleading.

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's view is that Universities should address as many complaints as possible at stage 1 frontline resolution (this is the reason why the above percentages are provided). Frontline resolution is therefore performed wherever possible; this involves the complaint being addressed at the point in the University nearest to where it arose.

However, some complaints are too complex and/or lengthy to be considered as frontline resolution ones within the Ombudsman's strict 5 working day target time-limit for this category of complaint. Any breach of this deadline requires to be authorised, recorded and reported on, even if the subject matter of the complaint is too lengthy and/or complex to be completed within that time-limit. However, such cases may be dealt with initially as complaint investigations (stage 2), for which a 20 working day target time-limit applies. The University's CHP envisages that a complaint may commence as an investigation, i.e. at stage 2, where appropriate.

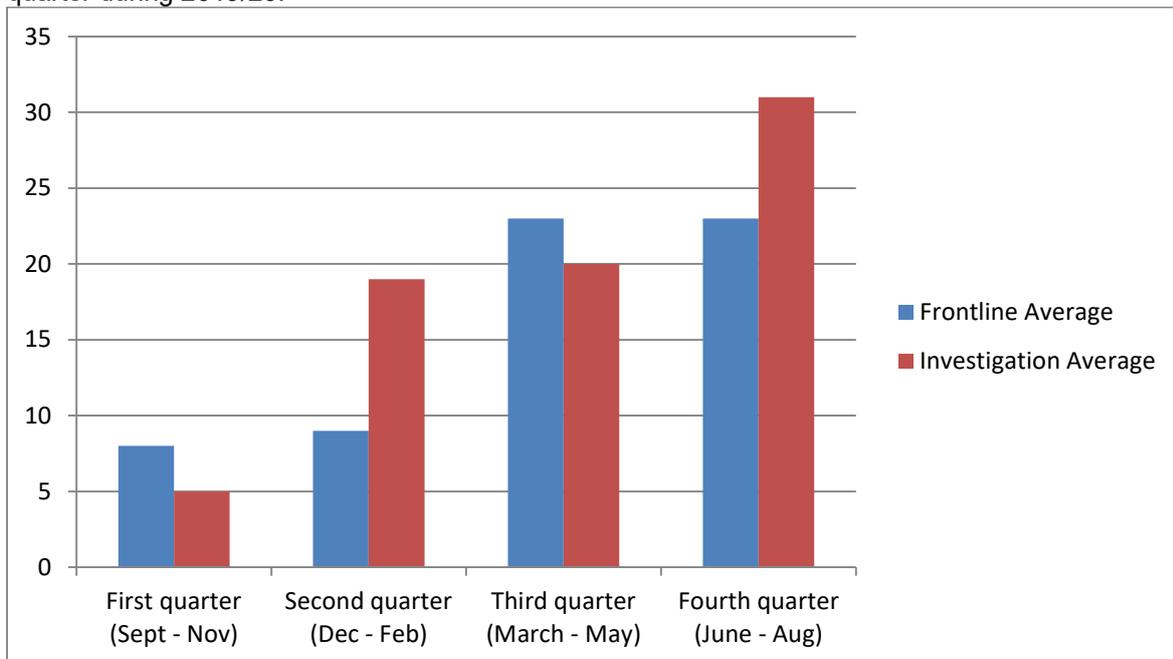
Percentage of all frontline resolution and of all investigations complaints closed within target time-limit (5 and 20 working days respectively): by complaint quarter, for 2019/20 year.



3 there were 2 frontline complaints, both closed after the time limit. In Q4 there was 1 frontline complaint and 1 investigation, both closed after the time limit. Complaints arising from members of staff are dealt with under the Grievance Procedure so this data would not be recorded here.

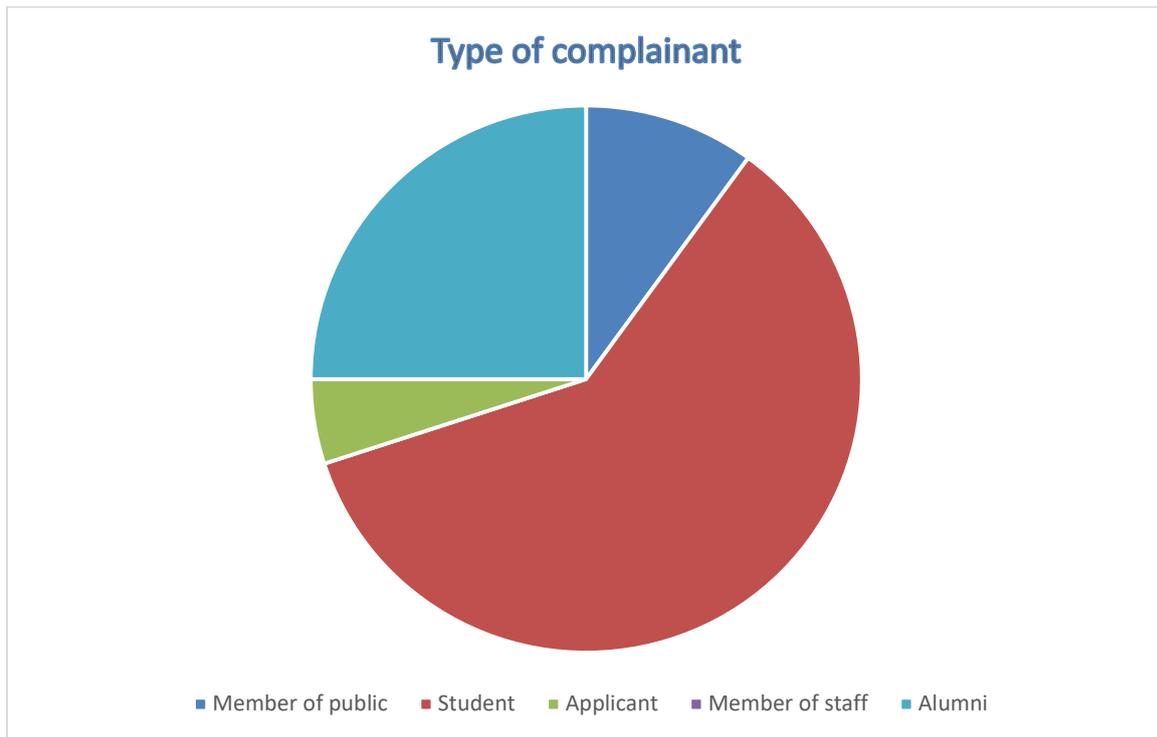
Time taken to resolve complaints: average duration (numbers)

The chart below shows the average length of time to deal with complaints in working days by complaint quarter during 2019/20.



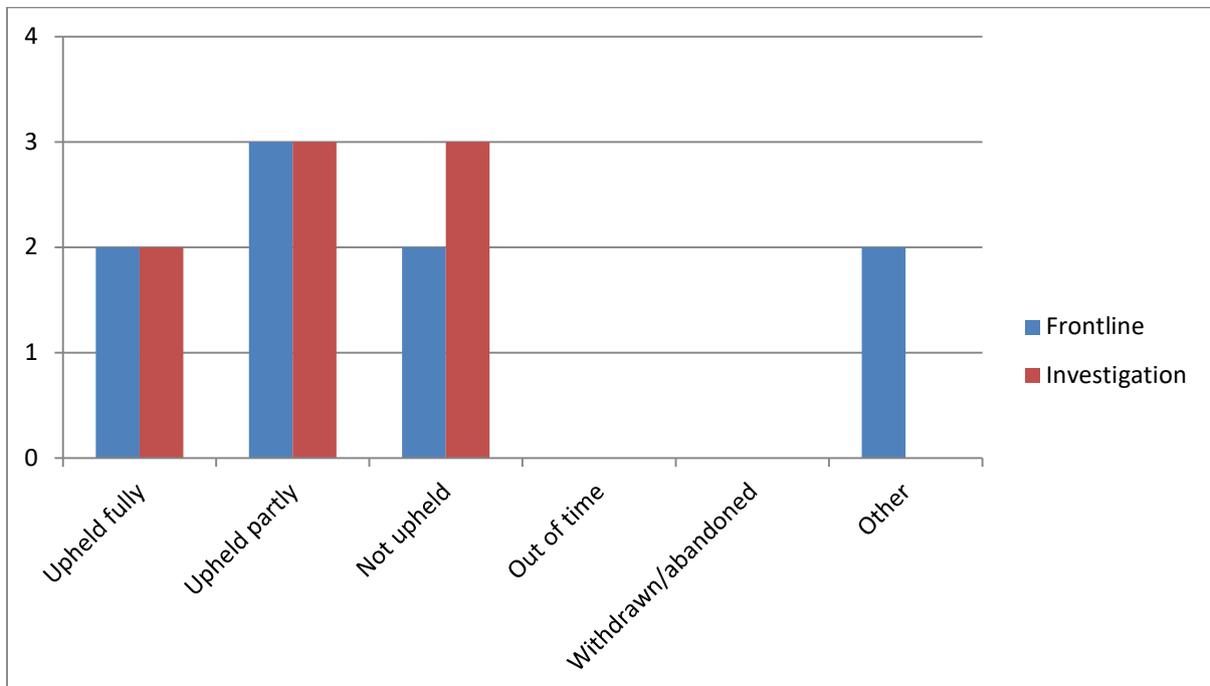
The targets for dealing with complaints set down by the SPSO are 5 working days for Frontline Resolution and 20 working days for Complaint Investigation cases, which by nature are more complex.

Type of complainant for 2019/20year:



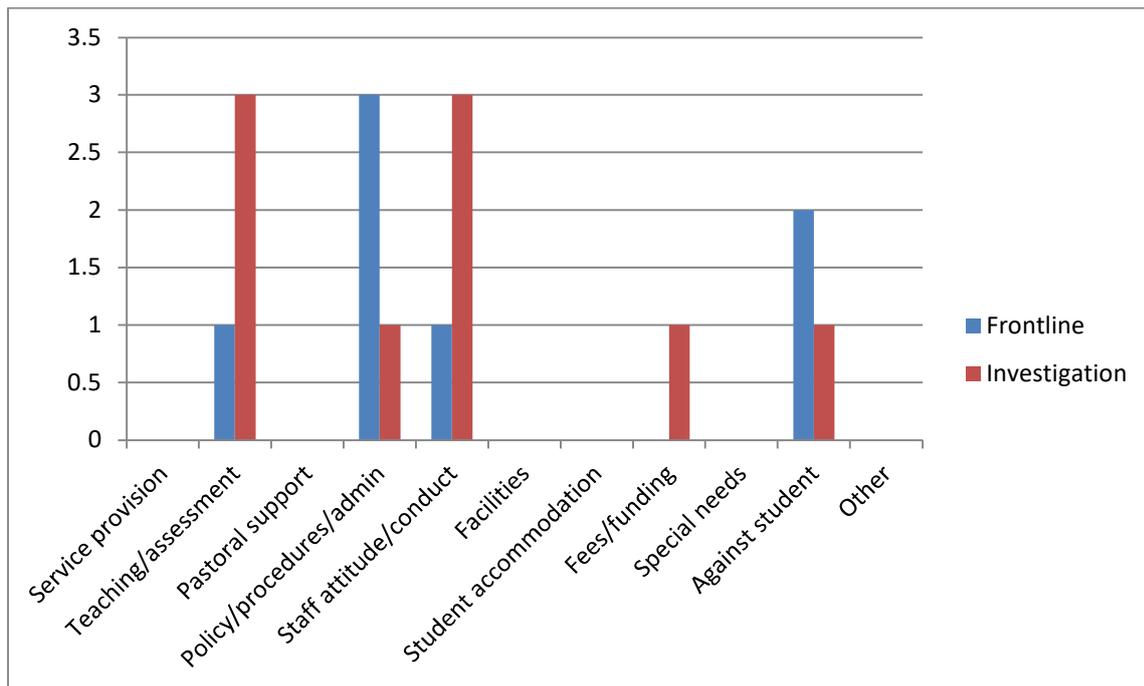
Notes: Where low numbers are concerned, percentage information is misleading.

Outcomes of complaints for current year to date (cumulative; numbers):

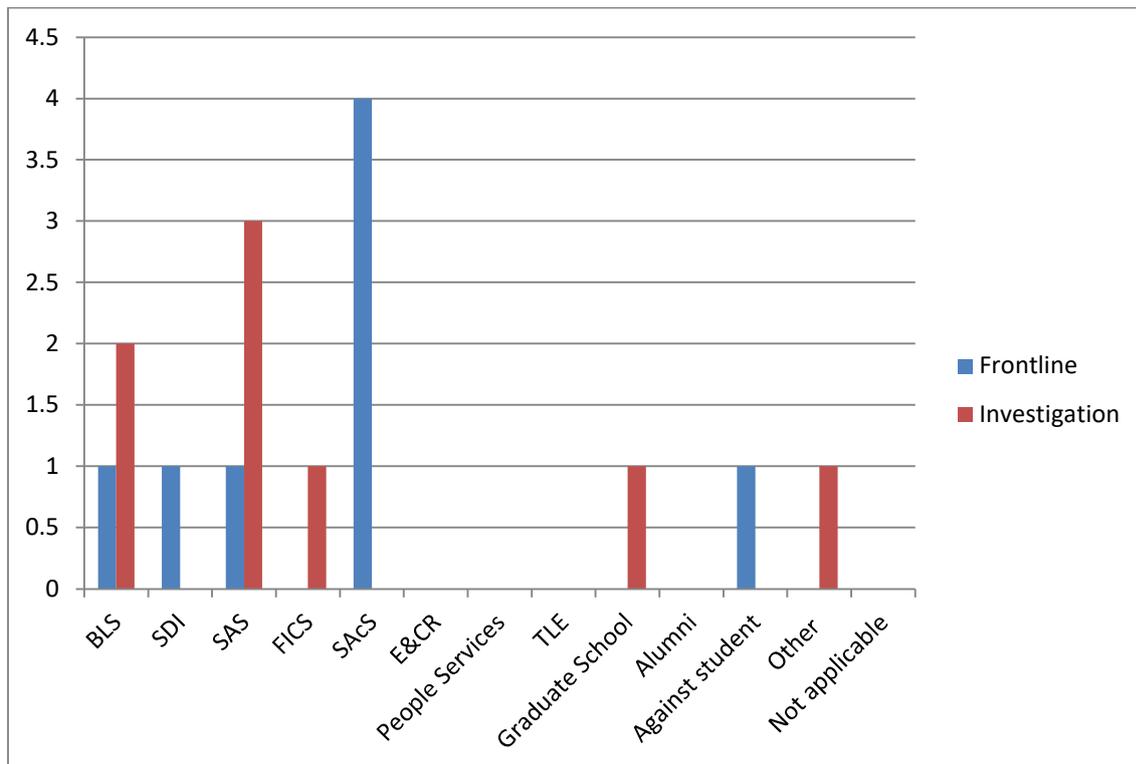


Notes: 'Other' includes referral to another procedure (e.g. disciplinary' grievance, etc) or to another organisation (if applicable), or other resolution (e.g. mediation).

Category of the complaints made in the 2019/20 year by frontline or investigation (numbers).



Schools/Services against which complaints were made in the 2019/20 year (numbers).



Notes: Complaints may be made against more than one category (e.g. "other"), so the numbers in the table may not tally with the total numbers of complaints.