

Tribiwnlys Anghenion
Addysgol Arbennig Cymru



Special Educational
Needs Tribunal for Wales

Annual Report 2012 –2013

SENTW is committed to providing an equal service in the Welsh and English languages. We will also do our best to provide services in other languages where there is a need.

Copies of this publication are available in Welsh and English languages. Copies can be downloaded from the SENTW website or obtained by contacting the secretariat.

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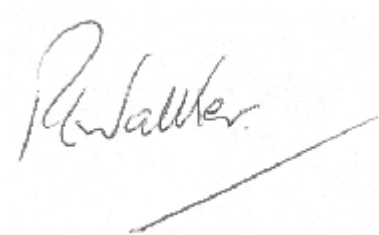
To: Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Education & Skills
National Assembly for Wales

December 2013

I am pleased to submit my tenth Annual Report as President of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales. The report details the Tribunal's activities for the year 1st September 2012 to 31st August 2013.

Although we only had one claim brought by a child during the year, I strongly believe that this pilot should not be judged by the number of appeals or claims alone. The work done in the two Local Authorities involved in the pilot and indeed by our Secretariat has been excellent and has meant that there has been an increased awareness and focus on the importance of the views of the child in the whole process.

I reported last year on the fact that we had started to use case management. I am pleased to report that this has gone well and that this has been done in the majority of cases by way of telephone conference, which has been far more convenient and cost effective for all parties. The fact that most of our appeals and claims are now very complicated means that case management is a necessary tool for the Tribunal to operate efficiently. In order to strive for further improvements and efficiency for our users, we are also piloting paper hearings on any suitable appeals and claims. I will report further on the progress of this in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Walker', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right below the name.

Rhiannon Ellis Walker OBE
President, SENTW

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Section 1 – President’s Foreword

This is my tenth annual report as President of the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW). The report covers the period September 2012 – August 2013. I hope you find the report informative and user friendly. Questions and comments are most welcome and can be made by getting in touch with the Tribunal Secretariat.

SEN Appeals

This year saw the tribunal registering the lowest number of appeals since the tribunal was set up in 2003-2004.

Key statistics:

- we registered 73 appeals which is a 15% decrease from 2011-2012,
- we dealt with a further 29 appeals that were carried over from 2011-2012,
- we discharged a total of 102 appeals during the year which is a 6% decrease from 2011-2012,
- appeals about refusal to assess have decreased by 25%,
- appeals against parts 2, 3 and 4 of the statement have increased by 45%; and
- appeals against parts 2 and 3 have decreased by 33%

We are again this year, finding that the majority of the appeals which go to a full hearing are those of a complex nature and do not envisage this changing in the near future. The figures also show that a large amount of appeals relate to refusal to assess and that a large percentage of these are conceded by the Local Authority. This is a continuing trend at the moment and is something which I discussed with the Minister of Education in my annual meeting in January 2013. The Minister expressed an interest as to the reasons why these appeals were conceded by the Local Authorities and we as a Tribunal are now recording general reasons as to why appeals are conceded.

Following on from this, we felt that it would be helpful if appeals about Refusal to Assess could be expedited. They would normally take twenty weeks and we felt that this was a long time for the parties to wait for an outcome of an appeal of this nature and was not in the best interests of the child. Consequently, after discussions at our user group meetings we started a pilot with the aim of reducing the time of these appeals to be dealt with from twenty weeks to ten weeks. The full results of this pilot are discussed further in this Report. However, I am pleased to report that the pilot has been very successful and the principle of reducing the time of refusal to assess appeals to ten weeks has now been adopted by the Tribunal.

Of the 102 appeals dealt with during 2012-2013:

- 24 were decided at a hearing which is a 33% increase from 2011-2012,
- 31 were withdrawn by the parent which is a 20% decrease from 2011-2012,
- 27 were conceded by the Local Authority which is a 12 % increase from 2011-2012,
- 1 appeal was struck out as it was outside the jurisdiction of the tribunal; and
- 19 appeals were carried over to 2013-2014 which is a 34% decrease from 2011-2012.

For pupils with special educational needs the latest figures from the Welsh Government National Statistics for Wales¹ show:

- a decrease in the total number of pupils with statements, from 13,591 in 2011-2012 to 13,564 in 2012-2013; and
- a decrease in the number of pupils that were newly assessed as requiring a statement from 1,333 in 2011-2012 to 1,286 in 2012-2013.

Disability Claims

There were 6 claims of disability discrimination registered during the last year and disability claims continue to represent a small fraction of our work. Again, I have noted that in the claims that do proceed, a common feature is an apparent uncertainty by responsible bodies about the duties that rest with them.

10 Year Anniversary

The tribunal celebrated its 10 year anniversary in operation on 1 September 2013.

Key statistics since 2003:

- we have registered 1075 appeals

	Total Number of Appeals 2003 - 2013	Percentage of Appeals
Refusal to Assess	312	29%
Refusal to Statement	142	13%
Refusal to Re-Assess	13	1%
Cease Statement	20	2%
Parts 2 & 3	206	19%
Parts 2, 3 & 4	228	21%
Part 3	76	7%
Part 4	47	4%
Parts 3 & 4	31	3%
Total	1075	100%

¹ Welsh Government, Statistics for Wales, SDR 100/2013 Pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs: January 2013

- we have registered 44 claims
- we have held 327 hearings

	Total Number of Hearings 2003 - 2013	Percentage of Hearings
Upheld	262	84%
Dismissed	59	14%
Struck Out	6	3%
Total	327	100%

- 16 applications have been made to the High Court/Upper Tribunal

Pilot Studies

The tribunal has undertaken 2 pilot studies during 2012-2013.

Refusal to Assess:

A pilot ran from January – August 2013 with the aim of completing refusal to assess appeals within 10 weeks instead of the current 20 week timeframe. This reduction in time does not affect the time parties have to submit evidence but is an administrative reduction of time. Parties are asked for availability for a given week rather than a 2 month period.

Prior to the pilot, the average number of days (working days) to completion was 45. During the pilot, the average number of days (working days) to completion is now 24. The pilot has produced excellent results and I have now asked the administrative changes to be made permanent for refusal to assess appeals.

Reasons for Withdrawals:

37% of appeals were withdrawn during the period 2011-2012. I discussed this issue with the Minister for Education and Skills during our annual meeting in January 2013 and the Minister requested that I looked into general underlying reasons.

I have asked the secretariat to record general information about the reasons for withdrawals.

A total of 16 cases have been withdrawn over this period:

- 14 were withdrawn as agreement was reached with the LA
- 1 was withdrawn as the parents were moving area and did not wish to continue with the appeal
- 1 appeal was withdrawn as the child’s school agreed to compile evidence so an assessment could be requested in the future.

I will continue to record reasons for withdrawals and will highlight this issue in general terms at my next annual meeting with the Minister.

Case Management and Telephone Conferences:

During the year we have started to case manage more complex cases. We believe that this should lead to all information being available to the tribunal panel at the hearing and so hopefully avoid any costly adjournments. Telephone conferences are also being used, which is cost effective for all parties as it means that they do not have to attend a special venue. It can also lead to discussions between the parties and a narrowing of issues of disagreement.

Paper Hearings:

I have thought for some time that some of our cases would be suitable to be dealt with by way of paper hearings. Other Tribunals in different jurisdictions do carry on this practice and I felt that it could have benefits for the parties in that it would mean that they would not need to travel to venues, which can be difficult and expensive for some parents. I was very interested in the paper published this year by Professor Dame Hazel Genn and Professor Cheryl Thomas which was the first empirical study of judicial decision making by the professional judiciary in the United Kingdom using case simulation. Having read this paper, I was convinced that, whilst paper hearings would not be a viable option for complex cases, there was a place for these types of hearing in the Tribunal, provided that they were done carefully and all parties consented to this type of hearing. Before proceeding further, I took the suggestion to our user group meetings to canvass their views and did not meet with opposition to the idea given the above safeguards. Consequently, we have decided to take this matter forward as a pilot for the next twelve months and our application forms have been amended to reflect this change.

I will report on the outcome in the next annual report.

Conceded Appeals:

I am concerned about the high number of conceded appeals and will be looking carefully at the reasons for this over the next year. I will report on the outcome in the next annual report.

Education (Wales) Measure 2009

The Tribunal received 1 claim during 2011-2012 using the new rights for children and young people themselves to bring an appeal or claim. These rights are still only applicable for those living in Wrexham or Carmarthenshire. The hearing was held during 2012-2013 and was upheld. There were no appeals or claims brought by a child this tribunal year.

Although we have not received any appeals or claims from children this year, this could be attributed to many factors, such as the overall reduction of statements issued. However, I do not feel that the success or otherwise of the scheme should be judged by numbers alone. The pilot has put the emphasis on the child, which I believe to be very important. Parties have had to think about what the child wants as we now insist that both LA and parents put the views of the child forward, regardless of who brings the appeal.

I am still concerned that this scheme is not reaching the children who could benefit most from it – namely looked after children. I have tried through the user groups to encourage Local Authorities to contact their Social Services departments regarding this legislation and they have been helpful. I have also offered to come and discuss/explain the legislation to any Social Services Department, but to date this offer has not been taken up. Any assistance that the Welsh Government could give in this respect would be very welcome. The pilot is due to report in November 2013 and we all await the findings of the Report with interest.

Interjurisdictional Meeting

The Tribunal hosted this meeting this year. The Presidents of the Special Educational Needs Tribunals and Additional Learning Needs Tribunal for England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales have been meeting annually for some time now to exchange views and ideas. This has proved very successful and has led to our Tribunal being able to access some of the relevant training events held by the other Tribunals. This is cost effective for a small Tribunal such as ourselves. The experiences of some of the larger Tribunals, has also been helpful for us when considering whether certain changes are helpful or not.

Meeting with the Minister for Education and Skills

I look forward to meeting Huw Lewis, the new Minister for Education and Skills in January 2014. I am happy to take any questions and concerns which Tribunal users may have.

Administrative Justice and Tribunal's Council (AJTC)

The AJTC was finally abolished on 19 August 2013 as part of the changes enacted under the Public Bodies Bill. The Welsh Committee has always been a valuable support to the SENTW. It is anticipated that an Administrative Justice Advisory Committee for Wales will be established by the Welsh Government.

Over the period of this report the Welsh Committee observed a SENTW hearing. I am pleased to report very positive feedback from the Welsh Committee confirming that SENTW's hearings are well managed and conducted to a high standard.

Members and Secretariat

I would like to extend my thanks and best wishes to; Leon Mills, who has been promoted to the position of Business Manager for the Adjudication Panel Wales, to Adrian Evans who has taken over the position of Business Manager for the Agricultural Land Tribunal for Wales and to Ann Owen, who has commenced maternity leave. Although we will not be losing them completely, they will be missed as all have been valuable SENTW team members. On behalf of the members and secretariat, I wish them all well.

A warm welcome is extended to Sarah Smith who replaced Ann as Secretary to the Tribunal in September 2013.

Training and Observation of Performance Scheme (TOPS)

One of the problems of being a small Tribunal is finding an appropriate way of appraising our members’ performance. We have been aware from the recommendations of the report of the Welsh AJTC that this was a matter that we needed to address.

Appraisal under the Judicial College is regarded as an element in the “measurement of effective performance” and some of the objectives of any such scheme would be to:

- maintain public confidence.
- maintain standards and consistence of practice
- ensure individuals continue to demonstrate the appropriate qualities and abilities for effective performance of their role
- identify individual training and development needs
- create opportunities for individuals to raise issues relating to procedure, training and their sitting experience.

Such objectives are very laudable and in a perfect world is what we would all like to achieve. We have given careful thought to creating a scheme that suits the Tribunal. After much thought and consultation, it was decided that as we sat as a team, it would be appropriate for us to be appraised as a team. We are grateful to the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for sharing their appraisal scheme TOPS. TOPS is a training and observation scheme which we believe takes all the good points that are necessary for an appraisal scheme and puts those points into a scheme which is tailor made for our Tribunal. The scheme has been put into operation and to date two panels have been observed.

Finally

Although this year saw the tribunal registering the lowest number of appeals since the tribunal was set up, it has as ever been a busy and challenging year. Appeals have been more complex and the number of presidential decisions has vastly increased.

I am sure that the coming year will again be filled with challenges, especially in these difficult economic times. However, with the continued support and hard work of my excellent secretariat, chairs and members, I am confident that the Tribunal is well placed to meet these challenges. It is with pleasure that I acknowledge all the hard work and commitment of the team and thank them for their support.

Section 2 – About Us

In this section, our:

- Background
- Overview of procedures
- Members of the Tribunal

Background

The Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales (SENTW) hears and decides appeals about children with special educational needs. Appeals are made by parents and are against certain decisions made by the local authority (LA) about a child's education. The Tribunal also hears claims against Welsh Schools and LA's where there has been disability discrimination.

SENTW, its tribunal members and decisions, is independent of Government and LA's and our decisions are legally binding. Funding for the tribunal and its administrative support is provided by the Welsh Government.

From spring 2012, children and young people living in Carmarthenshire and Wrexham, have been able to make their own appeal and claims against LA's and Schools in these areas. The rights are first being tested, once the test has finished we expect that children in all areas of Wales will be able to make their own claim. This is expected to be rolled out by June 2015.

The procedural regulations for the Tribunal are The Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales Regulations 2012.

Overview of Procedures

The Tribunal's overriding objective is to deal with cases fairly and justly. It is the Tribunal's expectation that parents, representatives, LA officers and Responsible Bodies, will help further the overriding objectives by co-operating with each other and the Tribunal for the purpose of progressing the appeal or claim.

At a Hearing the tribunal panel is composed of a legally qualified Chairperson and two Lay Members. Lay Members have been appointed for their general expertise and knowledge.

Tribunal Hearings will normally be held in private and take place near to the applicants. Hearing arrangements take account of any special requirements of those attending, such as; wheelchair access, hearing assistance, interpreter etc.

Members of the Tribunal

The Lord Chancellor is responsible for the appointment and re-appointment of the President and Chairpersons. Education panel Members are appointed by the Welsh Ministers.

President The President has responsibility for the overall judicial administration of the Tribunal.

Education Panel Members Education Panel Members have a wide range of relevant knowledge and experience which they bring to each Hearing. They sit on Special Educational Needs Appeals and on Disability Discrimination Claims.

Secretariat The day-to-day administration is delegated to the Secretariat who deals with all the preliminary paperwork and the processing of applications to the Tribunal. The Secretariat consults the President on any legal points arising during appeals or claims processes and passes on the President's Directions in writing to the parties. The Secretariat is a point of contact for the President, Members and parties and a clerk attends all Hearings in order to ensure that proceedings run smoothly.

Tribunal Members	Secretariat
<p>President</p> <p>Rhiannon Walker</p>	<p>Secretary/Business Manager</p> <p>Sarah Smith</p>
<p>Legal Members</p> <p>Mark Allen Jacqueline Blackmore Gwyn Davies Meleri Tudur</p>	<p>Secretariat</p> <p>Tania Ryland Danielle Cosgrave</p>
<p>Education Panel Members</p> <p>Sandy Boyle Norman Donavon Richard Ellis Owen Gwyn Griffiths Hillary Hayward Catrin Lewis Gareth Roberts Sian Wyn Siencyn Sue Taylor Andrew Wilson</p>	

Training

Full members' training was held in June 2013 and a members' conference held in October 2012. Secretariat training was held in March 2013.

Contacting the Tribunal

To contact the Special Educational Needs Tribunal for Wales:

Tribunal Address: Government Buildings
Spa Road East
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Tribunal Helpline: 01597 829800

Tribunal Fax: 01597 829801

Tribunal E-mail: tribunalenquiries@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Section 3 – Performance and Progress

In this section, our:

- Numbers and statistics
- Reviews and onward appeals
- Achievement against key performance indicators
- Complaints
- Welsh Language

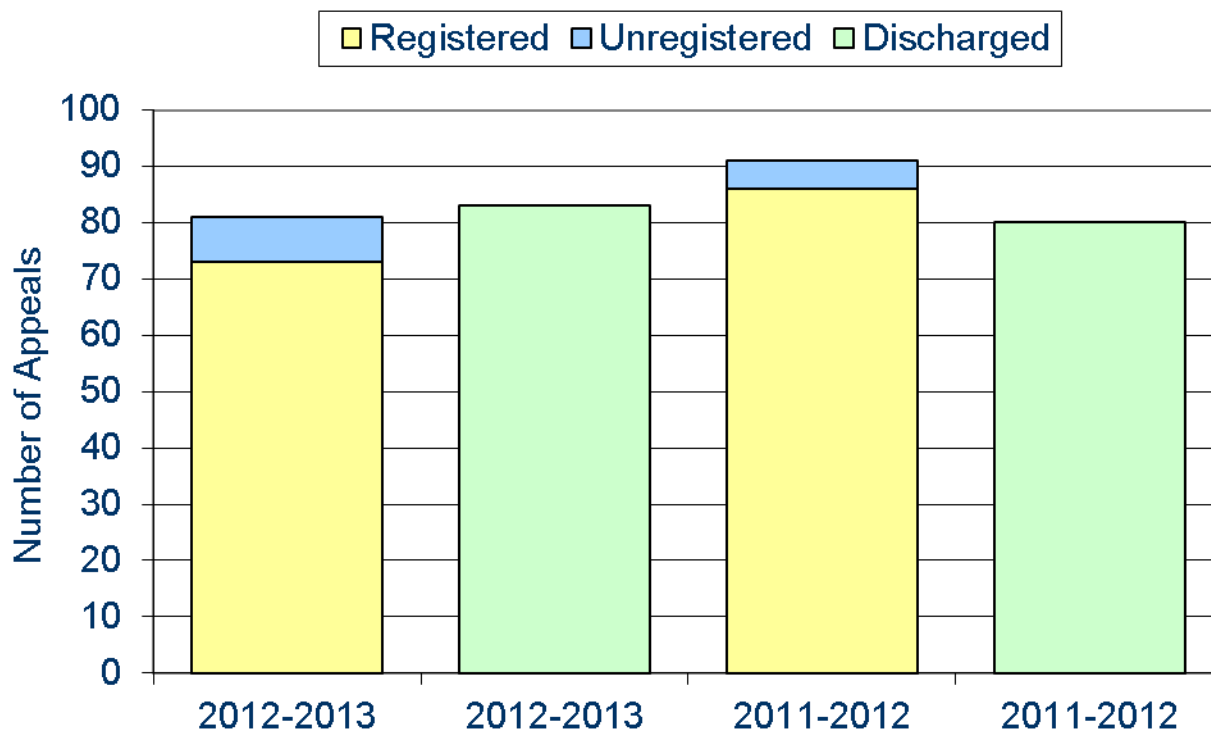
Numbers and Statistics

A Tribunal year runs from September to August.

The following statistics are collated:

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Table 1.1 Appeals received and discharged by year



2012 – 2013	Number of Appeals	2011 – 2012	Number of Appeals
Registered	73	Registered	86
Unregistered	8	Unregistered	5
Discharged	83	Discharged	80

Table 1.2 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by type of appeal

Type of Appeal	2012 – 2013		2011 - 2012	
	Total Appeals 73		Total Appeals 86	
Refusal to Assess	21	29%	28	33%
Refusal to Statement	10	14%	12	14%
Refusal to Re-assess	0	0%	1	1%
Cease Statement	1	1%	0	0%
Contents of Statement Parts 2 & 3	16	22%	24	28%
Contents of Statement Parts 2, 3 & 4	16	22%	11	13%
Contents of Statement Part 3 only	3	4%	6	7%
Contents of Statement Part 4 only	4	5%	2	2%
Contents of Statement Parts 3 & 4	2	3%	2	2%

Table 1.3 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by Local Authority

	2012 – 2013		2011 - 2012	
	Number of Appeals	Percentage of Appeals	Number of Appeals	Percentage of Appeals
Blaenau Gwent	1	1%	1	1%
Bridgend	3	4%	2	2%
Caerphilly	1	1%	2	2%
Cardiff	8	11%	12	14%
Carmarthenshire	2	3%	7	8%
Ceredigion	1	1%	1	1%
Conwy	3	4%	7	8%
Denbighshire	2	3%	2	2%
Flintshire	2	3%	0	0%
Gwynedd	0	0%	3	3%
Merthyr Tydfil	0	0%	2	2%
Monmouthshire	2	3%	6	7%
Neath Port Talbot	7	10%	1	1%
Newport	20	27%	8	9%
Pembrokeshire	1	1%	0	0%
Powys	1	1%	8	9%
Rhondda Cynon Taf	3	4%	7	8%
Swansea	13	18%	9	10%
Torfaen	0	0%	2	2%
Vale of Glamorgan	2	3%	5	6%
Wrexham	0	0%	0	0%
Ynys Mon	1	1%	1	1%
Totals	73	100%	86	100%

Table 1.4 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by Local Authority and type

	Refusal to Assess	Refusal to Statement	Refusal to Re-Assess	Cease to Maintain
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	1	0	0	0
Caerphilly	0	0	0	0
Cardiff	3	3	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	0	0
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0
Conwy	0	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	1	0	1
Flintshire	1	0	0	0
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	2	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	0	3	0	0
Newport	8	2	0	0
Pembrokeshire	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	0	0	0	0
Swansea	5	1	0	0
Torfaen	0	0	0	0
Vale of Glamorgan	1	0	0	0
Wrexham	0	0	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	0	0	0
Totals	21	10	0	1

	Contents of Statement Parts 2 & 3	Contents of Statement Parts 2, 3 & 4	Contents of Statement Part 3	Contents of Statement Parts 3 & 4	Contents of Statement Part 4
Blaenau Gwent	0	1	0	0	0
Bridgend	0	2	0	0	0
Caerphilly	0	0	0	1	0
Cardiff	1	0	1	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	2	0	0	0
Ceredigion	1	0	0	0	0
Conwy	1	2	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	0	0	0
Flintshire	0	1	0	0	0
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	0	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	2	2	0	0	0
Newport	5	3	2	0	0
Pembrokeshire	1	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	0	0	1
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	2	0	0	0
Swansea	3	0	0	1	3
Torfaen	0	0	0	0	0
Vale of Glamorgan	1	0	0	0	0
Wrexham	0	0	0	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	1	0	0	0
Totals	16	16	3	2	4

Table 1.5 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by Local Authority and school population

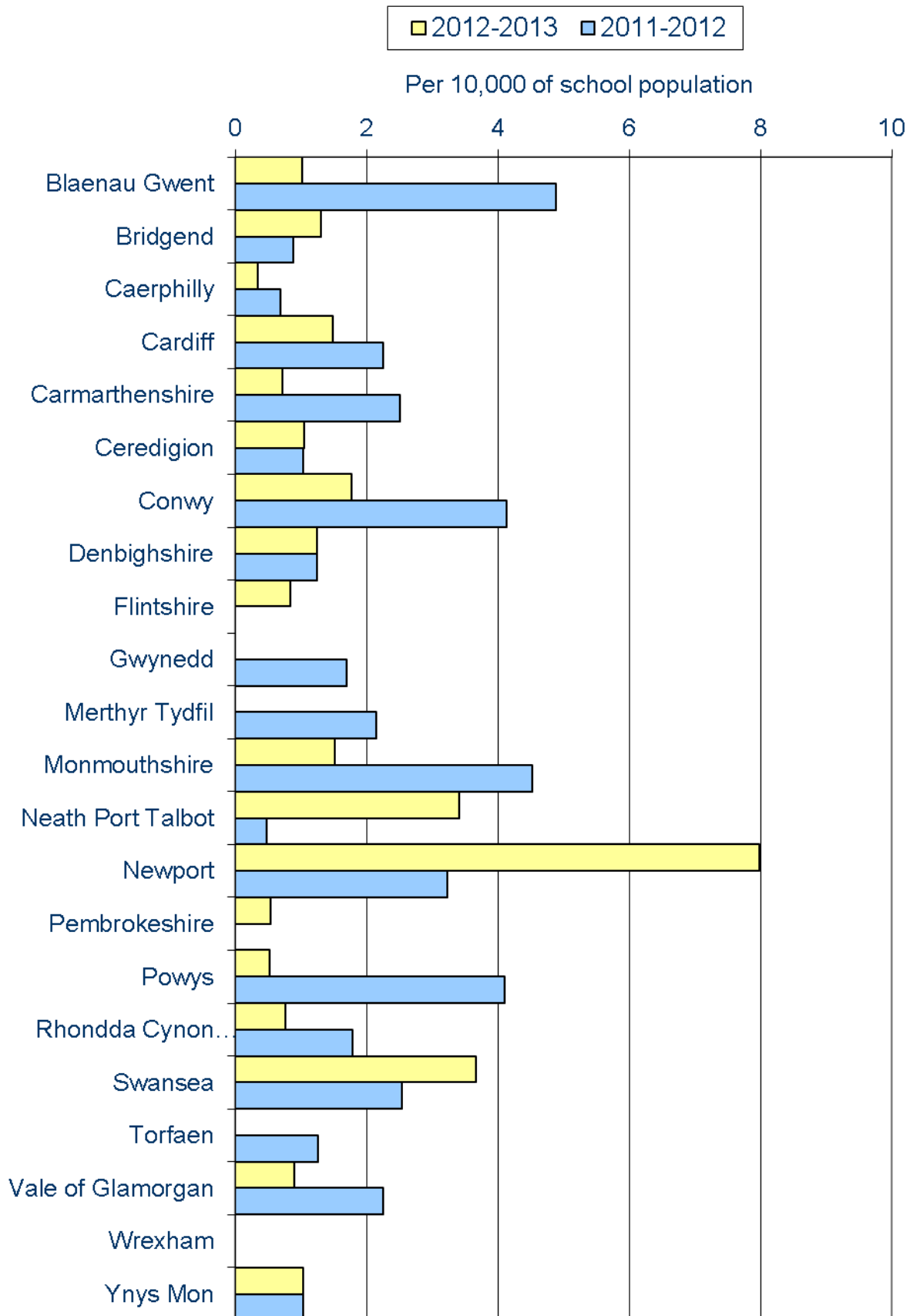


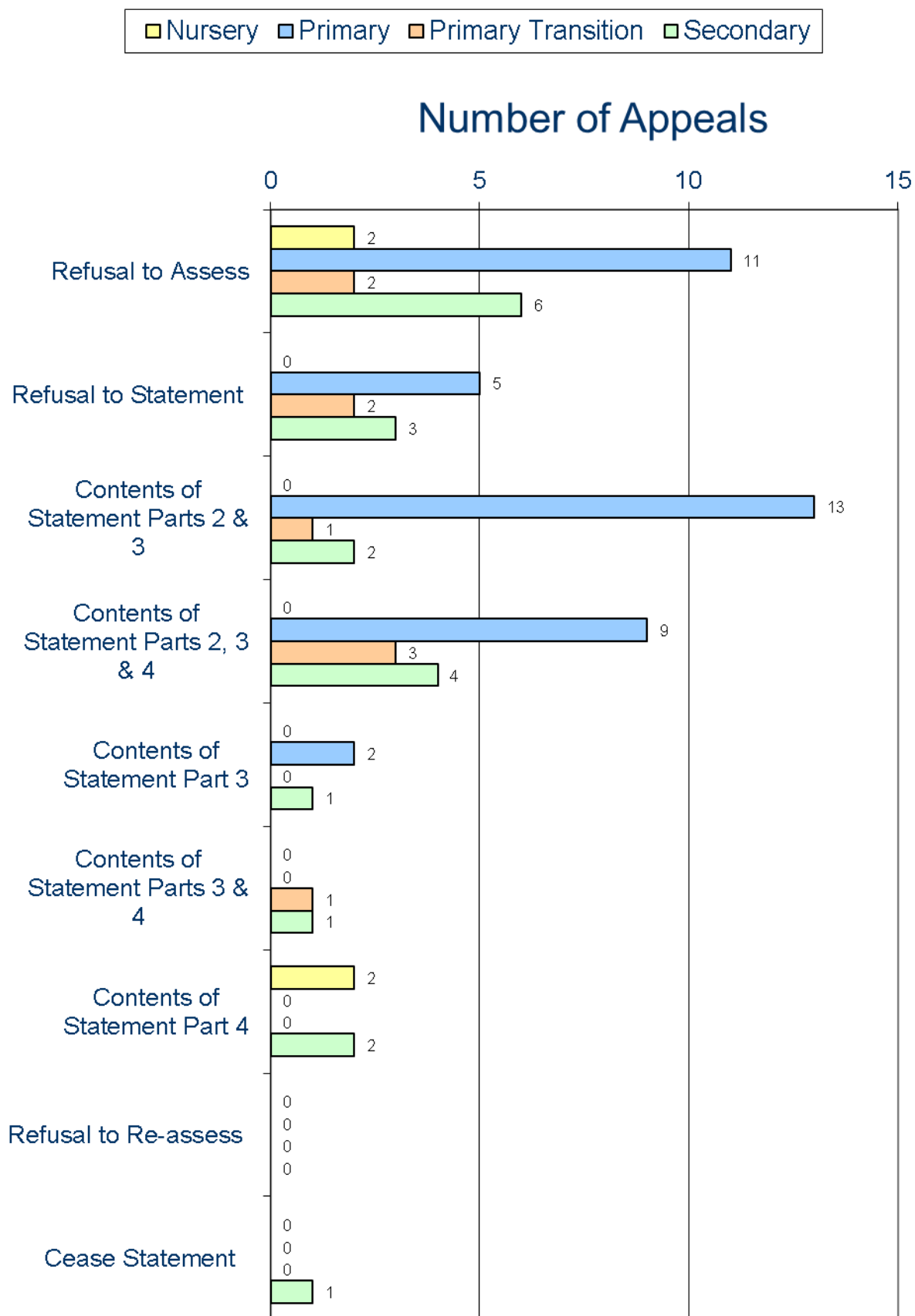
Table 1.6 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by school age and type of appeal

Table 1.7 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by school age and local authority

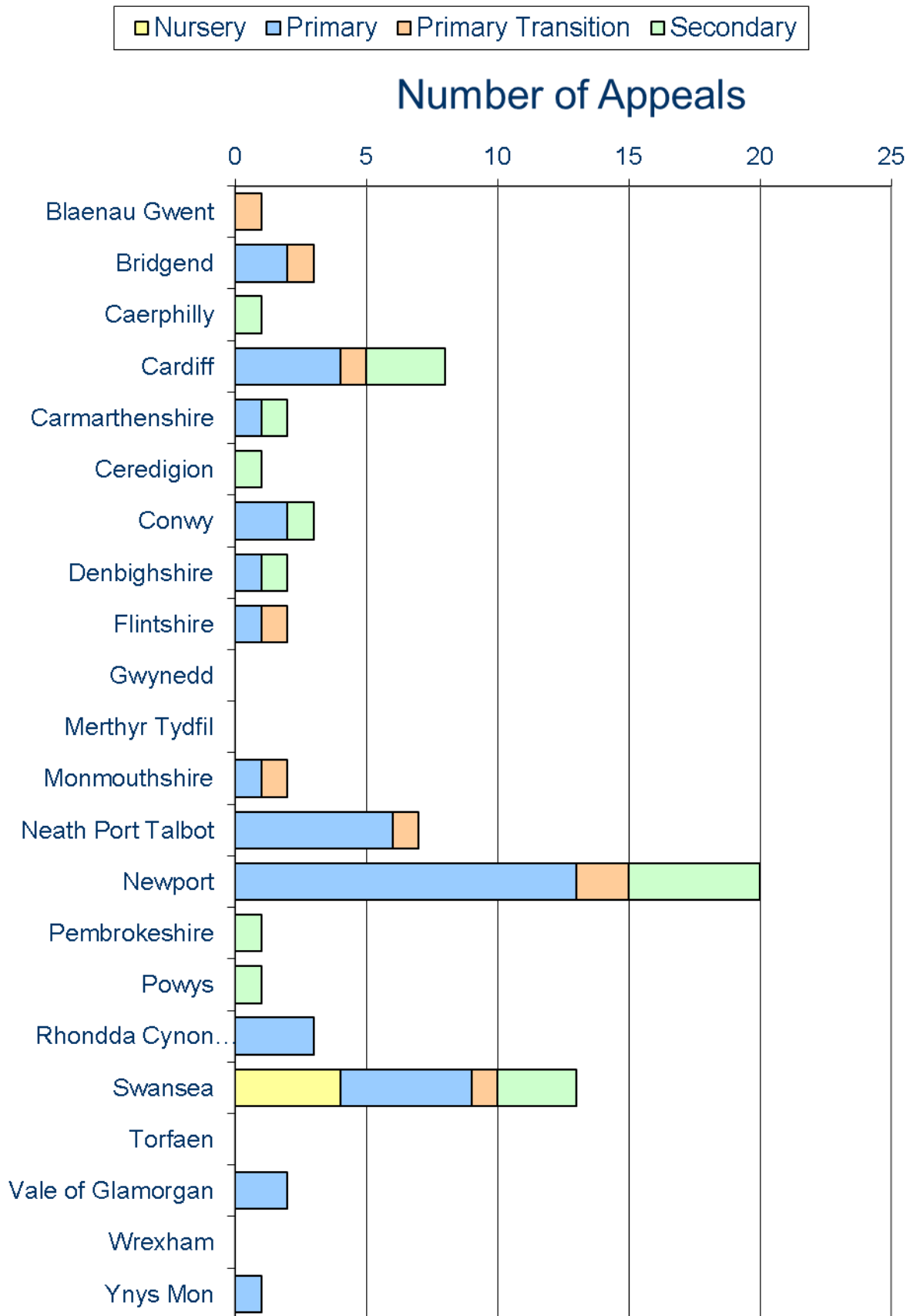
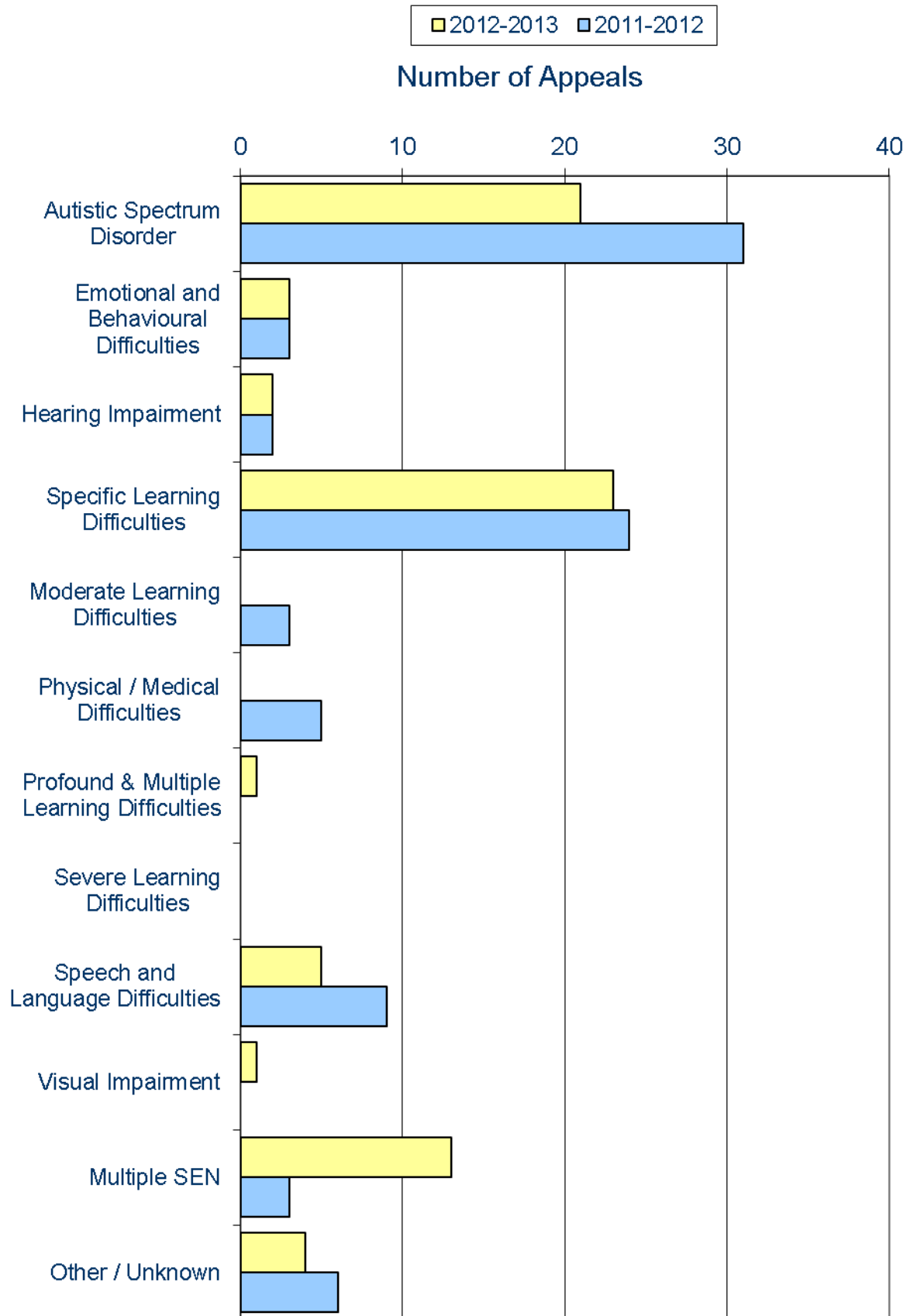


Table 1.8 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by special educational need

	2012-2013	2012-2013	2011-2012	2011-2012
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	21	29%	31	36%
Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	3	4%	3	3%
Hearing Impairment	2	3%	2	2%
Specific Learning Difficulties	23	32%	24	28%
Moderate Learning Difficulties	0	0%	3	3%
Physical / Medical Difficulties	0	0%	5	6%
Profound & Multiple Learning Difficulties	1	1%	0	0%
Severe Learning Difficulties	0	0%	0	0%
Speech and Language Difficulties	5	7%	9	10%
Visual Impairment	1	1%	0	0%
Multiple SEN	13	18%	3	3%
Other / Unknown	4	5%	6	7%
Total Registered	73	100%	86	100%

Table 1.9 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by gender

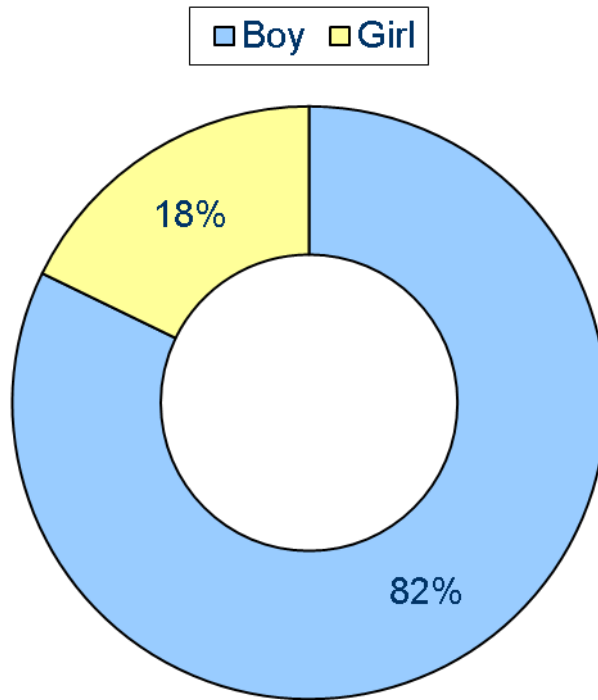


Table 1.10 Appeals received during 2012 – 2013 by ethnicity

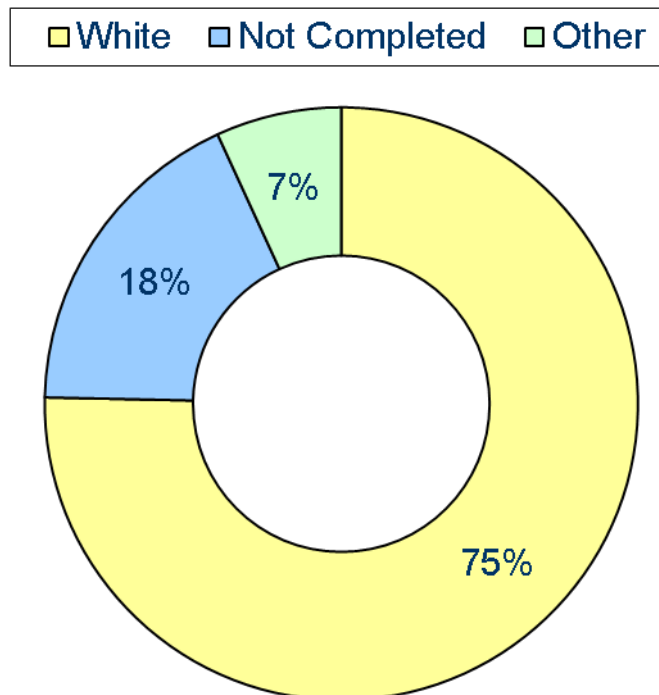


Table 1.11 Appeals by outcome

2012 – 2013 *	Actual	Percentage	2011 – 2012 **	Actual	Percentage
Upheld in Full	15	15%	Upheld in Full	9	8%
Upheld in Part	6	6%	Upheld in Part	4	4%
Dismissed	3	3%	Dismissed	3	3%
Withdrawn	31	30%	Withdrawn	39	37%
Conceded	27	26%	Conceded	24	23%
Struck Out	1	1%	Struck Out	1	1%
Pending	19	19%	Pending	29	24%
Total	102	100%	Total	109	100%

* includes appeals carried over from 2011 – 2012

** includes appeals carried over from 2010 – 2011

Table 1.12 Appeals by outcome and type (registered 2012 – 2013)

	Refusal to Assess	Refusal to Statement	Refusal to Re-Assess	Cease to Maintain
Conceded	13	2	0	0
Withdrawn	6	3	0	1
Upheld in Full	0	0	0	0
Upheld in Part	0	0	0	0
Dismissed	0	1	0	0
Struck Out	1	0	0	0
Pending	1	4	0	0
Total	21	10	0	1

	Contents of Statement Parts 2 & 3	Contents of Statement Parts 2, 3 & 4	Contents of Statement Part 3	Contents of Statement Part 3 & 4	Contents of Statement Part 4
Conceded					2
Withdrawn	8	4			
Upheld in Full	4	2	1	1	1
Upheld in Part		2		1	
Dismissed					
Struck Out			1		
Pending	4	8	1		1
Total	16	16	3	2	4

Table 1.13 Appeals by outcome and local authority (registered 2012 – 2013)

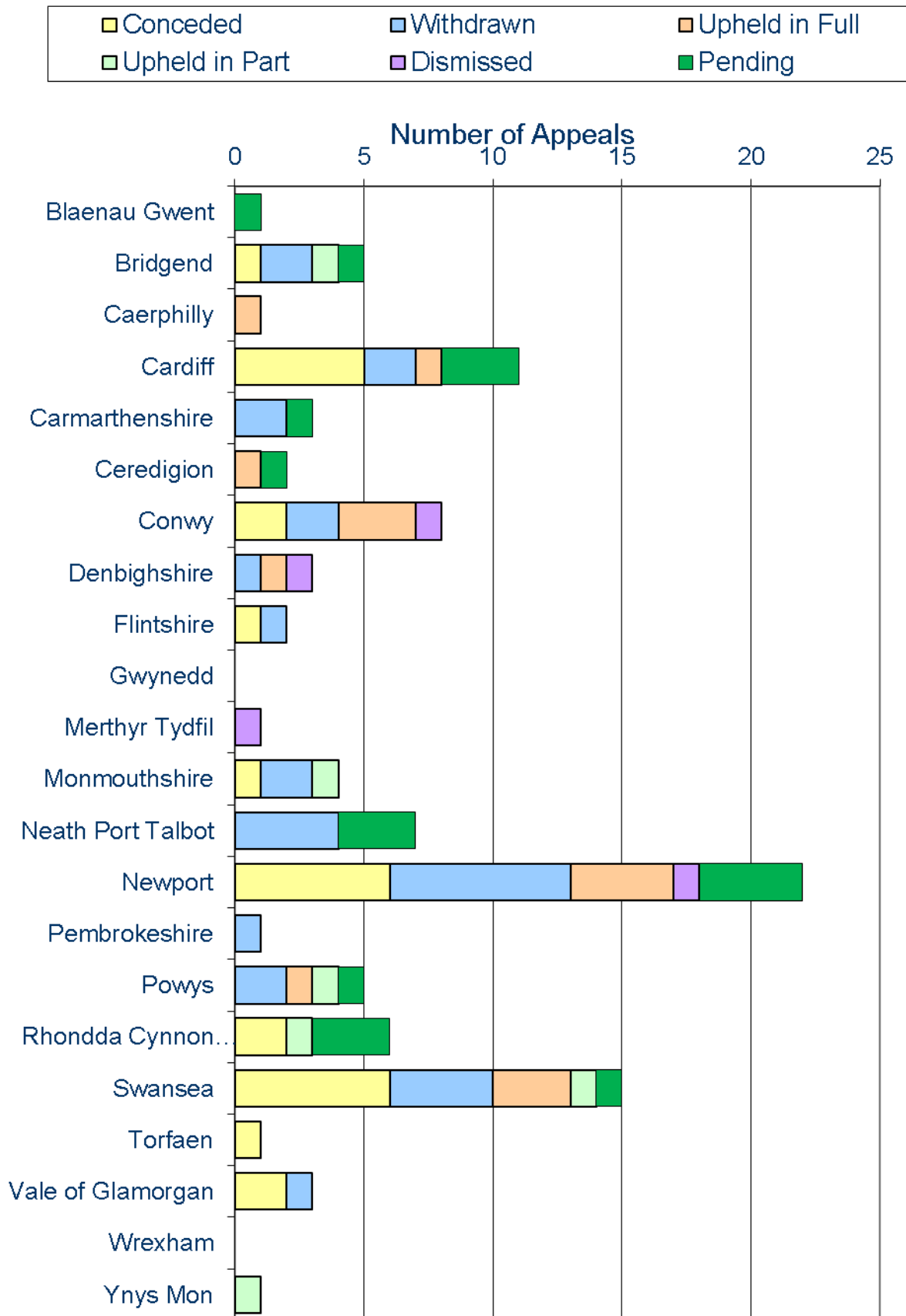


Table 1.14 Claims registered and discharged by year

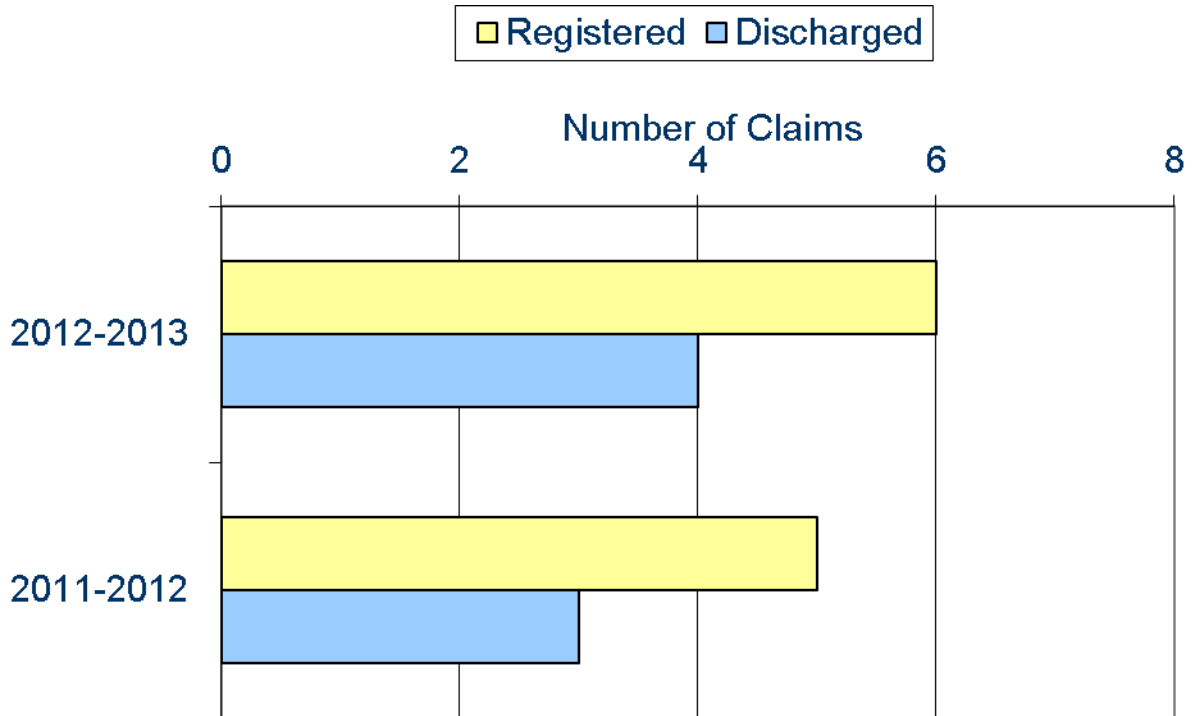


Table 1.15 Claims by outcome

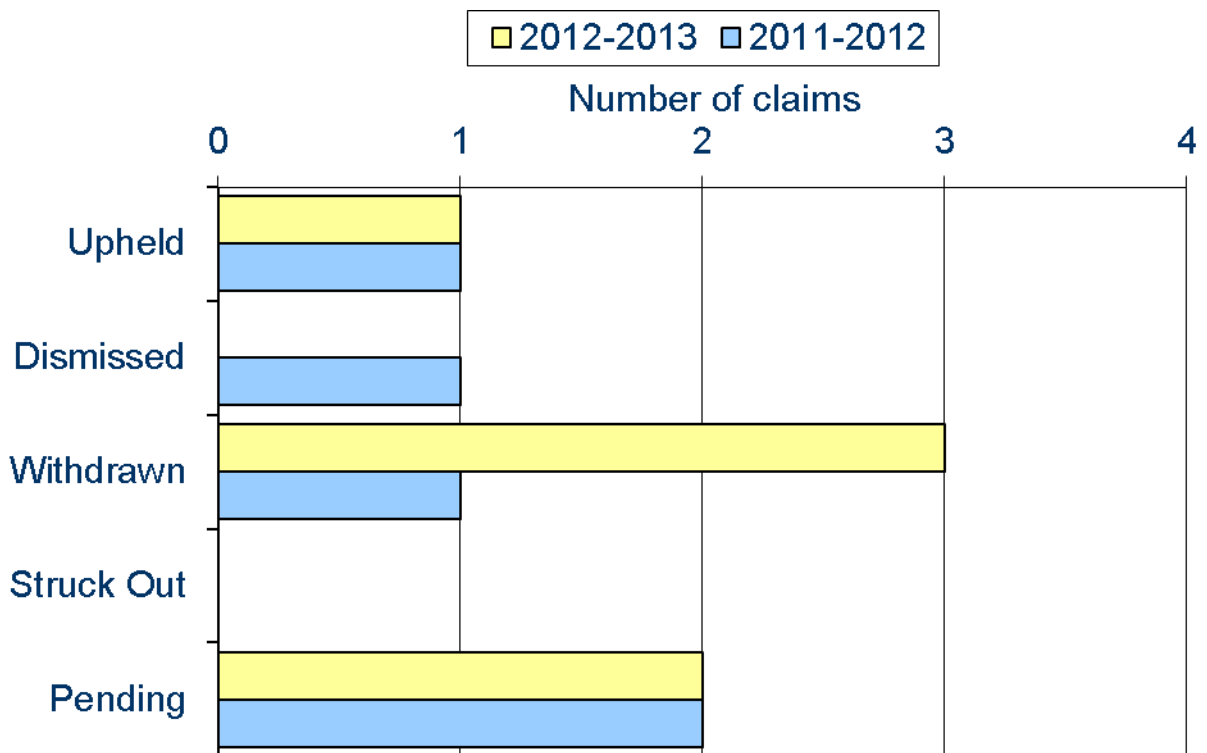
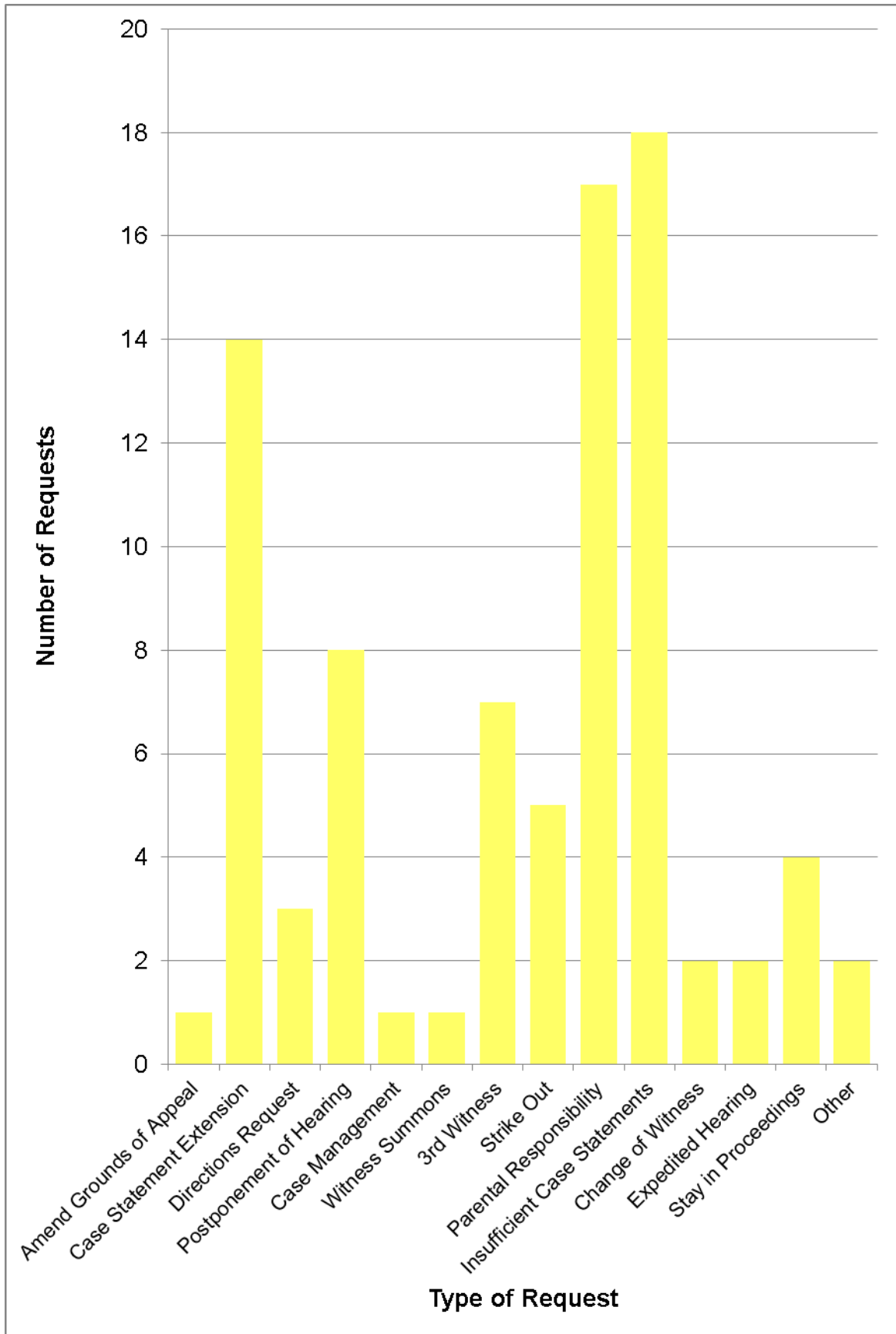


Table 1.16 Presidential Requests 2012 – 2013



Reviews and Onward Appeals

Applications for a review of a Tribunal decision can be made by parents and LAs on limited grounds. Over the period of this report, 2 applications were made; 1 was upheld in part and 1 was upheld in full.

Appeals to the Upper Tribunal can be made by parents and LAs against Tribunal decisions where it is thought that the decision is wrong on a point of law. Permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal must first be sought from SENTW. Over the period of this report 1 application for permission to appeal was made to SENTW, this case is still pending and will be reported on in the next annual report.

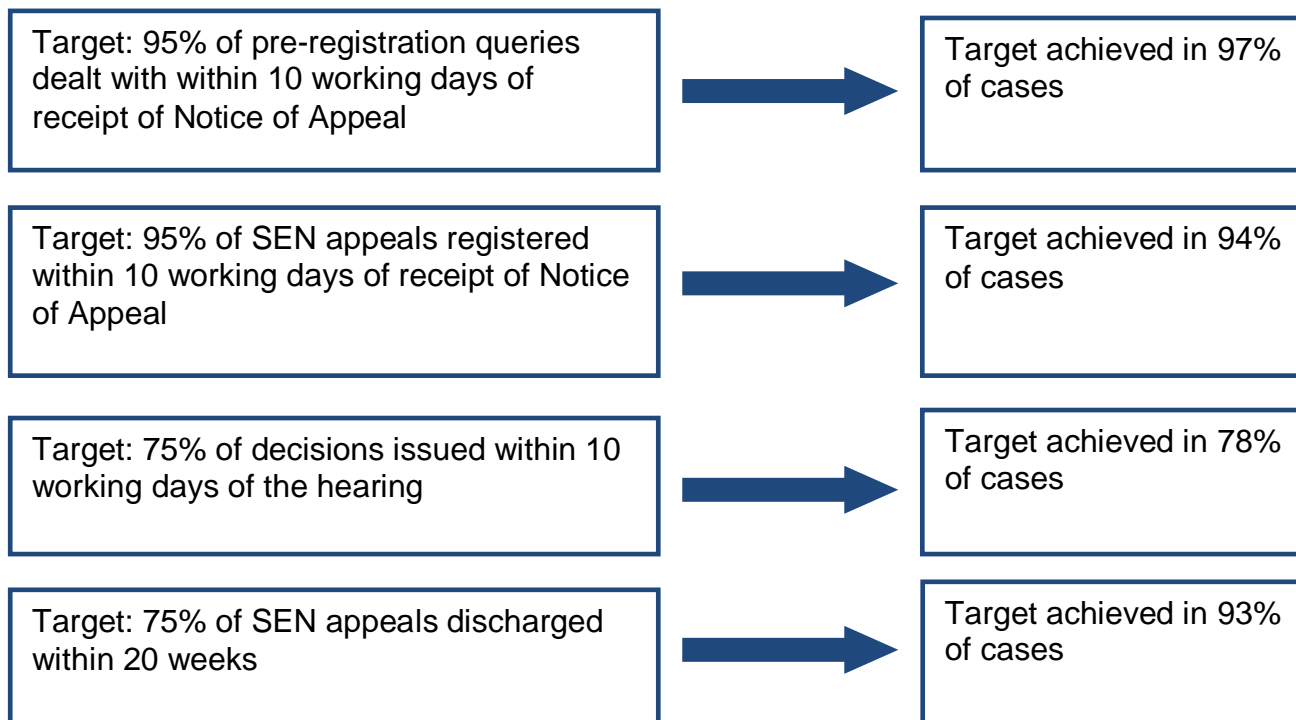
Achievements against Key Performance Indicators

To monitor how effectively services are delivered, we have key performance indicators aimed at measuring two key aspects of our business; the speed of our service and the quality of service through customer satisfaction.

To measure the speed of our service, we have a series of primary performance indicators based on the time taken to process an appeal – from receipt to the Hearing or discharge.

To measure customer satisfaction, we used an indicator that is derived from periodic customer surveys.

Speed of our service



Complaints

The Tribunal received no formal complaints during the course of the year.

Welsh Language

The Tribunal has a Welsh language scheme which has been approved by the Welsh Language Board. We are committed to providing an equally high quality equivalent service for both Welsh and English speakers who appeal or make a claim to the Tribunal. All of our publications and forms are bi-lingual and hearings for appeals and claims can be conducted in both languages.

Where Welsh or English is not the first language we will arrange for an interpreter to attend the hearing and do our best to meet all language needs.

No appeals or claims were made through the medium of Welsh in 2012-2013.

SENTW submits an annual monitoring report to the Welsh Language Commission on the implementation of its scheme. A copy of the report is available on SENTW's website or can be obtained by contacting the Tribunal.

Section 4 – Our Customers

In this section, our:

- Customer satisfaction survey
- User group meetings

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The Tribunal strives to improve customer service delivery and aim to put our customers at the heart of everything we do.

The customer satisfaction survey results enable us to gain a better understanding of our customers' needs and give us a valuable insight into what the Tribunal is doing well, as well as highlighting those areas where the Tribunal needs to improve.

We received 15 completed forms over the period of the report, of those:

- 98% of customers said we were helpful when handling telephone enquiries, that we responded quickly and that they were satisfied with the information received;
- 100% of customers agreed that we processed their appeal / case effectively
- 88% of customers agreed that the information received from us was clear and accurate

User Group Meetings

The Tribunal held regional User Group Meetings on 17 and 26 September 2012 and 13, 15 and 22 May 2013. The meetings were well attended by our stakeholders, who comprise of; Local Authority officers, parents partnership support groups, voluntary sector organisations and legal representatives.

Papers and items discussed included the LA duties and the Equality Act 2010, The Annual Report for 2011-2012, update on the children's right to appeal / claim pilot and updates regarding the statutory reform consultation.

Information about the Tribunal's User Group Meetings is available on our Website www.sentw.gov.uk. Please contact the secretariat if you are interested in attending meetings.

Section 5 – Business Priorities

In this section, our:

- Business Priorities for 2013 – 2014

It is important that the Tribunal continues to develop in order to deliver the best possible service for our users. This section is about how the Tribunal will build on its achievements through focusing on business priorities and our commitment to our users.

Business Priorities for 2013 – 2014

- develop the Tribunal Website so that it is a more effective tool for users
- continue the Training and Observation of Performance Scheme (TOPS) for members
- develop the Tribunal DVD so it is in line with the Welsh Language scheme.

Section 6 – Expenditure

In this section, our:

- Expenditure for 2012 - 2013

Expenditure for 2012 – 2013

CONTENT	AMOUNT
Members' fees	£111,000
Training	£3,000
Hearings, cancellations & user groups	£27,000
Other Appeal Expenses e.g. witness expenses	£500
Office Expenses (shared resources with with 2 other Tribunals)	£11,000
TOTAL	£152,500

* rounded to the nearest £1,000

Additional costs such as staff salaries for the secretariat and the Tribunal's shared accommodation are met centrally by the Welsh Government.