

APPENDIX 1

Compliments and Complaints – Date and Information

The following provides information on the numbers of compliments and complaints received, by directorate. The complaints are split to show the number of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints received and cases referred to the Local Governance Ombudsman are also included.

Following this information, commentary has been provided regarding any trends seen in complaints and what actions have been taken to mitigate future complaints.

Compliments	Nov 15	Dec 15	Jan 16	Feb 16	Mar 16	April 16	May 16	June 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Total
Environment & Housing	48	32	24	35	32	32	30	41	26	37	30	13	380
Citizens & Communities	19	31	21	22	23	26	14	31	29	25	27	29	297
City Development	30	26	15	16	19	13	10	18	10	9	27	13	206
Adult Social Care	51	66	38	40	60	38	44	38	51	33	29	16	504
Children's Services	5	5	7	2	2	6	7	7	3	0	2	0	46
Strategy & Resources	16	17	14	18	30	11	14	7	20	17	21	11	196
Monthly Total	169	177	119	133	166	126	119	142	139	121	136	82	1,629

Stage 1 Complaints	Nov 15	Dec 15	Jan 16	Feb 16	Mar 16	April 16	May 16	June 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Total
Environment & Housing	180	152	192	199	196	196	159	218	171	196	196	117	2,172
Citizens & Communities	35	23	38	31	43	49	49	41	21	30	27	26	413
City Development	19	19	24	31	32	38	28	22	28	21	26	26	314
Adult Social Care	22	27	22	24	17	24	17	25	24	24	25	24	275
Children's Services	25	12	14	22	20	29	24	21	29	17	23	0	236
Strategy & Resources	14	7	12	9	12	10	8	9	6	7	3	8	105
Monthly Total	295	240	302	316	320	346	285	336	279	295	300	201	3,515

Stage 2 Complaints	Nov 15	Dec 15	Jan 16	Feb 16	Mar 16	April 16	May 16	June 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Total
Environment & Housing	15	12	25	26	25	25	18	24	23	15	24	11	243
Citizens & Communities	4	4	1	6	1	4	4	5	6	3	0	2	40
City Development	2	5	4	3	1	1	2	1	4	2	1	2	28
Adult Social Care	8	8	14	9	9	8	6	7	13	9	8	6	105
Children's Services	2	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	9
Strategy & Resources	1	3	1	1	2	3	2	0	3	0	0	1	17
Monthly Total	32	32	45	47	38	42	33	39	50	29	33	22	442

Ombudsman Cases	Nov 15	Dec 15	Jan 15	Feb 15	Mar 16	April 16	May 16	June 16	July 16	Aug 16	Sept 16	Oct 16	Total
Environment & Housing	2	4	0	1	0	3	5	2	0	2	5	1	25
Citizens & Communities	2	2	1	3	1	2	1	1	0	3	0	1	17
City Development	3	5	3	4	6	0	4	3	2	1	0	2	33
Adult Social Care	0	0	1	1	4	0	3	1	0	0	2	2	14
Children's Services	2	2	2	3	2	1	5	2	5	0	1	4	29
Strategy & Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monthly Total	9	13	7	12	13	6	18	9	7	6	8	10	118

Environment & Housing

Key Issues

Parking services - Issues raised are about parking tickets and fines and issues around parking zones/passes for parking zones. The complaints are similar to last year in that they cover a broad range including problems with broken/faulty ticket machines taking money and not giving (appropriate) tickets, customers having received a parking fine where they do not believe they should have and complaints about receiving fines for driving in bus lanes. Some of these issues are dealt with as appeals rather than complaints as parking services have a specific "appeals" process. There have also been a few complaints regarding (none) receipt of parking permits for different residents zones leading to the receipt of repeated parking tickets.

Street cleansing issues - Complaints relate to leaf sweeping and other street cleansing issues. Complaints that have been raised include (seasonally) the lack of

leaf sweeping or the street sweeping machines attending at the wrong time of day. There have been fewer complaints about blocked gullies this year compared with last year however, this could be due to lower rainfall.

Learning points:

Environmental Action and Localities - The formal complaints are dealt with by managers across the service. Where the investigation of the complaint identifies a failing in a system or process this is used as an opportunity to review how work is done and make improvements

Citizens and Communities

Key Issues

Welfare and Benefits – The key trends and issues relating to welfare and benefits complaints continue to focus around the assessment of claims. With only 18 complaints made being fully upheld from November 2015 to October 2016, there has been on average 1.5 complaints being made relating to the assessment of claims each month. Whilst ideally no complaints should be received, over 200,000 assessments are made each year by the Leeds Benefits Service; in the context of this the number of complaints made where an error has occurred is low.

Additionally, as the assessment of benefits is means tested and as such 50 complaints received had been converted to service requests, as a right to appeal against the decision exists. These should not be logged under the complaints policy. Feedback has been given to reduce this incorrect logging of appeals as complaints and improvements have been seen.

Learning points:

Welfare and Benefits – Whilst the volume of complaints received by Welfare and Benefits is low, there will continue to be scope to learn and develop from errors identified. A strong feedback process is in place which links both front (contact centre) and back (processing) offices within Welfare and Benefits and continued, constructive feedback where errors are identified will mean that the numbers of complaints logged remains low.

City Development

Key Issues

Overall there has been a small rise in complaints during 2016, compared with 2015, but the increase cannot be attributed to any one issue.

As many of the complaints received within City Development are expressions of dissatisfaction with decisions properly arrived at under processes governed by various statutes, it is unlikely this type of complaint can be significantly reduced.

Although occasionally we do not meet the 15 working day deadline for responses we update customers throughout the complaints process.

Learning points:

We continue to raise awareness of the importance of excellent customer service and our aim is to provide a positive customer experience to all of our service users. The Directorate has developed a presentation/workshop, 'Building Brilliant Customer Serves', which has so far been rolled out to in excess of 120 staff in order to improve the quality of responses to. The workshops have been well received by staff and have improved the quality of responses to complaints which in turn has helped to significantly reduce the amount of complaints escalating to stage 2.

Adult Social Care

Key Issues

Assessment and Care Management. The most common cause for complaints across the service areas has been the quality of service provision citing delays in service provision; failure to provide a service; inconsistent home care service; poor standard of service and lack of social work support.

Learning points:

Assessment & Care Management - Contact Centre Customer Service Officers have had additional training on screening, eligibility and safeguarding and the Contact Centre now implements a two tier approach where safeguarding matters are identified and there is a process to escalate concerns to a registered professional within the Gateway. This enhances fact finding and allows for a registered professional to review the data and progress accordingly.

This process serves the dual purpose of providing an enhanced service delivery and to lower the risk of safeguarding concerns and requests for assessments not being addressed to and/or progressed in a timely manner.

Children's Social Care

Key Issues

Social Work Support - One of the most common complaints within children's services, is either a lack of social work support or the manner of social work support and a piece of work was carried out analysing the data behind these complaints. Social care intervention in people's lives is often unwelcome and so social workers can be criticised for either not being supportive enough or for being too intrusive.

Looked After Children - One of the main issues for looked after children is placement moves: wanting to move, not wanting to move or unhappy about how moves are handled.

Learning points:

Social Work Support – Learning from the analysis of data associated with complaints about social work support was used along with children's services commitment to restorative practice to refresh the complaints process.

To this end, more opportunities have been introduced to have a restorative conversation with complainants alongside the formal procedure. Initial awareness sessions have been held for managers, and independent investigating officers have been enrolled on restorative practice training with an aim to regain trust and restore the relationship. Training is planned for staff and managers around handling difficult conversations.

Looked After Children - Looked after children complaints are now treated with the utmost priority and the chief officer of social work and head of service for looked after children, are informed on day one. If possible they will intervene to resolve concerns swiftly.

In addition, the 'Tell Steve' initiative has been introduced as part of the 'looked after child promise'. This is a priority phone number/email (resourced by customer relations) where young people in local authority care can contact us if they feel we have not fulfilled any part of the promise with the assurance that we'll respond within 48 hours to their concerns. Learning from this is fed through the 'Have a voice' council to ensure that young people can see how we are responding to their feedback.

Customer relations regularly provides updates, including cases studies, to the practice improvement group, a meeting where senior management consider practice and undertake challenge to consider how services can be improved in a number of areas.

Strategy & Resources

Key Issues

Council Tax Recovery – The number of complaints made against Council Tax recovery over the period November 2015 to October 2016 has reduced from the number received over the period the between November 2014 to October 2015.

Notably, of the 45 complaints received, only 5 have been upheld. This ratio of upheld complaints to not upheld complaints is the lowest within Leeds City Council.

The reason for the very low number of upheld complaints is linked closely to the nature of work conducted by this office. Recovering money from customers is a task that is likely to generate emotional response from customers and it is this reaction that can lead to complaints being made.

The Council Tax Recovery office are required to work in a robust fashion to ensure that public funds are recovered, this at times will not be accepted in the manner it is intended by customers, however as can be seen by the low number of upheld complaints, very rarely has the action taken or advice provided by the Council Tax Recovery office or the bailiffs appointed by this office been incorrect or unwarranted.

Property Maintenance – Of the complaints received regarding blocked chutes, 3 were upheld; a further 5 were not upheld. The main issue identified around blocked rubbish chutes, is that whilst these are treated as an emergency repair and responded to within 24 hours, there have been occasions where demand for this service has been high and has led to shortages of staff to deal with these.

In relation to cleaning standards within communal areas, only 1 complaint had been upheld. The volumes received in 2015/16 are comparable to 2014/15, however these are now logged to strategy and resources, rather than Housing Leeds as they had been in the past.

Learning points:

Council Tax Recovery – There is no overriding trend identified where errors are being made or processes are incorrect, however the Council Tax Recovery office will continue to aim to assist customers and identify where referrals can be made to support agencies that may be able to help customers facing financial difficulties.

Property Maintenance – Whilst a challenging task to maintain standards within communal areas of Council properties, this is something that we manage successfully in the vast majority of cases. Based upon the footfall through these areas and number of residents using the waste disposal facilities the standards maintained are high and there are no concerns over this service.

One issue had been identified through the year where there had been unprecedented demand for clearance of chute blockages, with 38 reports in 24 hours. As a result of the stage 2 complaint that had been made over the delayed clearance of one particular blockage, additional staff were trained in blockage clearance to assist in any future occasions of unprecedented demand.