

Appendix 2

1. Executive Summary

Complaints overview: despite an overall reduction this year, Q4 saw an increase over the previous quarter

During the last quarter, we received 1379 stage 1 complaints, compared to 1219 the previous quarter, meaning for the full year we have received 5473 complaints, a 10% reduction from the 6073 complaints reported for last year.

Effectiveness of complaint handling: fall in stage 2 complaints

The number of complaints being escalated to stage 2 (Q4 371, from Q3 415) has decreased in line with the fall at stage 1. Balanced against an increase in complaints about waste management, this indicators are a positive sign that overall we are improving the effectiveness of our handling of complaints. It is also worth noting that we have also had very few complaints about the council's handling of welfare reform changes, which started during Q4.

Responding to complaints within timescale: some significant concerns

The high level performance indicator for % stage 1 complaints responded to within timescale has declined over last quarter (a fall to 80% Q4 from 84% in Q3), and the year-end position of 79% is a small increase from last year's result of 77%, and is significantly short of the target of 95% agreed by Customer Strategy Board.

Over the full year, three ALMOs and Customer Access & Performance exceeded the target, one ALMO and two directorates fell slightly short, but two are highlighted as 'red' in failing to achieve target:

- Children's Social care (63%)
- Environment & Neighbourhoods (49%)

There has been no sign of sustained improvement through the year in these two areas. Further action is needed to ensure performance is consistent with the agreed performance standards of responding to complaints within 15 working days (and 20 working days for Children's Social Care complaints).

The average response time across the authority to the Ombudsman's first formal enquiries has increased this year. The average this year is 31 calendar days against the Ombudsman's service standard of of 28 calendar days, compared to last year's average of 26.5 calendar days.

Performance table overleaf - Note on R-A-G status and data quality

The parameters used for the performance (R-A-G) status are detailed below, based on the current corporate standard of responding to 95% of stage 1 & 2 complaints within timescale.

- 95% and above - Green
- 85 to 94% - Amber
- 84% and below - Red

For each directorate/ALMO, the top line represents this quarter's result, and the bottom line is last quarter's result.

Table 1 Complaint analysis Q4 vs Q3 – 2012/13	Volume of complaints received this qtr / prev qtr				Effectiveness of complaint handling			Responsiveness Performance indicators		
	Service requests	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombud -sman	Stage 2 complaints (% stage 1)	LGO - financial settlement YTD	LGO – fault found YTD	Stage 1 response within standard†	Stage 2 response within 15 wkg days	Ombud -sman ave days YTD
Aire Valley ALMO	2	171	5	4		£175	3	98%	100%	28
	1	148	19	2				96%	95%	
East North East ALMO	70	137	25	3		£350	2	99%	96%	30
	46	161	23	2				94%	78%	
West North West ALMO	24	241	19	6		£500	5	95%	100%	33
	16	225	27	3				88%	89%	
Belle Isle TMO	0	25	2	1		-	0	96%	100%	29
	0	16	2	0				100%	100%	
Adult Social Care	0	86	17	6		-	1	95%		n/a
	0	79	13	11				97%		
Children's Services	3	53	5	4		£5049	10	75%		27
	1	67	3	4				73%		
City Development	67	57	11	7		£4250	1	88%	82%	31
	38	54	10	7				93%	90%	
Customer Access & Performance	1	60	3	0		-	0	100%	100%	n/a
	1	61	1	0				97%	100%	
Environment & Neighbourhoods	35	452	12	6		£1100	5	51%	50%	33
	9	309	9	3				61%	56%	
Resources (& former Corporate Governance)	15	82	6	2		£2240	3	89%	100%	28.5
	25	87	4	3				92%	100%	
Total	217	1364	105	39	6%	£13664	30	80%	84%	31
	137	1207	111	35	8%			84%	83%	

† Corporate standard is 15 working days, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are 20 working days.

2. Commentary from Directorates / ALMOs failing to meet target in Q4

2.1 Children's

See Children's Services' year-end commentary on page 9.

2.2 Environment & Neighbourhoods

Housing Partnerships and Housing Support

Quarter 4 shows a significant decrease in the percentage of complaints responded to within the timescales from 89% to 33%. This may be as a result of a recent restructure which has meant a period of change and different staff acting as investigating officers who may be new to the complaints process. We are expecting an improvement in the response times as the complaints process has been reviewed, in particular focusing in sending timely reminders to all involved in investigating complaints and the admin of Siebel.

Parks and Countryside

Quarter 4 shows a significant decline in the percentage of complaints responded to 37% of complaints in comparison to quarter 3 at 67%. This could be as a result of the change in structure which has yet to be reflected on Siebel. Previously grass cutting complaints sat with either EAS or the ALMOs and now are within Parks and Countryside. Further to a meeting with Customer Services, EAS and the E&N DCRO, Parks and Countryside reported they have responded to the incoming complaints but not had the opportunity or resources to ensure this is reflected in Siebel. Parks and Countryside have identified 6 staff to be Siebel trained and are aware of the need to ensure Siebel is updated.

Waste Management

Looking at Quarter 4 vs Q3 (12/13) results, one reason for the increase seen is due to the severe and prolonged winter weather seen during Jan, Feb and March that resulted in two full service shut downs and the initiation of city wide service recovery. This combined with a major rerouting of residual waste collections for over 100,000 properties in the inner city areas, to increase overall service efficiency, but with an expected short term settling in period whilst these changes were implemented and embedded.

The Waste Management staffing structure changes were due to take place within 2012/13 however these were not agreed until Q4 2012/13. The implementation is ongoing and will be finalised in July during Q1 2013/14. This will have a significant impact on improved response rates as there will be an increased number of staff dealing with complaints on a day to day basis. A data cleansing exercise is currently taking place in conjunction with the Contact Centre, Supervisors and Team Managers with Waste Management and all cases which have been dealt with, but not closed down, will be finalised and updated on Siebel. This will provide a more accurate position moving into Q1 2013/14 and this should be evident when the performance figures are produced.

The service are also working very closely with Supervisors and Team Managers, which will involve embedding a new process of handling complaints and this will be rolled out in Q1 2013/14 when the new staff are in post. This will remove the need for Supervisors and Team Managers to access and update Siebel and this is where we have identified that some of the data is not truly reflective of where the service are on actually dealing with complaints.

Complaints relating to equality issues.

In 2010 changes were made to the CRM Leeds system. One of the changes was the inclusion of an 'Equality Related' tick box inside all complaints. This allows the investigating officer to flag up if a complaint has any equality or discrimination related aspects.

Services who have received complaints detailing equality issues have provided a brief commentary about the types of issues received over the reporting period and the outcome of the complaints.

In 2011-12, the council flagged up 19 complaints as being equality related, which would appear to be a significant under-reporting of complaints with an equality or discrimination aspect. During 2012-13 a pilot arrangement has been in place in City Development whereby a member of the Equalities team assists with the investigation of such complaints. The pilot has been successful in identifying and addressing problems at an early stage, with only one case progressing to stage 2, and is being rolled out across the council during 2013-14.

Table 2 Complaints containing equality related issues

Directorate	Equality cases identified on CRM Leeds 2012-13	Comments from DCROs on typical issues
AVHL	2	No comments
ENEHL	1	One complaint with a race discrimination aspect, from a tenant claims repairs have not been carried out because she is a gypsy, and that ENEHL are being racist against her due to this. Not upheld as discrimination.
WNWHL	3	Three complaints with an equality/discrimination aspect. Three from disabled tenants about delays in repairs. None were upheld as discrimination.
Adult Social Care	0	N/A
Children's Services	0	Eight complaints with an equality/discrimination aspect, but not logged as such on the CRM system. Three complaints about disability discrimination (one upheld), three about race discrimination (one partially upheld), one about gender discrimination (not upheld), and one where the equality category was not explicit.
City Development	15	The majority of complaints with an equality aspect were about disability/access. One complaint was upheld and two partially upheld.
Customer Access & Performance	6	Six complaints with an equality/discrimination aspect. Two about racial discrimination (none upheld), one about gender discrimination (not upheld), one about disability discrimination (not upheld), and two where the equality category was not clear (one partially

		upheld).
Environment & Neighbourhoods	8	Several complaints with an equality/discrimination aspect. All about access problems, such as missed bin wheel out services.
Resources	0	N/A
Total	35	

Annual summary (see table on page 8)

4.1 Volume of complaints

Looking at 2012-13 as a whole, the number of complaints at both stages 1 & 2 of the complaints procedure fell considerably. Both stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints fell by 10% (Stage 1 from 6,073 to 5473, and Stage 2 from 415 to 371). The level of complaints has fallen to its lowest level over the previous six years. Stage 2 complaints also fell by a similar rate over the previous year, and the number of Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) decisions received fell by 11% to 146 from 164 last year.

Members should note that the number of decisions received from the LGO can be different from the number of cases received (reported on page 2) owing to the number of investigations which start in one council year and end in a different council year. The number of decisions recorded below also includes complaints where the LGO has used their discretion not to investigate or because the issue is outside of their jurisdiction.

Table 3 Overview of performance

	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Complaints - Stage 1	6,466	7,632	7,496	7,870	6,073	5473
Complaints - Stage 2	314	523	529	534	415	371
Ombudsman decisions received	183	170	172	165	164	146
Respond within standard	63%	72%	79%	86%	77%	79%

4.2 Effectiveness of complaint handling

Useful measures of the effectiveness of our complaint handling are:

- percentage of complaints that are escalated to stage 2
- amount of financial settlement agreed by the LGO
- % of cases where fault found by the LGO

These indicators point to how effectively we handle complaints at the earliest opportunity, particularly where we do not need to have the LGO intervene. The proportion of complaints escalated to stage 2 has remained at around 7-8% , the overall volume has reduced, and the LGO has found fault in around 20% of cases investigated.

In previous years, the LGO has produced further detailed statistics on the council's performance, including how many complaints were remedied during the LGO's investigation and the number of cases where only minor injustice identified. The LGO changed their way of handling complaints during 2012/13 and made the decision not to report this information for 2012/13 as it would not provide a comparable picture throughout the year.

The total financial settlements agreed by the LGO for the previous 4 years are set out below:-

09/10 = 44 cases	£16,575
10/11 = 47 cases	£25,481
11/12 = 35 cases	£16,064
12/13 = 17 cases	£13,664

Both the total financial settlements made and the number of cases where the LGO considered that financial redress was appropriate have fallen this year, although this does point to a number of higher individual settlements.

4.3 Responsiveness to customers

Overall, the % of responses within standard has increased slightly from 77% to 79% against a target of 95%. Although an improvement, this is somewhat disappointing, and possibly reflects both a tightening of resources and a lack of resilience in administering and investigating complaints within timescales at a time of significant organisational change.

Adult Social Care, Aire Valley Homes, East North East Homes and Customer Access & Performance have performed very well and exceeded the target at stage 1. Other areas are close (within 10%) to meeting the corporate target: Belle Isle TMO, City Development, Resources and West North West Homes. However, significant performance improvements are needed in the following areas:

- Children's Services (63%)
- Environment & Neighbourhoods (53%)

4.4 Ombudsman

The annual Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) letter to each local authority on its ombudsman complaints for 2012-13 is expected late July. In previous years, the LGO has provided an in depth assessment of the council's handling of complaints. With the restructuring/downsizing of the LGO and the transfer of responsibility for housing complaints to the Housing Ombudsman, it is unlikely that the council will receive very detailed feedback on our performance and effectiveness, as the LGO focuses its efforts on more serious cases.

During 2012-13, the LGO made 27 formal enquiries compared to 35 the previous year. The vast majority of investigations were conducted through requests for factual information (in the region of 80+ informal enquiries) without progressing those cases to a more formal investigation.

The council has not received any public reports in the last 12 months, compared to four last year, however the LGO has indicated that the findings in one current case may be considered by the Ombudsman because of there is a high financial settlement involved.

It is difficult to make any confident predictions about the impact on performance of the transfer from the LGO to the Housing Ombudsman of housing complaints.

Table 4 Complaint analysis 2012/13 vs 2011/12	Volume of complaints received this year / prev year				Effectiveness of complaint handling			Responsiveness Performance indicators		
	Directorate / ALMO	Service requests	Stage 1	Stage 2	Ombud -sman	Stage 2 complaints (% stage 1)	LGO - financial settlement YTD	LGO – fault found YTD	Stage 1 response within standard†	Stage 2 response within 15 wkg days
Aire Valley ALMO	9	605	59	11		£175	3	98%	96%	
	2	582	61	13	11%			96%	90%	
East North East ALMO	161	566	66	7		£350	2	98%	89%	
	105	510	56	10	11%			99%	82%	
West North West ALMO	69	956	95	13		£500	5	92%	91%	
	152	1077	102	20	10%			98%	97%	
Belle Isle TMO	1	53	4	1		-	0	92%	100%	-
	0	48	6	0	13%			94%	83%	
Adult Social Care	0	356	69	24		-	1	96%		-
	0	415	4	9	1%			79%		
Children's Services	17	302	13	32		£5049	10	63%		
	0	359	13	44	4%			55		
City Development	290	255	58	23		£4250	1	90%	86%	
	258	315	62	24	20%			88%	94%	
Customer Access & Performance	3	277	11	0		-	0	97%	100%	-
	13	338	7	0	2%			96%	57%	
Environment & Neighbourhoods	150	1659	34	20		£1100	5	49%	56%	
	248	2081	72	26	4%			53%	51%	
Resources (& former Corporate Governance)	86	380	31	15		£2240	3	91%	94%	
	24	348	32	19				81%	75%	
Total	786	5409	440	146	8%	£13664	30	79%	85%	
	802	6073	415	165	7%			77%		

† Corporate standard is 15 working days, Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care are 20 working days.

3. Commentary from Directorates / ALMOs failing to meet target in 2012-13

5.1 Children's Services

It is recognised that children's services continues to face challenges in responding to complaints within the statutory standard. Within Q1 and Q2 2011/12, issues were exacerbated due to a large scale restructure being taken across children's social work service which meant that staff levels were not always optimal. Additionally, movement within and restructuring of services meant that there was some difficulty of maintaining consistency in some cases. With the completion of this restructure, there are much clearer lines of responsibility.

The above should be considered in context of the following, however. Throughout 2012/13 there has been a consistent quarter on quarter increase on the number of complaints resolved within standard. This has been influenced by systematically providing early intervention support and guidance to complaints' investigators. A new series of training for newly appointed investigators and refresher training for others is to be rolled out across 2013.

5.2 Environment & Neighbourhoods

EAS and Localities

A high proportion of the complaints that are logged to Environmental Action Services relate to "parking". It is apparent that many of these contacts are actually appeals against fixed penalty notices (parking tickets) or are general correspondence. We are reviewing and refining the process to make sure that contacts that are not complaints are closed as soon as possible on Siebel and are handled through the appropriate process. We are acknowledging compliments centrally to save time and ensure the acknowledgements are sent out. Since Summer 2012 the admin supervisors in the localities/specialist teams have been the local point of contact for complaints. Complaints arrive centrally with Business Support from the contact centre and are allocated out as appropriate. We check the system 2-3 times a day so there should not be a delay in cases being passed to the teams for a response. Over the last few months the Business Support staff have gone back to checking complaints when they arrive to try to separate out those issues which are in fact service requests, rather than complaints about our service. If we identify a case is a service request, not a complaint it is acknowledged immediately and closed down with all further processing and monitoring being done on Uniform. We expect the response rates will improve over the summer with the finalisation of the recruitment and staffing levels.

Waste Management

Overall the number of complaints for 12/13 has reduced from the previous year (11/12) reflecting improvement activities within the service focussed on the reliability of recycling collections. A factor this year has been the increased number of complaints seen during the summer where the capacity of the garden waste collection service is overwhelmed, evidenced by the volumes of garden waste placed out for kerbside collection.

Regarding responsiveness of complaint handling, there is a relationship between the number of complaints received and the number responded to within standard timescales. This further evidences the lack of capacity within the service to handle complaints during peak times and the inability to adequately move resources from other services according to need.