

## **APPENDIX 1**

The Appendix provides detailed feedback from service areas as to complaint trends, and learning points that they have taken from them.

### **Adult Social Care**

#### **Top Complaint Issues**

The most common complaint issues relating to Adult Social Care have concerned staff attitude/conduct, quality of service and lack of social work support.

- Staff attitude/conduct – These complaints have typically focussed on the manner in which a member of staff has spoken to a service user, a lack of empathy, not being listened to or concerns around issues being discussed in front of others.
- Quality of service – These complaints have covered various areas such as Home Care, commissioned service providers in residential care, supported living and commissioned day care. Some concerns related to Finance and Access and Care Delivery.
- Lack of Social Work support – These complaints cover a range of issues from not providing or sharing information and concerns around communication.

#### **Lessons Learned:**

Where a complaint has been upheld, it is often the case that the Manager undertaking the resolution of the complaint will make recommendations on how the service should be improved to avoid a similar situation arising for another service user. Some of the lessons learned in response to complaints have identified the need for staff training and others have led to development of information for service users and their families the impact which should lead to service improvements.

Some examples of the service improvements include:-

- A Service Provider developed an information booklet for care staff about basic food preparation in order to best support service users to have a healthy diet following a complaint relating to food preparation and nutrition. This practice is to be shared with a regional Nutrition and Hydration Programme within the Yorkshire and Humber Academic Health Science Network who are seeking innovative ideas to improve nutrition and hydration amongst community-based older people in the region.
- A process is in implementation which requires home care providers to install electronic call monitoring (ECM) tape systems which will better monitor time within care visits and provide this information to Leeds City Council. This was in response to a concerns raised over the amount of time spent providing home care.
- Clear information about the costs of residential care are now provided to service users in writing following concerns raised over this. Social workers were also reminded of the requirement to offer a carer's assessment in all cases where carers request support.

- As a result of families' concerns about the lack of information about fees, an information booklet has been developed for service users and their representatives which very clearly describes the different types of placement available and the charging structures that apply to each one. The information literature will sit within the documentation given to people admitted to hospital.

In response to concerns about delays in billing, in paying providers and concerns about the lack of information in relation to finance, improvements have been made and/or are in the process of being implemented. Some examples of improvements made include the following:-

- Previously (2015) a financial assessment referral was made by email from the Social Worker to the Financial Assessment Team. A more robust system has now been introduced so an electronic record and an email is generated.
- In cases where a customer does not qualify for funding, as of June 2017 this information is shared with care homes also to avoid the customer being sent large backdated invoices.
- A guidance booklet around the payment of care home fees has been produced and is out for consultation before being finalised.
- There has been a booklet available regarding non-residential financial assistance for many years. Both this and the new residential care booklet will be made available on the Council's website.
- Mandatory training is also scheduled for Social Workers from February 2018, in order to provide them with a greater understanding of the finance process, new processes and procedures, the importance of early discussions with clients and representatives.

### **Children and Families' Service**

#### **Top three reasons for complaint**

##### **1) Lack of, or manner of social work support**

It is not surprising that this is a common cause for complaint. Social workers work closely with their appointed service user and it can be a challenging relationship as well as a supportive one. Service users may feel judged or disagree with actions or plans agreed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the child.

In line with restorative working all complainants are offered a meeting where their views can be heard and explored. The majority of these complaints are resolved quickly at this stage.

##### **2) Challenge to child and family assessments**

The numbers for this area have decreased over the last few years but it remains a significant point of complaint.

Child and family assessments are by their nature intrusive and usually involve a professional making considered judgements based on evidence presented to them,

which can be difficult for people. Social workers are trained to put forward a balanced view and talk through elements of the assessment with the parents or carers as the assessment progresses. This is to gain some agreement and also ensures there are no shocks when the assessment is finally produced. Assessments are hand delivered and talked through with the service user before being left with them.

### 3) Issues with contact

These complaints are often from parents whose children are in care but can also be looked after children who are seeking contact with members of their family or friends. The needs of the child are always prioritised in these cases and it can be difficult for family members to understand that a child may need to settle into a placement or have therapeutic treatment before being ready to have contact with them. It is particularly difficult for a looked after child that may be feeling isolated and wants contact but may not realise the harm that can be done. A face to face meeting will be arranged and the issues discussed to find a way forward. A compromise can often be found through other forms of communication but the safety and wellbeing of the child will be paramount.

### **Trends**

Now that the strategy in children and families' service is focussed on providing early support and strengthening families, we are seeing more complaints for wider family members especially grandparents. Through our restorative early support service and also family group conferencing, more members of the family are involved in the process and may even be part of the plans to care for a child. This can lead wider issues (with more assessments taking place) and has caused some complaints. However, involving the wider family in caring for a child remains a positive strategy to reduce the need for children to be looked after by the local authority.

There has been considerable effort into reducing out of area placements for looked after children and also moving children from residential care into foster care and this has been reflected in a reduction in complaints about placement moves.

Complaints by care leavers have risen over the last year and this can be seen as both negative and positive in that, in recent years, we have made more stringent efforts to maintain contact with care leavers and a series of enrichment initiatives has allowed us to give extra support to care leavers. Due to our having more contact we have seen a rise in all communication including complaints.

### **Learning points**

We have learned through challenge from parents to ensure DP agreements are specific and clear. We have also improved our process to apply for provision and support through DP by more communication to social workers regarding applications to be presented to the Resource, Allocation, Decision And Review (RADAR) panel.

There have been cases of delays in the complaint process which have been addressed through clear focus on timescales for response and support of officers investigating complaints.

## **City Development**

### **Top complaint issues**

The key areas for complaints in City Development have been Planning & sustainable Development, Highways & Transportation and Recreation – Sport.

Planning complaints typically focus on how planning applications are handled, either the customer's application or how they have been affected by an application nearby. In the majority of cases the complaints are not upheld, showing, the correct processes are being followed.

One of the main common issues for highways is failure to carryout work, within a timescale the customer feels is acceptable. In most cases this relates to potholes and other roadworks and the work from the council's point of view not being deemed a high priority.

For Sport, the key top complaint issue is the condition of the leisure centres and the facilities they provide, such as swimming lessons. The leisure centres are cleaned regularly but sometimes the standards does not meet the customers.

A number of customers escalate their complaints to stage two of the policy, however it can often be the case that whilst the customer remains dissatisfied, the Council are unable to offer a different outcome to that at stage 1.

For example, complaints are received relating to planning application which have administered correctly, but has a great negative effect on the customer. It is likely, the customer will still feel aggrieved after their stage 1 response as the Council cannot remove the issue. As with a large proportion of stage 2 complaints, the majority of stage 2 complaints are not upheld.

### **Key trends**

In the latter half of 2016/17 and to date in 2017/18 there has been a decrease in the number of complaints received across City development, particularly around Planning & Sustainable Development and Culture & Sport. The number of upheld complaints has also declined over this period.

### **Learning points**

Many of the complaints received by City Developments relate to issues which have a negative impact on customer, even if all policies have been followed correctly. With this being the case it is difficult to discern improvements. However, the decrease in the number of complaints received is promising and has come about as a result of the 'Building Brilliant Customer Services' workshops that had been rolled out to many staff within City Development in late 2016 which had aimed to improve the quality of responses.

## **Cleaner Neighbourhoods**

### **Top complaint issues**

Parking services - Issues raised about parking services were similar in nature to last year. Many of the complaints are actually appeals against the receipt of a parking fine/fine for driving in a bus lane and the Parking services team has dealt with these using their appeals process. Common complaint types through the year have been around parking zones/passes for parking zones and about problems with broken/faulty ticket machines taking money and not giving (appropriate) tickets.

Street cleansing issues – These complaints have largely been general complaints about a perceived lack of street cleansing. There have been a small number of complaints about street cleaning machines supposedly causing damage to property. Unlike some previous years, there have been few complaints about seasonal accumulations of leaves.

### **Learning points:**

Cleaner Neighbourhoods Teams - The formal complaints continue to be dealt with by managers across the service and where the investigation identifies a failing in either a system or process managers have continued to use this as an opportunity to review how work is done and make improvements.

## **Customer Access**

### **Top complaint issues**

Complaints received by the Contact Centre have related to the level of service received, staff conduct and the level of service received. Broken down by service the Council Tax, Refuse/Waste and Housing Leeds.

### **Key trends**

In the context of the volume of calls taken at the Contact Centre, the number of complaints received is very low with 1 complaint received for every 3200 calls, with 40% fully upheld, 30% partially upheld and 30% not upheld. A reduction has been seen in the number of complaints received over the same period in 2015/16. When considering the pressures faced by the contact centre in managing a reduced workforce with a relatively high turnover of staff, coupled with pressures our customer face around their personal finances and the availability of services, the reduction seen is encouraging.

Peaks and troughs in customer contact are seen throughout the year. In most months typically somewhere between 10 and 20 complaints will be received. Peak volumes were received in June, July and October. The increase in complaints in the second half of the period under review has coincided with challenging periods around staffing levels and also the introduction of new IT systems which had seen delays and also teething problems once the systems were in place. In November new self-service systems have gone live and staffing levels have increased which has seen complaints reduce to lower levels.

### **Learning points**

Whilst the level of contact centre complaints have reduced over the 12 month period under review, focus remains on maintaining this reduction whilst balancing budget reductions and increased customer demand.

A new initiative has recently begun which has seen the recruitment of new staff to the contact centre as part of the apprentice scheme. The aim of the apprentice scheme is that this will ensure that staff remain in position for longer periods of time as they learn whilst they work and it is hoped that this can be expanded over time to provide greater levels of contact centre staffing.

As detailed in the customer relations pilot update, ways of expanding this approach and increasing the volume of complaints prevented at the first point of contact are being explored. Good results have been achieved through the first half of the year and the aim is to achieve resolution in 1 of 3 cases by modifying the way these calls are handled.

## **Housing Leeds**

### **Top Complaint Issues**

A large number of complaints were being received in regards to the quality of repairs and missed appointments/lack of communication. To resolve these issues for customers at first point of contact, the Responsive Repairs team have been working closely with the Contact Centre to train and develop staff to get it right first time. In addition to this, Leeds Building Service has developed a new system to improve the planning and scheduling of repairs that will have a specific impact in the East of the city

### **Key Trends:**

Analysis of complaints shows a high number relating to staff attitude/conduct; mainly linked to non-timely communication. To resolve these issues, bespoke Customer Care training was developed by the Customer Relations Manager for all customer facing staff. The training began in January 2017 with input from volunteer customers and 130 staff attended between January and March 2017. The course was further reviewed based on staff feedback and a further 37 sessions arranged between August and December 2017 – just under 450 staff.

### **Learning Points:**

Feedback on learning outcomes to all teams continues to be a priority. In addition to the Customer Care training for staff, Housing Leeds remains committed to raising staff awareness of equality issues holding a full programme of learning and training events during Diversity Month in September 2017. A recent complaint regarding gender change has resulted in a gender change guidance/procedure being developed across Leeds City Council led by Housing Leeds. We have also included the correct use of pronouns in our Customer Care training making it LGBT+ inclusive. We continue to receive a small but regular number of complaints per month regarding planned investment works and this has been taken into consideration during the procurement of new contractors. Customer Care being a key element of the assessment of their submission to be successfully awarded the contract.

## **Waste Management**

### **Top Complaint Issues**

Top complaint issues are: missed bins, followed by crew issues, then policy, and bin orders and deliveries, these four categories account for around 80% of the complaints received within the service, with complaints in relation to missed bins attributing to around 40% of the complaints received as a whole.

### **Key Trends:**

Figures tend to remain consistent throughout the year, with peaks occurring at various points. For example, complaints tend to slightly increase when our garden waste collection service resumes during February/March, and often peak during the summer months. There has been a slight increase in policy complaints, which shows as a spike in June. This is mainly attributable to the introduction of bin charging and customers not agreeing with the policy change. However missed bin complaint have gone down over the last 12 months from 50% of our total complaints to 40%.

### **Learning Points:**

Complaints in general are falling, which can also be attributed to the drop in missed bins, and indicates an overall improvement in service. The complaints relating to bin charging have started to decline and will drop further following the suspension of the garden waste for the winter period