

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Housing and Communities Committee 31 May 2017
Scrutiny Committee 21 June 2017

Housing and Community Care Complaints and Customer Feedback**Executive Director (Housing and Community Safety)****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report details the complaints received between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 across Housing and Community Care. It includes information on the number of Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints received and some examples of feedback from customer satisfaction surveys. It also summarises actions taken to improve services as a result of customer feedback.

1. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 In Perth and Kinross we value what people tell us about our services by way of complaints and other customer feedback. We use the information to support learning and improve services. We are committed to providing high quality services, however we do accept that sometimes things can go wrong, and when they do, we aim to resolve things quickly.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to establish and maintain a formal procedure for receiving and considering complaints by, or on behalf of, people who use services. This is enshrined in social work legislation as well as government guidance which asks local authorities to report annually on the complaints investigated and the outcomes of these. Across housing, community care and community safety, the service also reports on non-social work areas, including those relating to finance, local taxes and business support. This statutory requirement ceases for the reporting year 2017-18 due to the introduction of the new model Social Work Complaints Handling Procedure.
- 1.3 Procedures have been amended to reflect national requirements and recent changes introduced across Scotland from April 2017. All complaints will now be included in the Council's Annual Complaints Performance Report in accordance with the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. Changes are also being made to align NHS complaints and social work complaints to support services and improvements within the Perth and Kinross Health and Social Care Partnership.

2. PROGRESS SINCE LAST REPORT

- 2.1 The previous report presented to Housing and Health Committee on 25th of January 2017 (Report No 9 17/35) covered the 18 month period from April 2015 to September 2016. This report overlaps, but now aligns to a financial year reporting cycle and annual report. Progress has been made on the improvement actions highlighted in the previous report and are noted below.

- 2.2 The Customer Liaison Team supports the Quality Assurance Group for Social Work and the Complaints Scrutiny Group for housing which allows a consistent approach to scrutinising and learning from complaints.
- 2.3 The Customer Liaison Team have a full programme of staff training to all community care staff and will closely monitor performance and provide any further training as required. The Team is continuing to explore closer joint working with health colleagues and how information is shared and services improved.

3. ANALYSIS OF COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 This section summarises the types of complaints reported in the past year and the improvements introduced. Services have been undergoing significant transformational change to improve and alter the way they are delivered to meet rising demand, public expectation and challenging financial times for public services. This has a bearing on the number and type of complaints the service receives.

Table 1: No Complaints received

	2015/16	2016/17
Social work services		
Stage 1	46	65
Stage 2	13	20
Non social work services		
Stage 1	406	521
Stage 2	26	50

- 3.2 The table above shows that the majority of complaints about Social Work and non social work services were resolved at the first point of contact by frontline services.

3.3 Complaint Numbers in Context

Although the numbers of complaints recorded has increased, they are low compared to the number of service users, but still an important source of feedback about services.

Table 2: Complaints in relation to total service users/tenants

Service or Team	Number	Number	Number of Complaints & %	Number of Complaints & %
	2015/16	2016-17	2015-16	2016-17
Comm Care	10,681 (users)	10,652 (users)	46 (0.43%)*FLR	65
			13	20

			(0.12%)**Invest	
Housing Repairs	24,401 (repairs)	21,606 (repairs)	169 (0.7%) *FLR	267
			9 (0.04%) **Invest	17
Area Housing Teams	7,457 (houses)	7,467 (houses)	118 (1.6%) *FLR	148
			4 (0.08%) **Invest	23

*FLR Front Line Resolution (Stage 1)

** Investigation (Stage 2)

3.4 Social Work Complaints (Community Care)

The figures show that complaints for this reporting year are higher than last year. In the reporting year, 65 complaints were dealt with by frontline staff, with a smaller number being investigated (20) at stage 2. Of the 20 stage 2 complaints, 3 (18%) were upheld. The main areas of complaint related to learning disabilities, Perth City team and care at home services. The reasons were primarily due to provision of services.

Of the 20 investigations:-

- Service Provision (including quality and reduction of services) represents the largest reason for complaints, but we also received complaints in relation to staff conduct/attitude
- Complaints are evenly spread across a number of teams with no specific team highlighted
- All 20 complainants (100%) received an acknowledgement within the target time set of 5 working days
- 12 (67%) of complainants received their detailed response within the target time set of 28 days or where an extension had been agreed. 2 complaints were withdrawn before the final response was sent
- Five Complaints Review Committees were held in the reporting period

3.5 Other Service Complaints (Non Social Work Complaints)

The majority of complaints about housing, finance and business support services were also resolved at the first point of contact by frontline services. Between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017 there were 521 complaints which were dealt with and resolved by frontline services and 50 complaints which were investigated under stage 2. Of those investigated:-

- Housing Repairs had the largest number of the 50 stage 2 complaints, followed by some of the Area Teams, which reflects the volume of services provided in these areas
- The main reason for the complaints was provision of services or issues with employees

- 48 (96%) received their acknowledgements within the target time of 3 working days
- 37 (79%) of the complainants received their response within the target time of 20 working days. Where responses were delayed, complainants were given information about a new target date

The increase in complaints from last year may be a reflection of the considerable amount of training carried out across the service to emphasise the importance of recording accurately complaints activity.

3.6 Key Improvement Areas

Working with management teams improvement actions have been implemented and include:-

- Staff have been reminded of the Customer Service Standards and their responsibilities with regard to returning calls and correspondence
- Improved process for calculating charges for services and improved the information given to service users and their families
- Reiterated the importance to staff and contractors of wearing and carrying ID badges
- Through our Repairs Transformation Project we are looking at ways to improve communication with tenants about the status of their repairs
- Staff have been challenged about inappropriate parking of Council vehicles
- Improved signage and reviewed how we deal with customers at one rural office

3.7 Themes and Lessons Learned

- Poor customer care and communication are a key element of many of the complaints we deal with
- Issues around charging for services in Community Care, especially the delay in sending out invoices had caused a spike in complaints activity within Finance and Support Services, however the improvement actions have resulted in a reduction of these type of complaints
- Failure to communicate clearly or timeously with customers often causes complaints and can result in them escalating, often out of proportion to the initial problem
- Complaints handling is not consistent across the three areas of the service, although with the change to the Social Work process there are opportunities to share good practice now across the service
- In the second half of the year we received no complaints concerning parking or use of ID badges indicating that practice had improved in this area after being raised as an issue of concern

- 3.8 In addition to improvements undertaken with individual teams and services, a number of actions have been introduced to help support and improve how we handle complaints and improve the customer experience.

These include:-

- Ensuing all improvement actions relating to specific complaints are completed
- Working to fully introduce and embed the new Social Work procedure
- Working with Health colleagues on “joint” complaints
- Monitoring improvement actions across the service and where appropriate share the learning
- Monitoring decisions made by the SPSO concerning other public bodies and share the learning where appropriate

4. Customer Satisfaction

We regularly gather information from people about the services they receive, some of which is summarised in the table below.

4.1 Housing Services

Indicators	*2013-15	**2015-17
% of tenants satisfied with Perth and Kinross Council as a landlord	84.5	85%
% of tenants who have had a repair completed in the last year satisfied with the service they received	90.43%	90%
% of Gypsy/Travellers satisfied with the management of our Gypsy/Travellers site	N/A	69%
% of tenants who think the rent for their property represents good value for money?	84%	85%
% of tenants satisfied are you with the quality of their home?	85%	85%

*Source: Tenant Satisfaction survey April 2013.
7,300 surveys sent out, 858 returned (response rate 11.75%)

**Source: Tenant Satisfaction survey April 2016.
7,400 surveys sent out, 1,536 returned (response rate 20%)

- 4.2 Housing Services satisfaction levels remained similar across all indicators. Some initiatives introduced as a result of feedback included the introduction of Take the Lead project with the Environment Services to re-inforce messages about dog-fouling and a Tenant Welcome Pack to enhance the experience of new tenants moving into their home.

4.3 Adult Social Work and Social Care

<u>Specific Area of Service Adult Social Work and Social Care</u>	*2016	**2017
% of service users who agreed that they were satisfied with the overall service they received	90.1%	86.7%
% of service users who agreed that they were supported to live as independently as possible	84.9%	80.1%
% of service users who agreed that they received a high quality service	87.5%	85.8%
% of service users who agreed that they can rely on the services that they receive	85.4%	80.6%
% of service users who agreed they were treated with dignity and respect	N/A	89%
% of service users who agreed they were treated with compassion and understanding	N/A	86.3%

*Source: Community Care survey May-June 2016.

Sample size 900 service users, of whom 242 responded (Response rate 26.9%)

** Source: Adult Social Work and Social Care survey April-May 2017.

Sample size 1,200 service users of whom 344 responded (Response rate 28.6%)

4.4 In response to this feedback the Community Care Management Team have undertaken a number of improvement actions including:-

- Discussions with Care at Home providers about their quality and contractual arrangements
- Followed up with respondents who have highlighted areas of concern around their support to ensure that these were addressed and alternatives steps put in place
- Reviewed communication and information about charging and how this would be embedded in the outcome focussed assessment/review process

Staff are in the process of identifying improvement actions based on this year's survey concluded in May 2017.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1 This report summarises the Social Work and other service complaints received during 2016/17.

5.2 The Committee is asked to:-

- (i) Note the contents of this report and the impact that feedback from customers has had on improving services.
- (ii) Note the improvement actions noted to support and improve how we handle complaints and improve the customer experience.

5.3 The Committee is asked to refer this report to the Scrutiny Committee for their consideration.

Author

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Approved

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1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes/None
Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement	None
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	None
Workforce	None
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	None
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	None
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	None
Risk	None
Consultation	
Internal	Yews
External	None
Communication	
Communications Plan	None

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

- 1.1 The Perth and Kinross Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2023 and Perth and Kinross Council Corporate plan 2013-18 have five outcomes which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. All are relevant to this report.

Corporate Plan

As above

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 None

Workforce

- 2.2 None

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

2.3 None

3. Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties.
- 3.2 The proposals have been considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
- (i) Assessed as **not relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.3 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals. However, no action is required as the Act does not apply to the matter presented in this report. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

Sustainability

3.4 None

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The Head of Legal & Governance Services has been consulted and there are no direct legal implications of this report.

Risk

- 3.6 The Housing and Community Care Senior Management Team regularly reviews complaints and identifies areas for action.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 The Heads of Finance and Legal & Governance Services have been consulted on this report.

External

- 4.2 The Tenant Committee Reporting Panel was consulted on the report. They commented that the 'report emphasises the need for complaints to be dealt with and recorded in a clear and precise way.'

5. Communication

- 5.1 None

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

3. APPENDICES

Detailed complaints monitoring

Appendix 1

Community Care Stage 2 - 1 April 2015 – 31st March 2017

Table 1: Complaints Activity and Performance

Number of Stage 2 complaints	No. & % ack by target date	No. & % responded to by target date	No. & % upheld	No. & % satisfied with response	Number progressing to Complaints Review Committee
13 (2015/16)	10 (77%)	7 (64%)	4 (36%)	11 (100%)	0
20 (2016/17)	20 (100%)	12 (71%)	3 (18%)	11 (55%)	3*

* In addition to the 3 CRCs escalated from Stage 2 there were an additional 2 CRCs that we were directed to hold as a result of decisions from the SPSO.

Table 2: Teams Involved

Team Concerned	Number of Stage 2 (2015/16)	Number of Stage 2 (2016/17)
SW Perth City	2	5
Learning Disabilities	0	5
Care at Home	0	2
Finance Charging	1	2
SW Access Team	1	2
Community Mental Health Team	1	1
SW South/Finance Charging	1	1
AHT North/ Safer Communities	2	0
Community Mental Health Team	1	1
SW North	1	0
Hospital Discharge Team	1	0
SW South	0	1
Occupational Therapy	1	0
SW Perth City/ Finance Charging	0	1
AHT South/ Safer Communities	1	0
SW North/Care at Home	1	0
Total	13	20

Table 3: What was the focus of the complaints?

	Employee	Service provision	Communication	Policy and procedure	Other	Equal
2015/16	2	8	0	3	0	0
2016/17	2	16	0	2	0	0

Community Care Complaints dealt with at Stage 1

In addition to the complaints dealt with at stage 2, between April 2016 and Mar 2017 we had 65 complaints that were dealt with at stage 1 primarily by the teams themselves and sometimes by the Customer Liaison Team. Between April 2016 and Sep 2016 we had 32 complaints dealt with at Stage 1.

The main area dealing with complaints informally was the Care at Home Service and the Learning Disability Team, which is understandable due to the immediate and personal nature of these services and the large number of service users and carers involved. The other area identified, which was reflected in the formal complaints data, concerned staff conduct / attitude and service users feeling that they received a poor quality or reduced service. Many of these issues were dealt with to the complainants' satisfaction when a member of staff made prompt contact and clarified the situation and also made an apology, where this was required.

Appendix 2

Complaints dealt with under Corporate Complaints Procedure, which comprise Housing and Finance and Support Services.

Table 1: Complaints Activity and Performance

Number of Stage 2 complaints	No. & % ack by target date	No. & % responded to by target date	No. & % of complaints upheld
26 (2015-16)	25 (95%)	13 (50%)	19 (73%)
50 (2016-17)	48 (96%)	37 (74%)	23 (46%)

Table 2: Teams involved

Team Concerned	Number of Stage 2 (2015/16)	Number of Stage 2 (2016/17)
Housing Repairs and Imp	8	9
Area Team North	2	9
HAC Housing Access	2	4
Area Team Letham	0	5
Area Team City	0	6
Area Team South	1	3
Local Taxes	4	1
Area Housing Team Letham Repairs	0	3
Finance Charging	3	1
Benefits	0	1
HAC Homeless	1	0
Welfare Rights	0	0
Scottish Welfare Fund	0	1
Housing	0	1
CSC/HRIS	0	2
Area Housing Team City/HRIS	1	1
Area Housing Team North/Benefits	1	0
Area Housing Team North/HRIS	1	0
Customer Service Centre	2	0
Area Housing Team City Repairs	0	1
Housing	0	1
Area Housing Team North Repairs	0	1
Safer Communities	0	1
Total	26	50

Table 3: What was the focus of the complaints?

	Employee	Service provision	Communication	Policy and procedure	Other	Equal
2015/16	3*	21	0	3*	0	0
2016/17	5	44	0	1	0	0

* Covers more than one category

Complaints dealt with at Stage 1

In addition to the complaints dealt with by way of Investigation Stage 2 the new model CHP expects staff to deal with complaints raised with them by way of Front Line Resolution (Stage1).

In 2016-17 staff in Housing and Finance and Support Services dealt with 521 stage 1 complaints and in the. Of these complaints raised at stage 1 the numbers escalating to Investigation are very small indicating that staff are dealing with these complaints well and more importantly to the customer's satisfaction.