

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL**Scrutiny Committee – 18 September 2013****COUNCIL COMPLAINTS REPORT FOR APRIL 2012 – MARCH 2013****Report by Head of Legal Services****PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report outlines the performance of the Council Complaints Procedure for the period April 2012 to March 2013.

1. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 This report presents the complaints figures from the last year of operation of the Council's two stage complaints procedure which was originally introduced in September 2008. The first stage of this procedure was an investigation carried out by the relevant Service. If the complainant remained dissatisfied, then a further review or investigation was carried out by the Council Complaints Team based in Legal Services on behalf of the Chief Executive or Depute Chief Executive.
- 1.2 The information presented in this report draws on information extracted from the Council's electronic Complaints Relationship Management system. This system holds all the Council's complaint information including Children's Services and Community Care complaints. These complaints are also reported separately to the Scrutiny Committee
- 1.3 Since the 1 April a new Complaints Handling Procedure has been operated by the Council in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman model. This procedure also has two opportunities to deal with complaints internally; a Front Line Resolution stage and an Investigation stage, with the possibility of a third stage for Social Work complaints depending on the legislative requirements of the statutory social work complaints regime.

2. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

- 2.1 The number of complaints received during each six-monthly period since October 2007 is given below.

Period	Stage 1	Stage 2	Percentage Escalated
Oct 2007 – March 2008	58	15	26%
April 2008 – Aug 2008	71	18	25%
Sept 2008 – March 2009	64	24	38%
Apr 2009 – Sept 2009	47	21	45%
Oct 2009 – March 2010	37	20	54%
April 2010 – Sept 2010	34	19	56%
Oct 2010 – March 2011	39	23	59%
April 2011 – Sept 2011	37	23	62%
Oct 2011 – March 2012	42	25	59%
April 2012 – Sept 2012	59	29	49%
Oct 2012 – March 2013	74	47	64%

The number of stage 1 and 2 complaints received has risen significantly during the last year.

The increase in the number of stage 2 complaints received in the last six months coincided with the implementation of the new Complaints Handling System and resulted in some stage 2 complaints taking considerably longer to complete that the stated deadline of 15 working days.

2.2 Stage 1 complaints received by Service

Service	Percentage of Complaints		
	Oct 11 – Mar 12	Apr 12 – Sept 12	Oct 12 – Mar 13
Chief Executive's	4%	3%	4%
Education & Children's Services	14%	22%	19%
Environment Service	59%	51%	47%
Housing & Community Care	21%	24%	30%

2.3 Stage 1 Complaints received by Category

Category	Percentage of Complaints		
	Oct 11 – Mar 12	Apr 12 – Sept 12	Oct 12 – Mar 13
Service Delivery	59%	41%	43%
Staff Attitude/Staff Performance	36%	47%	49%
Policy/Procedure	5%	12%	8%

Complaints are categorised as shown. Over the last 12 months that there has been a decrease in complaints about service delivery and an increase in complaints regarding staff attitude / staff performance. This trend will be monitored over the next financial year and further complaints training for staff is being planned for autumn 2013.

3 RESPONSIVENESS TO COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 The Council's former complaints procedure specified that complaints should be acknowledged within five working days and should receive a response within 15 within working days

	Oct 11 – Mar 12		Apr 12 – Sept 12		Oct 12 – Mar 13	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Acknowledged within five working days	100%	95%	98%	93%	99%	90%
Full response within target	83%	79%	75%	81%	78%	79%

- 3.2 The rate of response for acknowledgements is very good but there was a slight decrease in response times over the last two periods.
- 3.3 The level of full response for stage 1 complaints is very consistent, although there was also a decrease in response over the last two periods.
- 3.4 The response rate for stage 2 complaints remained relatively steady over the last two periods although on the low side. As with Stage 1 complaints this was due to a number of complaints which were both difficult and complex to investigate.

- 3.5 Classifying completed Stage 2 complaints changed in January 2012, to include the normal 15 working day target or a timescale agreed with the complainant. Where the complainant has expressed dissatisfaction with the extended timescale, the complaint is classified as exceeding the deadline.

4. OUTCOME OF COMPLETED STAGE 2 INVESTIGATIONS

	Chief Executives	Education & Children's Services	Environment Services	Housing & Community Care	Total
Complaints	2	9	45	20	76
Complaint Points	9	25	67	138	239
Point Upheld	0	6	6	32	44
Points Partially Upheld	1	4	3	4	12
Points No conclusion	0	2	5	8	15
Points Not Upheld	8	13	53	94	168

- 4.1 Stage 1 investigations were carried out by Investigating Officers within each Service. The Services had their own stage 1 response letter format and it was not standard practice for them to detail whether the complaint was upheld or not. Under the new Complaints Handling Procedure it is now standard for Services to detail the outcome of each complaint.

5. PROPOSALS

There are no proposals in regard to this report.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION(S)

This is the last report in regard to the Councils stage 1 and stage 2 complaints procedure.

It is recommended that the Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) Consider and comment on this report.
- (ii) Note that a report detailing the first three months of the operation of the new Complaints Handling Procedure has been presented to the Scrutiny Committee in a separate report.

Author(s)

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Approved

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Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The undernoted table should be completed for all reports. Where the answer is 'yes', the relevant section(s) should also be completed. Where the answer is 'no', the relevant section(s) should be marked 'not available (n/a)'.

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	No
Corporate Plan	No
Resource Implications	
Financial	No
Workforce	No
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	No
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	No
Strategic Environmental Assessment	No
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	No
Legal and Governance	No
Risk	
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	No
Communication	
Communications Plan	No

2. Consultation

Internal

- 2.1 Each Service's Complaints Co-ordinator was consulted during the preparation of this report.