

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY & AUDIT COMMITTEE – 21 JUNE 2016

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS STATISTICS

REPORT BY RICHARD STIFF, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to highlight the complaint statistics and satisfaction for 2015/16 and to update members on the action being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the complaints handling procedure and to learn from complaints.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee consider:-

- (i) the key performance indicators on complaints closed between 1 January 2016 and 31 March 2016; and
- (ii) the results of the satisfaction survey sent to everyone who made a complaint which was closed during 2015/16.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Angus is a place where a first class quality of life can be enjoyed by all.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Since 1 April 2013, the council has been operating the new Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities as required by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

3.2 During 2015/16 a total of 251 complaints were recorded as closed off during the year.

4. COMPLAINTS STATISTICS

4.1 Analysis of key indicators for 2015/16 shows that:-

- Of the 207 complaints received, 177 complaints were recorded as closed off during the year.
- 131 complaints were closed at the frontline resolution stage, 43 complaints at Stage 2 and 3 complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2.
- Of the Stage 1 complaints received 39 were upheld, 52 not upheld and 40 partially upheld.
- Of the Stage 2 complaints received 5 were upheld, 17 not upheld and 21 partially upheld.
- Of the escalated Stage 2 complaints, 3 complaints were not upheld.
- The average time, in working days, for a full response to be issued at each stage was Stage 1 – 12.1 days, Stage 2 - 25.4 days and Stage 2 escalated days 28 days.

4.2 In accordance with SPSO guidance Stage 1 complaints should be dealt with within five working days and Stage 2 complaints 20 working days.

- The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days:-

Stage 1	74 (56.5%)
Stage 2	21 (48.8%)
Stage 2 escalated	2 (66.7%)

- The number and percentage of complaints where an extension of 5 or 20 working days timeline had been authorised:-

Stage 1	5 (3.8%)
Stage 2	1 (2.3%)

4.3 A full copy of the indicators is attached at [Appendix 1](#).

5. ANALYSIS OF FIGURES

5.1 It is clear from the figures that there is still some way to go in fully meeting the requirements of the Council Complaints Handling Procedures. Officers should be reminded of the timescales to resolve issues and endeavour to do so within the prescribed timescales or seek an extension. Complaints are a learning tool for directorates, to improve service delivery or to review how we implement our policies.

6. SATISFACTION WITH THE COMPLAINTS PROCESS

6.1 Indicator 7 of the Performance Management Framework requires councils to report on customer satisfaction with the complaints process. To achieve this, we issue satisfaction surveys six weeks after the complaint has been closed to all complainers. During 2015/16 5 completed questionnaires were returned.

6.2 The results for 2015/16 are shown in the table below. The high levels of dissatisfaction could reflect that the survey sample consisted entirely of people who had made complaints about the council, the majority of which were not upheld. Accordingly, in future surveys, it will be highlighted that the questionnaire is about the complaints process rather than the councils alleged failure.

1. Is our complaints handling procedure easy to follow?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	80.00%	4
No	20.00%	1
Unaware of complaints handling procedure	0	0
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

2. If the investigation into your complaint took longer than 20 working days, did the council keep you informed on the progress of your complaint?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.00%	3
No	20.00%	1
Not applicable	20.00%	1
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

3. Did we address all the issues raised in your complaint?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.00%	3
No	40.00%	2
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

4. Were you satisfied with the quality and clarity of our response?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	40.00%	2
No	60.0%	3
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

5. Did we treat you fairly when dealing with your complaint?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	60.00%	3
No	40.00%	2
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

6. Even if you did not agree with the outcome, overall how satisfied are you that we handled your complaint well?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Very satisfied	40.00%	2
Fairly satisfied	20.00%	1
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	20.00%	1
Fairly dissatisfied	0	0
Very dissatisfied	20.0%	1
Other (please specify)		0
<i>answered question</i>		5
<i>skipped question</i>		0

7. If you would like to make any further comments or suggestions, please do so.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	5
<i>answered question</i>	3
<i>skipped question</i>	2

**The percentages in this table may not add up to 100% in each question due to some people having answered more than one option.*

7. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

- 7.1 Each Directorate has been asked to identify and act on the key learning points from the complaints received about their service.
- 7.2 Complaints received from 1 April-31 March are detailed in the attached Appendix 2, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 along with key learning points and procedures/processes that have changed as a result of the complaint.

8. SPSO

- 8.1 Eight complaints were taken to the SPSO following the outcome of the investigation stage.
- 8.2 The possible outcomes from an SPSO investigation are as follows:
1. Cannot investigate compensation claims.
 2. Did not investigate after contacting the Investigating Officer.
 3. Investigated – not upheld.
 4. Did not take further as complainer had not progressed the complaint with Angus Council.
 5. Did not investigate as no reliable way to establish what happened.
 6. Cannot investigate compensation claims.
 7. Could not investigate as complainant had an alternative right of appeal.
 8. Ongoing.

9. COMPLIMENTS

- 9.1 At the last meeting of the Committee, it was agreed that mechanism be put in place to record compliments. With effect from 1 April 2016 compliments will be recorded and reported to committee in due course.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

11. CONSULTATION

- 11.1 The Strategic Directors of Children and Learning, Communities and Resources, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Corporate Improvement and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

REPORT AUTHOR: Richard Stiff
EMAIL DETAILS: StiffR@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices:-

Appendix 1 – Complaints Management Reporting
Appendix 2 – Learning from Complaints – Resources
Appendix 3 – Learning from Complaints – Communities
Appendix 4 – Learning from Complaints – People