

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 23 AUGUST 2022**

**QUARTERLY 1 COMPLAINTS REPORT – 1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2022**

**REPORT BY JACKIE BUCHANAN, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this report is to highlight the complaints received in Quarter 1 from 1 April – 30 June 2022 and to assure members that work is ongoing to learn from complaints received by Angus Council.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

- (i) Notes the complaints statistics for the period 1 April – 30 June 2022; and
- (ii) Notes the number of records received via the online system as detailed in the Appendices.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/COUNCIL PLAN**

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcome contained within the Community Plan:

- Angus is a safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable community.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the responsible body for complaints. They set and monitor complaints handling standards for the public sector in Scotland. These standards are published as the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) and define how they expect the public service sector to handle complaints quickly and simply, with local and early resolution by empowered and well-trained staff.

This report provides the complaint statistics for Quarter 1 of 2022 and details the complaints received by department within the Appendices.

**CONTACT US**

The system used by Angus Council to drive its digital transformation is Granicus. The platform has three elements

- 1. **Self** – The digital team use Self to build and publish online forms on MyAngus such as: to report a missed bin, freedom of information enquiry or council tax payments
- 2. **Dash** – the workflow system used to view and administer these online requests
- 3. **Service** – the system used by ACCESS colleagues to manage enquiries.

The detail within the appendices is a breakdown of the records logged by customers using the online tool.

**4. 2022 QUARTER 1 SUMMARY**

In Quarter 1, 1 April – 30 June 2022, Angus Council received 63 complaints.

<b>Findings</b>	<b>1 Apr-30June 2022 Quarter 1</b>
Service Improvement	3
Communication Failure	6
Misunderstanding of Council Policies	6

Council Not at Fault	6
Communication Failure	9
Failing to meet customer expectations	22
Failure to provide service	3
Treatment or attitude of a staff member	1
Not a corporate complaint	1
Other	4
Service Request	1
Delay in responding to enquiries & requests	1
Total	63

## 5. Performance Indicators

### 5.1 Indicator One – Complaints received per 1,000 population

To determine the number of complaints received per 1,000 population, we count those received at Stage 1 and received directly at Stage 2.

The population of Angus in 2022 is 116,040

The total number of complaints received per 1000 population in Quarter 1 is 0.6

### 5.2 Indicator Two – Closed complaints

Category	Quarter 1	%
Stage 1 complaints	48	77.4%
Stage 2 complaints	4	6.5%
Escalated Stage 2	11	17.5%
Total Closed	63	

The total number of complaints received in Quarter 1 is 63. Such complaints may have arisen in a previous quarter.

### 5.3 Indicator Three – complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

There is a requirement for a formal outcome to be recorded for each complaint. These outcomes are “upheld”, “partially upheld” or “not upheld”.

If it were found that the correct procedures had been followed or the service provided was as expected, a complaint would be recorded as “not upheld”. However, if this was not the case the complaint would be recorded as “upheld”. Where there are several points to a complaint and the decisions are a mixture of “upheld” and “not upheld”, the complaint is recorded as “partially upheld” overall. If an issue is resolved before it becomes a complaint, then this is recorded as “resolved.” This category came into operation on 1 April 2021.

Category	1 Apr-30 June 2022 Quarter 1	%
Stage 1 Upheld	18	37.5%
Stage 1 Not Upheld	14	29.2%
Stage 1 Partially Upheld	16	33.3%
<b>Total Stage 1</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100%</b>
Stage 2 Upheld	1	25%
Stage 2 Not Upheld	1	25%
Stage 2 Partially Upheld	2	50%
<b>Total Stage 2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>
Stage 2 Escalated Upheld	2	18.2%
Stage 2 Escalated Not Upheld	5	45.4%
Stage 2 Escalated Partially Upheld	4	36.4%
<b>Total Stage 2 Escalated</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>100%</b>
Total Closed	63	

5.4 **Indicator Four** – The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

The table below shows the average working days taken to respond to complaints at each stage of the complaint's procedure.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Following Escalation
	Q1	Q1	Q1
Sum of the total number of working days taken for all complaints closed at -	154	141	100
Number of complaints – closed	48	4	11
The average time in working days for a full response to complaints	3.2 days	35.3 days	9.1 days

5.5 **Indicator Five** – The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 days.

We are required to respond to a Stage 1 complaint within 5 working days and a Stage 2 complaint within 20 working days.

Percentage of complaints closed within timescale	1 Apr-30Jun 2022 Quarter 1	
Stage 1	87.5%	42
Stage 2	0.0%	0
Escalated Stage 2	81.8%	9

5.6 **Indicator Six** – The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the 5 and 20 working day timeline has been authorised.

Where a response has taken longer to be issued, an update is given to the complainant with a new date for response.

Stage 1 complaints may be extended by a further 5 days. The timeframe for an extension to a Stage 2 complaint investigation is also five days however, complex complaints may take substantially longer to close.

Number of complaints with an extension	1 Apr-30Jun 2022 Quarter 1	
Stage 1	18.8%	9
Stage 2	0.0%	0
Stage 2 Escalated	100%	11

5.7 Complaints per Service Area

The Scrutiny & Audit Committee on 23 June 2022 requested that further information highlighting complaints by service area and the attached **Appendices** shows this broken down by Directorate and service area. This data relates to complaints only.

## 5.8 Compliments

Our customers have an opportunity to submit compliments via the website, by contacting staff directly or via Accessline. Below is an example of the compliments received in the first quarter.

### Received via email

- Tenant assisted with a Tenant Grant Fund thanked the staff member for the assistance and requested that it be recorded

### Received via Accessline

- I drive regularly up and down the dual carriageway and wanted to record that what a difference this weekend as all the rubbish and bags which people dump had all gone from Forfar towards Dundee. Well done on keeping Angus looking good especially when we head into the tourist season as it gives a much better impression
- The motivation for this letter is to compliment the hard work and clear effort I witnessed whilst travelling down the A90 on Saturday 21 May. I traverse this road quite frequently for work related reasons and have recently noticed a massive difference in the cleanliness at the side of the dual carriageway, notably, in Angus. Seeing the clean-up crew in their full orange Hi-vis PPE, with what I can only describe as a landfill in the back of the pickup was truly and excellent sight. People are too quick to complain about wrong doings, so I felt it necessary to write to yourselves to give a compliment for professionalism and for looking after our roads safely and very efficiently. I sincerely hope all councils will take note, not only as a benefit to the environment, but a benefit to people who appreciate the work the council teams have to do, it is a dangerous job and should be unnecessary, but your team clearly strive above all other I have seen on my travels.
- Saw a group of guys in Hi-vis jackets carrying white bags cleaning up the sides of the A90 and just want to say what a great job they were doing
- Music Camp – A big thank you to all instructors, organisers for a great weekend of music and fun.
- Music Camp – A great big thank you to you and your staff for giving the young people such a fabulous music camp. You really have done them proud. The string Calypso was just brilliant, and the wind arrangement of Funky Town was awesome. What an impressive collection of young musicians. Thank you again for giving them such a positive experience that they will benefit from for years to come. My son has had a massive boost to his confidence and happiness.

## 5.9 Staff Training

The SPSO also requires all staff to be familiar with the process for handling complaints and an E-Learning module was launched in January 2022 which is mandatory for all staff to undertake.

To date 708 members of the organisation have completed the E-Learning course.

## 5.10 Complaint Actions and Outcomes

In order to demonstrate that as an organisation we are learning from the findings of complaints, the digital system records any lessons learned.

The highest number of complaints were received by those services providing frontline services. Waste collections, housing, parks and cemeteries, council tax collection enquiries and issues within schools/school meals/school transport.

These complaints are quickly addressed and relate mainly to misunderstanding of council policy, delays in responses being issued or communication failure. Communication with customers remains one of the key issues in relation to the complaints raised. Every effort is being made to ensure that this situation improves and communication with our customers is key in terms of expectations etc. However, it has to be recognised that as we reduce and stop a number of things that we do, this inevitably increases the number of complaints. The impact of reduced resources invariably means that it takes longer to respond to enquiries. As a council we are doing less with less and the impact will be seen as customers' expectations have not reduced in line with our reducing capacity to undertake all the services we have previously carried out, or our need to prioritise some services over others.

Below is a sample of the changes made as a direct result of a complaint being received.

You Said	We Did
School absence reporting procedures should be reviewed and a more robust approach developed to ensure that when children are absent from school, this is consistently followed up with parents	A review of Attendance Default Procedures was included in the Angus Education Plan for 21-22. This action was completed and the revised procedures will be issued to all schools for session 22-23.

## 6. FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There are no differential impacts on persons with protected characteristics.

## 7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive and all Directors have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**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.

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**Appendices: Breakdown of Complaints by Service Area**



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

**Step 1**

**Name of Proposal – Quarterly Complaints Report – 1 July – 30 September 2021**

**Step 2**

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment **Yes/No**

**(A)** If Yes, please choose from the following options **all** reasons why a full EIA/FSD is not required:

(i) It does not impact on people **Yes/No**

(ii) It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics **Yes/No**

(iii) It is for information only **Yes/No**

(iv) It is reflective e.g. of budget spend over a financial year

**Yes/No** (v) It is technical

**Yes/No**

If you have answered yes to any of points above, please go to **Step 16**, and sign off the Assessment.

**(B)** If you have answered No to the above, please indicate the following: Is this a full

Equality Impact Assessment

**Yes/No**

Is this a Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment

**Yes/No**

If you have answered Yes to either or both of the above, continue with Step 3.

If your proposal is a **strategy** please ensure you complete Step 13 which is the Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment.

**Step 3**

(i) Lead Directorate/Service: Legal & Democratic Services

(ii) Are there any **relevant** statutory requirements affecting this proposal? If so, please describe.

N/A

(iii)What is the aim of the proposal? Please give full details.

N/A

(iv)Is it a new proposal? Yes/**No** Please indicate OR

Is it a review of e.g. an existing budget saving, report, strategy, policy, service review, procedure or function? Yes/**No** Please indicate

**Step 4: Which people does your proposal involve or have consequences for?**

Please indicate all which apply: Employees Yes/No

Job Applicants Yes/No

Service users Yes/No Members of the public Yes/No

**Step 5: List the evidence/data/research that has been used in this assessment (links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance). This could include:**

**Internal data** (e.g. customer satisfaction surveys; equality monitoring data; customer complaints).

**Internal consultation** (e.g. with staff, trade unions and any other services affected).

**External data** (e.g. Census, equality reports, equality evidence finder, performance reports, research, available statistics)

**External consultation** (e.g. partner organisations, national organisations, community groups, other councils).

**Other** (general information as appropriate).

**Step 6: Evidence Gaps.**

Are there any gaps in the equality information you currently hold? Yes/No

If yes, please state what they are, and what measures you will take to obtain the evidence you need.

**Step 7: Are there potential differential impacts on protected characteristic groups?** Please complete for each group, including details of the potential impact on those affected. Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from **Covid-19**.

**Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each group. Please state the reason(s) why.**

Age

**Impact**

Disability

**Impact**

Gender reassignment

**Impact**

Marriage and Civil Partnership

**Impact**

Pregnancy/Maternity

**Impact**

Race - (includes Gypsy Travellers)

**Impact**

Religion or Belief

**Impact**

Sex

**Impact**

Sexual orientation

**Impact**

**Step 8: Consultation with any of the groups potentially affected**

If you have consulted with any group potentially affected, please give details of how this was done and what the results were.

If you have not consulted with any group potentially affected, how have you ensured that you can make an informed decision about mitigating action of any negative impact (Step 9)?

**Step 9: What mitigating steps will be taken to remove or reduce potentially negative impacts?**

**Step 10: If a potentially negative impact has been identified, please state below the justification.**

**Step 11: In what way does this proposal contribute to any or all of the public sector equality duty to:** eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people of different protected characteristics?

**Step 12: Is there any action which could be taken to advance equalities in relation to this proposal?**

**Step 13: FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY**

This step is only applicable to **strategies** which are key, high level decisions. If your proposal is **not** a strategy, please leave this Step blank, and go to Step 14.

Links to data sources, information etc which you may find useful are in the Guidance.



**Step 13(A) What evidence do you have about any socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome in relation to this strategic issue?**

**Step 13(B) Please state if there are any gaps in socio-economic evidence for this strategy and how you will take measures to gather the evidence you need.**

**Step 13(C) Are there any potential impacts this strategy may have specifically on the undernoted groupings?** Please remember to take into account any particular impact resulting from Covid-19.

**Please state if there is a potentially positive, negative, neutral or unknown impact for each grouping.**

**Low and/or No Wealth** (e.g. those with enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provision for the future).

**Impact**

**Material Deprivation** (i.e. those unable to access basic goods and services e.g. repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, leisure and hobbies).

**Impact**

**Area Deprivation** (i.e. where people live (e.g. rural areas), or where they work (e.g. accessibility of transport)).

**Impact**

**Socio-economic Background** i.e. social class including parents' education, people's employment and income.

**Impact**

**Other** – please indicate

**Step 13(D) Please state below if there are measures which could be taken to reduce socio-economic disadvantage/inequalities of outcome.**

**Step 14: What arrangements will be put in place to monitor and review the Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment?**

**Step 15: Where will this Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment be published?**

**Step 16: Sign off and Authorisation.** Please state name, post, and date for each:

Prepared by: Elaine Whittet, Legal & Democratic Services

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips 16 August 2022

Approved by: Jackie Buchanan – 16 August 2022

NB. There are several worked examples of separate EIA and FSD Assessments in the Guidance which may be of use to you.