

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2022

COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT – 1 JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

REPORT BY JACKIE BUCHANAN, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to highlight the complaints received in Quarter 2 from 1 July – 30 September 2022 and to assure members that work is ongoing to learn from complaints received by Angus Council. The Report also includes details of compliments received during the period.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee notes for the period 1 July – 30 September 2022: -

- (i) the complaints statistics for the period;
- (ii) the compliments statistics for the period; and
- (iii) the complaints received by service.

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.

The SPSO definition of a complaint in the model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) is:

‘An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more member of the public about the local authority’s action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the local authority’.

In April 2021 the revised Complaints Handling Procedure was adopted by all Local Authorities on 1 April 2021. The main changes are:

- The definition of a complaint
- The number of stages in a complaint
- Timescales at each stage of a complaint
- The requirement to record, report and publicise complaints information

On completion of this review the model CHP the main changes included:

- The addition of a new outcome “Resolution”

Work has been underway to allow Angus Council to report on the Resolution category and accordingly, this report details, all records and outcomes from 1 April 2022.

In terms of resolution the complainant and the council agree what action will be taken to resolve the matter. Where a complaint is resolved, it is not usually necessary to continue investigating, although we can choose to do so, to identify learning etc.

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 appendix is a breakdown of the records logged by customers using the above tools.

4. 2022 QUARTER 2 SUMMARY

The Quarter 2 Summary of records by Service is attached at Appendix 1

5. Performance Indicators

5.1 Indicator One – Complaints received per 1,000 population

Table 1 provides the council's total complaints closed per 1,000 population.

Measure	2021/22 Quarter 1	2021/22 Quarter 2
Angus Population	115,820	115,820
Total number of complaints received	189	71
Total number of complaints received per 1,000	1.6	0.6
Total number of complaints closed	147	71
Number of complaints received per 1,000	1.3	0.6

5.2 Indicator Two – Closed complaints

Category	Quarter 1	%	Quarter 2	%
Stage 1 complaints	118	80.3%	52	74.2%
Stage 2 complaints	6	4.1%	6	8.5%
Escalated Stage 2	23	15.6%	13	18.3%
Total Closed	147	100%	71	100%

The total number of complaints received in Quarter 2 is 71, within this figure only one is reported for the Children, Families and Justice Directorate. The Directorate keeps a separate record of complaints which indicates that this may be an under-report, the reason for which is being investigated. It is hoped that this data issue will be addressed in the next quarterly report.

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

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

A complaint is resolved when both Angus Council and the customer agree what action (if any) will be taken to provide full and final resolution for the customer, without making a decision about whether the complaint is upheld or not upheld. Angus Council try to **resolve** complaints wherever possible, although we accept that this will not be possible in all cases.

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	%	1 July – 30 September 2022	%
Stage 1 Upheld	18	15.3%	17	32.7%
Stage 1 Not Upheld	14	11.9%	22	42.3%
Stage 1 Partially Upheld	16	13.6%	10	19.2%
Stage 1 Resolved	70	59.3%	3	5.8%
Total Stage 1	118	100%	52	100%
Stage 2 Upheld	1	16.7%	0	0.0%
Stage 2 Not Upheld	3	50%	2	33.3%
Stage 2 Partially Upheld	2	33.3%	4	66.7%
Stage 2 Resolved	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Stage 2	6	100%	6	100%
Stage 2 Escalated Upheld	2	8.7%	3	23.1%
Stage 2 Escalated Not Upheld	5	21.7%	6	46.2%
Stage 2 Escalated Partially Upheld	4	17.4%	3	23.1%
Stage 2 Resolved after escalation	12	52.2%	1	7.7%
Total Stage 2 Escalated	23	100%	13	100%
Total Closed	147		71	

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.

	Sum of the total number of working days taken for all complaints closed at	Number of complaints closed at stage	The average time in working days for a full response to complaint
Stage 1 Q1	422	118	3.6
Stage 2 Q1	182	6	30.3
Following Escalation Q1	422	23	18.3
Stage 1 Q2	171	52	3.3
Stage 2 Q2	118	6	19.7
Following Escalation Q2	171	13	13.2

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.

	The number of complaints – closed – Stage 1 within 5 working days	Number of complaints – closed at Stage 1 (frontline resolution)	The number of complaints closed at stage 1 within 5 working days as a % of total number of stage 1 complaints
Stage 1 Q1	92	118	78.0%
Stage 1 Q2	43	52	82.7%

	The number of complaints – closed – Stage 2 within 20 working days	Number of complaints – closed at Stage 2 (frontline resolution)	The number of complaints closed at stage 1 within 20 working days as a % of total number of stage 2 complaints
Stage 2 Q1	1	6	16.7%
Stage 2 Q2	2	6	33.3%

	The number of complaints – closed – after escalation within 20 working days	Number of complaints – closed after escalation	The number of complaints closed after escalation within 20 working days as a % of total number of stage escalated complaints
Stage 1 Q1	21	23	91.3%
Stage 1 Q2	12	13	92.3%

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		1 July – 30 September 2022 Quarter 2	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Stage 1	21	17.8%	12	23.1%
Stage 2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Stage 2 Escalated	0	0.0%	0	0.0%

5.7 Complaints per Service Area

The attached Appendix 2 shows the areas complaints have been received.

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 for the second quarter of 2022.

- Compliment regarding the “Book Bug”.
- Thanks to staff at a recycling centre and to the waste operative workers.
- Thanks to Angus Council staff on working with communities regarding resilience ahead of winter.

- Thanks and appreciation for the work the gravediggers do
- Thanks for the work done in respect of the overgrown trees at Laurelbank
- Thanks and appreciation for the work the Parks Service do
- Thanks and appreciation for the organisation of the Royal Visit held in July.

Housing Repair Satisfaction Survey

During the period 10774 repairs have been completed in the last six months with 1349 of these repairs carried out in October alone.

The breakdown of repairs per burgh is detailed below

	Arbroath	Brechin	Carnoustie	Forfar	Kirriemuir	Monifieth	Montrose	Sum:
April 2022	478	39	129	357	101	32	325	1,461
May 2022	497	29	126	429	127	32	461	1,701
June 2022	433	25	157	378	100	39	379	1,511
July 2022	456	24	148	339	93	35	398	1,493
August 2022	513	23	144	350	92	35	417	1,574
September 2022	524	28	163	400	118	23	429	1,685
October 2022	422	32	117	279	94	29	376	1,349
Sum:	3,323	200	984	2,532	725	225	2,785	10,774

A repair satisfaction survey is carried out monthly by Knowledge Partnership (KP) on behalf of Angus Council's Housing Services using a telephone survey method. The survey questionnaire is administered to approximately 550 tenants whose homes had received one or more repair in the previous month. Working with this population, a random sample of 150 telephone interviews is completed. Each interview lasts approximately 10 minutes according to the needs of the respondent. The survey report received from KP feeds back the results of those 150 repair service interviews.

There were 52 compliments in July, 67 in August and 54 in September.

- Thanks to ACHS and the Contractors involved.
- Thanks for the work being done so quickly.
- Highly delighted with the contractors. I have to say it was a wee bit difficult to connect with the Access Line process, however
- I was extremely satisfied with the contractors
- Housing Officer was great. Contractors were brilliant – I am pleased with the repairs service since moving into my new home. I feel the Housing Officer has been focused on making sure I am happy here.
- The contractor was great.
- Communication was excellent
- Very good service overall
- The Access line staff were very helpful
- The Access Line was good to deal with
- Very helpful staff on the Access Line. Appreciation for all involved at ACHS and QAPM.

Operation Unicorn

A number of members of staff were involved in the planning and delivery of Operation Unicorn, The Death of HM The Queen in Scotland. Letters of thanks and congratulations have been received from The Lord Lyon and The First Minister. The Chief Executive and Lord Lieutenant have written to all staff and volunteers who were involved in the excellent delivery of Operation Unicorn in Angus as HM commenced her final journey from Balmoral to Edinburgh.

5.9 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
The broader education plan and 1:1 tuition was not clear in terms of how it would meet the pupils needs and how progress would be reviewed.	Staff responsible for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are to ensure that targets within plans are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited (SMART)
That education planning had not been sufficient and did not address the pupils needs and had not been implemented correctly or consistently.	Senior Managers will ensure that reduced timetables are on an interim arrangement for pupils, and that timescales and conditions around increasing timetables are clearly indicated and communicated with all relevant participants.
A Stage 2 response was issued directly by an officer to a customer that did not follow the council and SPSO guidelines,	We will ensure that members of staff dealing with Stage 2 complaints complete the necessary training and are fully aware of the template documents available to them to assist them in doing so.
The Home-to-School Transport Policy will be updated to clarify the position of privilege school transport places.	Policy paperwork is being updated and will be available on the council website before the end of November.
That you had notified us of specific requirements in relation to mail issued by Angus Council but AC failed to implement.	We are investigating an IT System that will alert council services to customer specific requirements

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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JACKIE BUCHANAN
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Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

Step 1

Name of Proposal – Quarterly Complaints Report – 1 July – 30 September 2022

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

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