

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 9 MARCH 2023

COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT – 1 OCTOBER – 31 DECEMBER 2022

REPORT BY JACKIE BUCHANAN, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report and appendices is to highlight the complaints received in Quarter 3 from 1 October – 31 December 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 October – 31 December 2022: -

- (i) the complaints statistics for the period;
- (ii) the sample of compliments received for the period; and
- (iii) the complaints received by each of the Council's Directorates as outlined in Appendix 1 to this report.

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 As outlined in previous Complaints and Compliments Reports to this Committee, there is a national framework dealing with customer complaints made to public bodies which is under the auspices of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). Local authorities are bound to follow this framework. Please see report number R402/22 for further information.

The detail within the appendix is a breakdown of the records logged by customers using the Council's "Contact Us" digital platform and other customer complaints uploaded there by staff.

4. 2022 QUARTER 3 SUMMARY

The Quarter 3 Summary of records by Directorate is attached at Appendix 1

5. Performance Indicators

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

Table 1 - Council's total complaints per 1,000 population.

Measure	2021/22 Quarter 1	2021/22 Quarter 2	2021/22 Quarter 3
Angus Population	115,820	115,820	115,820
Total number of complaints received in the period	189	71	150
Total number of complaints received per 1,000 population	1.6	0.6	1.3
Total number of complaints closed in the period	147	71	78
Number of complaints closed per 1,000 population	1.3	0.6	0.7

5.2 **Indicator Two** – Total amount of Closed complaints

Category	Q1	%	Q2	%	Q3	%
Stage 1 complaints	118	80.3%	52	73.2%	50	64.1%
Stage 2 complaints	6	4.1%	6	8.5%	7	9.0%
Escalated Stage 2	23	15.6%	13	18.3%	21	26.9%
Total Closed	147	100%	71	100%	78	100%

The total number of complaints received in Quarter 3 is 150.

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 of “resolved” came into operation on 1 April 2021.

Category	1 Apr-30 June 2022 Quarter 1	%	1 July – 30 September 2022 Quarter 2	%	1 October – 31 December 2022 Quarter 3	%
Stage 1 Upheld	18	15.3%	17	32.7%	13	26.0%
Stage 1 Not Upheld	14	11.9%	22	42.3%	20	40.0%
Stage 1 Partially Upheld	16	13.6%	10	19.2%	17	34.0%
Stage 1 Resolved	70	59.3%	3	5.8%	0	0.0%
Total Stage 1	118	100%	52	100%	50	100%
Stage 2 Upheld	1	16.7%	0	0.0%	1	14.3%
Stage 2 Not Upheld	3	50%	2	33.3%	3	42.9%
Stage 2 Partially Upheld	2	33.3%	4	66.7%	3	42.9%
Stage 2 Resolved	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total Stage 2	6	100%	6	100%	7	100%
Stage 2 Escalated Upheld	2	8.7%	3	23.1%	9	42.9%
Stage 2 Escalated Not Upheld	5	21.7%	6	46.2%	3	14.3%
Stage 2 Escalated Partially	4	17.4%	3	23.1%	9	42.9%
Stage 2 Resolved after	12	52.2%	1	7.7%	0	0.0%
Total Stage 2 Escalated	23	100%	13	100%	21	100%
Total Closed	147		71		78	

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 1	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
Stage 1 Q3	395	50	7.9
Stage 2 Q3	164	7	23.4
Following Escalation Q3	395	21	18.8

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. Extensions are permitted for Stage 1 complaints of 5 days and for Stage 2 complaints of 5 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%
Stage 1 Q3	35	50	70.0%

	The number of complaints – closed – Stage 2 within 20 working days	Number of complaints – closed at Stage 2 ((investigation)	The number of complaints closed at stage 2 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%
Stage 2 Q3	2	7	28.6%

	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 escalated complaints
Stage 1 Q1	21	23	91.3%
Stage 1 Q2	12	13	92.3%
Stage 1 Q3	2	21	9.5%

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 working days. There is no fixed timeframe for an extension to a Stage 2 complaint investigation. Any extensions to the Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaint timelines must be authorised by the relevant manager.

Number of complaints with an extension	1 Apr-30Jun 2022 Quarter 1		1 July – 30 September 2022 Quarter 2		1 October – 31 December 2022 Quarter 3	
Stage 1	21	17.8%	12	23.1%	18	36.0%
Stage 2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	42.9%
Stage 2 Escalated	0	0.0%	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 third quarter of 2022.

- Several compliments received in relation to the Accessline staff being polite and helpful.
- Thanks to roads staff for arranging gritting that had been missed quickly and efficiently
- Thanks to housing staff for arranging for tipping to be cleared
- Thanks and appreciation for British Empire Medal presentations

Housing Repairs

At the December meeting Elected Members raised questions regarding outstanding repair and the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth has advised that during the period the following were carried out: -

- 1355 Emergency repairs
- 435 Urgent repairs
- 641 Priority repairs and
- 1637 Routine repairs

There remains 418 outstanding repairs and 431 void repairs to be carried out.

Satisfaction Survey

During the period 3511 repairs have been completed in the last three months.

The breakdown of repairs per burgh is detailed below

	Arbroath	Brechin	Carnoustie	Forfar	Kirriemuir	Monifieth	Montrose	Sum
October 2022	422	32	129	357	101	32	325	1398
December 2022	345	129	94	274	67	44	196	1149
January 2023	314	96	86	215	57	31	165	964
Total Q3	1081	257	309	846	225	107	686	3511

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 67 feedback responses received in October. The November data is not yet available, and no survey was carried out in December.

Below is an overview of the feedback received:-

- Straightforward to report and work was carried out to an exemplary fashion
- Homeless Officer was first class and process went smoothly
- A number of complaints regarding accessline
- A number of compliments regarding the work and helpfulness of tradesmen
- Standard of workmanship outstanding

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
Staff failed to follow protocol when speaking to a child that should be carried out side by side and not in front of them	School staff reminded to follow protocols when speaking to children
That there had been a lack of/or miscommunication between yourself and your solicitor	We will review communication styles to ensure these meet the needs of the individual with relevant staff
We repeatedly failed to uplift Green Waste	We have improved communication with clients and ensured that wheel-out lists are kept up to date

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.

REPORT AUTHOR: Elaine Whittet

EMAIL DETAILS: WhittetE@angus.gov.uk

**JACKIE BUCHANAN
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

Appendix 1: Breakdown per Service Area



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

Step1

Name of Proposal – Quarterly Complaints & Compliments – 1 October – 31 December 2022

Step 2

Is this only a **screening** Equality Impact Assessment Yes

(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 | No |
| (ii) | It is a percentage increase in fees which has no differential impact on protected characteristics | No |
| (iii) | It is for information only | Yes |
| (iv) | It is reflective e.g., of budget spend over a financial year | Yes |
| (v) | It is technical | No |

Sign off and Authorisation.

Prepared by: Elaine Whittet Team Leader 14 February 2023

Reviewed by: Doreen Phillips Senior Practitioner, Equalities 14 February 2023

Approved by: Jackie Buchanan Director of Legal & Democratic Services 14 February 2023