

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 26 OCTOBER 2023

COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT – 1 APRIL – 30 JUNE 2023

REPORT BY JACKIE BUCHANAN, DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, GOVERNANCE & CHANGE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report and appendix is to highlight the complaints received in Quarter 1 from 1 April – 30 June 2023 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 April – 30 June 2023: -

- (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. 2023 QUARTER 1 SUMMARY

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

5. Performance Indicators

5.1 The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) have outlined four key performance indicators for local authorities to use to monitor practice and identify any trends.

Indicator One – Complaints received per 1,000 population.

Indicator One: The total number of complaints received in Q1 was 155 which is 1.3 per 1,000 population.

This SPSO indicator records the total number of complaints received per 1,000 population. This is based on the sum of the number of complaints received at Stage 1 (this includes escalated complaints, as they were first received at Stage 1), and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2. The table also shows for information, the total number of complaints received and the total number of complaints closed as well the total number of complaints closed per 1,000 population.

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

Measure	1 April- 30 June 2023 Quarter 1
Angus Population	115,820
Total number of complaints received in the period	155
Total number of complaints received per 1,000 population	1.3
Total number of complaints closed in the period	72
Number of complaints closed per 1,000 population	0.6

5.2 **Indicator Two:** the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of five and 20 working days.

The SPSO requires complaints to be closed within five working days at stage 1 and 20 working days at stage 2.

This indicator will report:

- (i) the number of complaints closed in full at stage 1 within five working days as % of all stage 1 complaints responded to in full
- (ii) the number of complaints closed in full at stage 2 within 20 working days as % of all stage 2 complaints responded to in full.
- (iii) Escalated complaints are those that have been considered at Stage 1 and then have either moved to Stage 2 at the customer's request (because the customer was unhappy with the response at Stage 1) or because they have exceeded the maximum of ten working days at Stage 1 therefore have automatically been moved to Stage 2.

Table 2

Category	Q1	%
Stage 1 complaints	45	62.5%
Stage 2 complaints	5	6.9%
Escalated Stage 2	22	30.6%
Total Closed	72	100%

The total number of complaints closed in Quarter 1 is 72

5.3 **Indicator Three:** the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

This indicator represents the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

This indicator will report:

- (i) the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1
- (ii) the average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2
- (iii) the average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation.

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 April – 30 June 2023 Q1	%
Stage 1 Upheld	14	31.1%
Stage 1 Not Upheld	18	40.0%
Stage 1 Partially Upheld	13	28.9%
Stage 1 Resolved	0	0.0%
Total Stage 1	45	100%
Stage 2 Upheld	1	20%
Stage 2 Not Upheld	3	60%
Stage 2 Partially Upheld	1	20%
Stage 2 Resolved	0	0.0%
Total Stage 2	5	100%
Stage 2 Escalated Upheld	3	13.6%
Stage 2 Escalated Not Upheld	8	36.4%
Stage 2 Escalated Partially Upheld	11	50%
Stage 2 Resolved after escalation	0	0.0%
Total Stage 2 Escalated	22	100%
Total Closed	72	

5.4 **Indicator Four:** the outcome of complaints at each stage.

There is a requirement for the outcome to be recorded for each complaint. There are four outcome categories: resolved, upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. Where some of the points of complaint are upheld and others are not, this should be reported as ‘partially upheld’.

This indicator will report:

(i) the number of complaints

- (a) upheld
- (b) partially upheld
- (c) not upheld and
- (d) resolved

as a % of all complaints closed at stage 1.

(ii) the number of complaints

- (a) upheld
- (b) partially upheld
- (c) not upheld and
- (d) resolved

as a % of all complaints closed at stage 2.

(iii) the number of complaints

- (a) upheld
- (b) partially upheld
- (c) not upheld and
- (d) resolved after escalation

as a % of all complaints closed after escalation.

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	192	45	4.3
Stage 2 Q1	43	5	8.6
Following Escalation Q1	179	22	8.1

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	29	45	64.4%

	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	3	5	60.0%

	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	13	22	59.1%

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 April – 30 June 2023 Quarter 1	
Stage 1	13	28.9%
Stage 2	1	20.0%
Stage 2 Escalated	0	0.0%

5.7 Complaints per Service Area

The attached Appendix 1 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. Members had requested that examples of compliments be provided in this report albeit this is not part of the requirements under the SPSO framework for reporting. Below is an example of the compliments received for the first quarter of 2023.

- “Thank you so much for your help. We have buried dad’s ashes. Angus Council colleagues were great and we went back to see the grave today and saw how beautifully everything had been put back in place”.
- “I met with a constituent recently and wanted to thank staff in housing who help get a tenant rehoused”.
- A housing officer contacted a previous tenant of a property to advise that boxes with personal items had been left in the attic. The tenant asked that her most heartfelt thanks be passed on as the items were very special and she could not thank the officer enough.
- “X has been raving about the great work you do, and the boys did in the flat at Poets Place – thank you”.
- “Went home on Monday and had a replacement bin – great service! Thanks v much”
- “X and I are so grateful for what you have done for me it is a huge lift off my shoulders. I was upset, had a wee cry till you called me and sorted things for me. I live on my own no one to ask or helping me. I don’t know the system or how benefits work”.
- Additional Bin provided along the seafront – great service.
- “I just wanted to say thank you to the bin men/women who collect the purple bins in Edzell. My little boy, as soon as he hears the lorry, wants to stand at the kitchen window to wave. Every week without fail he gets a big smile and wave from the whole team. It makes him so happy and he looks forward to Wednesday mornings every week often asking during the week if its Wednesday yet! Thank you for making a little boy’s week and I hope it makes your team smile a little too.”
- “Thank you very much for your kindness, patience and understanding today. You were also extremely professional and very sensitive as to how I was feeling. You made the experience a joy as I got to tell you about my family of whom I am so proud. I had no idea that you had met me as a mark of respect to myself and my families. So thank you”.

- We would like to thank both of you again for all your help and support. You have both been fantastic and have given us the confidence to home educate X in a way that best meets his individual needs. You are both so easy to talk to and excel yourselves in creating a unique, positive learning experience for children as individuals. You have both been the light at the end of a very long tunnel and X has said X will miss the meetings with you both.

5.9 Housing repairs and comments/compliments

Members had requested that information pertaining to housing be provided in this report albeit this is not part of the requirements under the SPSO framework for reporting.

During the period the following repairs were completed (reactive repairs):

- 1077 Emergency repairs
- 302 Urgent repairs
- 457 Priority repairs
- 1139 Routine repairs

Of the reactive repairs reported in the quarter, 505 are outstanding.

Repairs completed within the quarter (void repairs):

- 112 Void 5 days
- 78 Void 10 days

There are 197 void repairs outstanding from those reported in the quarter.

Monthly Repair Satisfaction Survey

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 was administered during:

- **April 2023 to a population of 547 tenants** whose homes had received one or more repairs during March 2023. Working with this population, a random sample of **155 telephone interviews** was completed, giving a response rate of 28.3%¹. Each interview lasted approx. 10 minutes according to the needs of the respondent. This survey report feeds back on the results of these 155 repair service interviews.
- **May 2023 to a population of 466 tenants** whose homes had received one or more repairs during April 2023. Working with this population, a random sample of **131 telephone interviews** was completed, giving a response rate of 28.1%¹. Each interview lasted approx. 10 minutes according to the needs of the respondent. This survey report feeds back on the results of these 131 repair service interviews.
- **June 2023 to a population of 470 tenants** whose homes had received one or more repairs during May 2023. Working with this population, a random sample of **143 telephone interviews** was completed, giving a response rate of 30.4%¹. Each interview lasted approx. 10 minutes according to the needs of the respondent. This survey report feeds back on the results of these 143 repair service interviews.

Feedback responses from tenants

There were 77 feedback responses received in April, 60 in May and 66 in June.

Below is an overview of the feedback received, including some of the comments: -

- Quality of work is always good.
- Very quick to attend to the repair. Access Line were fine and the work itself was carried out to a high standard.
- Really good service from QAPM very efficient and work was done promptly. Staff at Access Line were also very helpful.
- Guy was fantastic and good service from the council.
- Was very pleased. Contractors were very polite and efficient.
- The electrician behaved impeccably and had great communication, so I am very pleased with the process for reporting repairs, the appointment call and the work undertaken.

- The contractor was very thorough, given the previous issues with this work that was much appreciated.
- Great quality work and materials - quick response - highly delighted.
- A number of complaints regarding housing officers
- Make it easier to make the report online rather than a phone call.
- It took a long time to connect with the Access Line.
- When you get put through to the repair service there are too many confusing options.
- Not great service at all. Been in the property for over 2 years and suffering badly with bathroom mould and lack of flooring in places. Need to find a fix to this immediately.

5.10 **Complaint Actions and Outcomes**

In order to demonstrate that the organisation is learning from complaints and to present meaningful information to the Committee work will be carried out with services for the next committee highlighting key themes and learning points for the organisation. This will allow the first six months of learning to be available to committee members. A system to centrally record any lessons learned is currently being investigated.

However, during the reporting period, Angus Council closed 72 complaints with 45 of these were managed at Stage 1 and 27 at Stage 2 (including those escalated).

Analysis of the complaints made with particular attention to those upheld or partially upheld showed that the main categories of complaint related to: -

- Inadequate standard of service including lack of communication
- A delay in responses being issued which invariably results in complaints
- Misunderstanding of council policy

The themes emerging from complaints across council services are similar and highlight a need for services to improve communication and respond timeously where possible. However, as services contract due to budget restrictions this will continue to be a challenge for the organisation.

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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Appendix 1: Breakdown per Service Area



Equality Impact/Fairer Scotland Duty Assessment Form

Step1

Name of Proposal – Quarterly Complaints & Compliments – 1 January – 31 March 2023

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 13 July 2023

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