

ANGUS COUNCIL

SCRUTINY AND AUDIT COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2024

COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS REPORT

QUARTER 1 - 1 APRIL to 30 JUNE 2024
QUARTER 2 - 1 JULY to 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

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

1. ABSTRACT

1.1 The purpose of this report and appendices is to highlight the complaints received in Quarter 1 from 1 April to 30 June 2024 and in Quarter 2 from 1 July to 30 September 2024 to assure Members that work is ongoing to learn from complaints received by Angus Council. The Report also includes details of compliments received during these periods.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN AND COUNCIL POLICIES

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. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Audit Committee notes for the periods 1 April to 30 June 2024 and 1 July to 30 September 2024: -

- (i) the complaint statistics for the periods;
- (ii) the sample of compliments received for the periods; and
- (iii) the complaints received by each of the Council's Directorates as outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 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 402/22 for further information.

4.2 The detail within the Appendices 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. Appendix 1 relates to Quarter 1, from 1 April to 30 June 2024, and Appendix 2 relates to Quarter 2, from 1 July to 30 September 2024.

5. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

5.1 The SPSO has four key mandatory KPIs which is the minimum an organisation should report on, as follows: -

Indicator One: The total number of complaints received per 1,000 population.

This indicator records the total number of complaints received. This is the sum of the number of complaints received at Stage 1, and the number of complaints received directly at Stage 2. (This

includes escalated complaints, as they were first received at Stage 1).

Indicator Two: the number and percentage of complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days, for Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints respectively.

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 – 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 (5 working days plus a 5 working days extension) at Stage 1 therefore have automatically been moved to Stage 2.

Indicator Three: 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) resolvedas a % of all complaints closed at stage 1.
- (ii) the number of complaints
 - (a) upheld
 - (b) partially upheld
 - (c) not upheld and
 - (d) resolvedas 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 escalationas a % of all complaints closed after escalation.

Indicator Four: 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.

5.2 Indicator One – The Council's total complaints received in the quarter per 1,000 population.

Measure	1 April – 30 June 2024 Quarter 1	1 July – 30 September 2024 Quarter 2
Angus Population	115,820	115,820
Total number of complaints received in the period	224	216
Total number of complaints received per 1,000 population	1.93	1.86
Total number of complaints closed in the period	197	168
Number of complaints closed per 1,000 population	1.7	1.5

5.3 Indicator Two – Total amount of Closed complaints in the quarter.

Category	Q1	%	Q2	%
Stage 1 complaints	109	55.3	93	55.4
Stage 2 complaints	9	4.6	3	1.8
Escalated	79	40.1	72	42.9
Total Closed	197	100	168	100

The total number of complaints closed in Quarter 1 is 197 and in Quarter 2 is 168.

5.4 Indicator Three – the number of closed complaints resolved, upheld, partially upheld and 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 it is accepted 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 2024 Q1	%	1 July – 30 September 2024 Q2	%
Stage 1 Upheld	19	17.4	20	21.5
Stage 1 Not Upheld	20	18.3	16	17.2
Stage 1 Partially Upheld	12	11.0	8	8.6
Stage 1 Resolved	58	53.2	49	52.7
Total Stage 1	109	100	93	100
Stage 2 Upheld	3	33.3	1	33.3
Stage 2 Not Upheld	3	33.3	1	33.3

Stage 2 Partially Upheld	3	33.3	1	33.3
Stage 2 Resolved	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total Stage 2	9	100	3	100
Stage 2 Escalated Upheld	16	20.3	11	15.3
Stage 2 Escalated Not Upheld	19	24.1	11	15.3
Stage 2 Escalated Partially	20	25.3	24	33.3
Stage 2 Resolved after	24	30.4	26	36.1
Total Stage 2 Escalated	79	100	72	100
Total Closed	197	100	168	100

5.5 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 complaints 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	563	109	5.2
Stage 2 Q1	490	9	54.4
Following Escalation Q1	3,516	79	44.4
Stage 1 Q2	324	93	3.5
Stage 2 Q2	84	3	28
Following Escalation Q2	2,083	72	28.9

5.6 Complaints per Service Area

The attached Appendices shows the areas complaints have been received.

5.7 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 first and second quarters of 2024.

- Excellent support given in relation to the bid by the Royal British legion (Carnoustie) to the National Lottery for funds to refurbish the toilets.
- Following damage by a bin lorry, excellent support received to resolve the matter.
- A number of compliments received and thanks for nomination to the Kings Garden Party
- A compliment was received in relation to the dedication and kindness of two teachers who had provided outstanding support to a student at Monifieth High School.
- A letter expressing thanks and recognising the essential support by staff at Monifieth High School to young people fleeing conflict and adversity.

5.8 Housing repairs and comments/compliments

During Q1 the following repairs were completed (reactive repairs):

- 1202 Emergency repairs
- 364 Urgent repairs
- 573 Priority repairs
- 1299 Routine repairs

Of the reactive repairs reported in the quarter, 471 are outstanding.

Repairs completed within the quarter (void repairs):

- 163 Void 5 days
- 146 Void 10 days

There are 23 void repairs outstanding from those reported in quarter 1.

During Q2 the following repairs were completed (reactive repairs):

- 1,146 Emergency repairs
- 359 Urgent repairs
- 565 Priority repairs
- 1,172 Routine repairs
- 9 Complex repairs

Of the reactive repairs reported in the quarter, 463 are outstanding.

Repairs completed within the quarter (void repair):

- 144 Void 5 days
- 109 Void 10 days

There are 4 void repairs outstanding from those reported in the quarter.

Monthly Repair Satisfaction Survey

Angus Council's Housing Service conduct a monthly repair satisfaction survey, administered by Research Resource. Each month, 100 tenants who received one or more repairs in the previous month are contacted via telephone, with interviews lasting approximately 5-10 minutes depending on the needs of each respondent. Tenants have the option to request follow-up contact, allowing the Council to address specific concerns directly. Research Resource provides the Council with a detailed monthly report summarising tenant satisfaction and feedback.

The Voids and Repairs Board reviews these survey results and tenant feedback to identify key areas for improvement. This information is essential for informing performance discussions with contractors, allowing the Board to set specific expectations, address any issues raised by tenants, and collaborate on action plans that enhance service quality and responsiveness.

Feedback responses from tenants

There were 99 feedback responses received in April, 85 in May, 102 in June, 100 in July, August & September.

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

- Best repair service I've ever had from council. Contractor was excellent.
- Repair carried out very quickly.
- Service from start to finish was excellent.
- Excellent service
- Delighted with service.
- Service was spot on.
- The contractors were all really nice.
- It was very quick, and my shower was replaced. I was happy.
- The guy was great, all efficient, and professional.
- I was happy with the service I got.
- They were quite quick. I have never had any problems with workmen.
- Great workmanship
- He did a good job and was respectful in the home.
- Was told contractor would be back on Sunday to finish painting and they didn't appear, and I haven't heard anything since.
- Someone came out and had a look at it. Told me someone would be out to do repair. Not heard a thing since.

- Asbestos was removed but then waited ages for ceiling to be plastered and still waiting for it to be decorated.
- This has taken over 2 years, and the path has not been correctly done they also removed the tree, and this had been discussed with the housing officer that it was not to be removed.
- The leak from the roof has been ongoing for years now and it's still not been dealt with.
- One of the taps are still not working properly.
- I felt the time it took to get the repair done was very long.
- Don't know if it's been done no communication with contractor.
- This is still an ongoing issue, they have done some work, but the job has not been fully completed.
- They had it all completed the next morning. The contractor was very nice, I was happy with the service.
- The contractor was a very nice gentleman, and he did a very good job of the repair.
- The contractor was excellent. He was here on time and did a very good job within a reasonable time.
- Very pleased with this repair.
- Service is amazing, couldn't be happier.
- Excellent job.
- Very good job
- Very satisfied with the service i received and also the quick timescale it took from reporting to getting work done.
- I was very happy with the service
- It was quick, it was easy, it was done very well, and the boy was very polite = it was fixed
- Just better communication through the council and the parties they use to complete the repairs and a better timeline from when these are reported. Once the repair was done it was completed to satisfaction - it was just the hassle and back and forward and with better communication this would have been avoided.
- Need to follow up what has been said, nobody has been back in touch even though contractor has identified a problem.
- It would have been a bit more beneficial if they had communicated a bit more when they were running late.
- If I wasn't satisfied, I would have phoned the council.
- Repair not done fully, contractor needs to come back to finish job off.
- The floor has been left soaking and nobody has done anything.
- It took 1 week to do repair when it could have been done in a day.
- The floor has been left soaking and nobody has done anything.
- I was never given an appointment time, they just arrived one day and thankfully I was in.

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, assets, parks and cemeteries.

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.

A number of complex complaints have been received and this is evident in the number of days taken to complete complaints.

6. CHILD FRIENDLY COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 On 16 July 2024, the United Nation Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 made Scotland the first country in the UK, and the first devolved nation in the world, to directly incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law. The Act ensures that children's rights are central to policy and decision-making, and their needs met by public service complaints procedures in Scotland.
- 6.2 The Scottish Government has provided funding to the SPSO to develop a child-friendly way for public bodies to handle complaints. With the help of children, young people and staff from a wide range of public bodies and third sector organisations, the seven Child Friendly Complaints Principles have been agreed. The Child Friendly Complaint Handling Principles are as follows:
- For everyone under 18
 - Focused on Children's Best Interests
 - Trusting and Inclusive
 - Centred on Children's voices.
 - Kind and Supportive
 - Private and Confidential
 - Knowing about Rights
- 6.3 The Complaints Handlers Network, which Angus is part of, has been working with the SPSO to develop a Child Friendly Complaints Handling Process. Angus Council has carried out testing with pupils in primary and secondary schools and it has been established that the current system is too complicated for children to understand. Work has been completed on a Child Friendly approach to complaints by children and a pilot phase will commence shortly for a period of six months. During that time, awareness raising with employees will also take place. A further update on this will be provided to Committee following the six-month pilot.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT, HUMAN RIGHTS AND FAIRER SCOTLAND DUTY

- 8.1 A screening assessment has been undertaken and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required for the following reason(s): - There are no differential impacts on persons with protected characteristics.

9. CHILDRENS RIGHTS AND WELLBEING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 A Childrens Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment has been undertaken and a full assessment is not required as the "General Principles" do not apply to these recommendations. Consideration will be given to this in developing the Child Friendly Complaints process referred to above.

10. CONSULTATION

- 10.1 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 Quarter 1
Appendix 2: Breakdown per Service Area Quarter 2