

Complaints & Compliments 2023/24 Information Report

Wrexham County Borough Council

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REPORT FOR INFORMATION

1. PUROSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with details of the numbers and types of complaints and compliments across the Council (both corporate & statutory complaints)
- 1.2 To highlight the lessons learned and actions taken to address complaints across the Departments.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 Wrexham Council has a robust process in place for complaint management which is based on, and endorsed by, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.
- 2.2 Complaints are managed by a Complaints Team based within the Governance & Customer Department. The Corporate Complaints Procedure is how the majority of complaints made to the Council are addressed. The procedure is a two stage process – Informal and Formal. At the informal stage, complaints are investigated and responded to by the team of service subject to the complaint. Should the complaint be escalated formally, an investigation is undertaken by the Complaints Team and a response issued on behalf of the Chief Officer – Governance & Customer.
- 2.3 Representation and Complaints procedures in Social Services Departments are a statutory requirement. They were introduced under the Health & Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act in 2003 and the Children Act 1989. In August 2014 the procedures were revised by Welsh Government resulting in a two stage process.
- 2.4 Stage 1 (Local Resolution) and Stage 2 (Formal Investigation). If a complainant remains dissatisfied, they have recourse to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. At Stage 1, the manager for the team subject to the complaint is responsible for investigating and responding to the complainant.
- 2.5 At Stage 2, an Independent Investigator is commissioned from an approved list which is shared by all six North Wales Authorities. The Independent Investigator will produce a report for the Director of Social Services stating the findings, conclusions and recommendations of their Investigation.

- 2.6 A small number of social care complaints are considered through the corporate complaints procedure. This is when the complainant is not a service user or acting on behalf of a service user and therefore do not qualify to use the statutory procedure.
- 2.7 The Complaints Team work closely with the relevant managers from all Departments to ensure that any shortcomings identified as part of a complaint investigation are addressed, both for the complainant directly and to ensure there is no systemic issue that may affect other service users.
- 2.8 A separate report on complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is produced for consideration from the Council's Executive Board and Governance & Audit Committee, as per the requirements of the Ombudsman's policies. This is based on the Annual Letter presented to the Council by the Ombudsman.
- 2.9 Attached with this report is an overview of the corporate complaints (Appendices 1a and 1b) and statutory social care complaints (Appendix 2). Within the social care report is a breakdown of the complaints by team including the outcome to each. Please note that given these reports are publically available, the information is relatively high level to ensure the information remains anonymous. Members are advised to liaise with the relevant Department or Complaints Team regarding further information (provided this can be shared in line with GDPR/consent etc).
- 2.10 Members previously requested information on action plans and a breakdown of the social care complaints. These reports are to be used as a guide for members to see a general picture of complaints received by the Council during the reporting period. Specific details and in depth breakdowns of the complaints are made available to Departments on request to assist them in the performance management within the specific services. It is the responsibility of each Department to ensure they act upon the complaints they receive and ensure improvements are implemented where required so there are no centrally held action plans. A statement from each Chief Officer in respect of their complaints is attached in Appendix 3.
- 2.11 Members also requested national comparison data. The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales are responsible for the collation and publication of this information. This can be found on their website at Published Statistics (ombudsman.wales). Unfortunately at the time of reporting, the full year national comparison had not been published.

APPENDIX 1:

Introduction

The report highlights that the number of both formal and informal complaints have increased. Formal complaints increased from 164 in 2022/23 to 291 in 2023/24. Informal complaints increased from 521 in 2022/23 to 810 in 2023/24.

During this reporting year there was a period of Industrial Action, primarily impacting on the Environment & Technical Department which has resulted in a large number of complaints being made. This mainly concerned waste collections. However it should be noted that even accounting for the increase due to the industrial action, there has been a general increase in complaints across most services compared to the previous year.

There has been an increase in the percentage of complaints either upheld or partially upheld against the same period last year (49% up from 35%). Again much of this can be attributed to the period of industrial action where by the failure to deliver services such as waste collections resulted in complaints being upheld.

Though it is regretful that customers feel disappointed enough in Council services to submit a complaint, where shortcomings are identified, these are acted upon to rectify to the satisfaction of the complainant in most instances.

Formal Complaints by Department

Brief information regarding the complaints for each Department is given below:

Economy & Planning (13)

This Department has seen an increase in complaints received, with 13 in the period compared to the 8 that were received in 2022/23.

These complaints related to Planning Policy (4), Public Protection (4), Planning Control (4) and Regeneration (1)

Of the 13, none of the complaints were upheld following an investigation, confirming the Department to have acted correctly in line with their policies and procedures.

Education & Early Intervention (6)

6 complaints were received, an increase from the 4 in the previous year. However, of these, only 1 was upheld indicating that in the majority of cases the relevant team had followed due process correctly.

Please note, complaints about issues within Schools follow their own complaints procedures set by Welsh Government so are not included within this report.

Environment & Technical (155)

The Environment & Technical, along with the Housing Department, received the majority of complaints against the Council (155 and 88 respectively), which is to be expected due to the nature and size of both services.

As referenced at the beginning of this report, the Industrial Action impacted on the Departments service provision significantly. To assist in understanding the impact of this on the complaints received, complaints concerning the services impacted by Industrial Action were categorised separately. These predominantly related to waste collection.

Of the 155 formal complaints, 90 were directly related to the Industrial Action. Without these, the figure would be reduced to 65 which is in line with the numbers of previous years.

Members are reminded that an initial report of a missed collection is not considered through the complaint procedure. It is only when there are repeated failures and a subsequent informal complaint investigation by the Department still fails to resolve the issue that the matter is escalated to a formal complaint. For context, the Contact Centre processed 5,015 missed waste collection reports within this period (excluding during the period of industrial action when the reporting facility was temporarily disabled).

The breakdown of complaints are as follows: Industrial Action (90), Waste Collection (27), Highways Maintenance (15), School Transport (6), Highways Infrastructure (4), Enforcement (3), Street Cleaning (2), Trees (2), Parking Services (1), Grounds Maintenance (1), Licencing (1), Winter Maintenance (1), Cemeteries (1) and Public Transport (1).

Finance & ICT (12)

12 formal complaints were made against the Finance & ICT Department, a decrease from 16 the previous year. These concerned Council Tax (4), Revenues & Benefits (4), Financial Assessment (3) and Insurance (1).

Of these, 4 complaints were upheld or partially upheld. These related to administrative errors and communication issues. In all 4 cases an apology was issued and the errors corrected.

Governance & Customer (10)

10 complaints were made against the Department during the reporting period, a slight increase from the 9 in the previous year.

The complaints were against Customer Services (5), Legal & Democratic (3) and Electoral & Registrars (2).

Of the 10 complaints, half were either upheld or partially upheld. Apologies were issued where errors were identified and action taken to resolve the concerns.

Housing (88)

There were 88 formal complaints made against the Department during the period, an increase from the 63 the previous year.

Complaints made regarding the Allocations Team accounted for the most, with 19 being received. Of these, only 2 were upheld/partially upheld which indicates that the team had followed due process in the majority of cases. It should also be noted that given the size of the waiting list, it is expected that a number of people would voice their dissatisfaction through the complaints process.

Complaints regarding repairs decreased to 14 from 20, of which 6 were upheld. These predominantly related to delays in carrying out works to the property.

Estate Offices received 14, though this is across all six offices. This was consistent with the previous year. Some issues around communication with contract holders was identified and work is ongoing to ensure the process around this are strengthened.

The remaining complaints related to External Works (9), Planned Maintenance (7), Various - more than one service involved (5), Decants (5), Recharges (5), Housing Options (4), DLO Voids (3), Assets (2), Heating Services (1).

Overall, of the 88 formal complaints received by Housing, 27 were upheld/partially upheld. This equates to 30%, which is lower than the Council average for all Departments. Action was taken to rectify any issues identified in these cases and apologies made to the complainants.

Social Care (7)

Only 7 complaints were received, though this is attributed to the vast majority of complaints concerning social care being processed through the statutory social services complaints procedure. Information on social care complaints are published in the Director's Statutory Annual Complaints report.

Of the 7 complaints, 2 were regarding Adult Social Care and 5 Children's Social Care. Only one complaint was upheld (in part).

Remedies

Following the conclusion of an investigation, a number of actions were taken as a result of recommendations by the Complaints Team, which both resolved the specific complaint and will ensure service improvements for future customers. In addition, some actions resulted in service wide improvements. These included:

Adult Social Care website updated to provide further financial assessment information

Finance letters re waivers to be revised to ensure full information is provided to the applicant on the rationale for the decision

Improved process for addressing reports tenancy breaches within an Estate Office

Review of closure codes/messages used by the Environment & Technical Department to take place as some are too generic and fail to adequately inform the customer

It is worth noting that excluding complaints directly relating to Industrial Action, only 38% of complaints were upheld/partially upheld. Whilst this was a slight increase on last year (35%), it still indicates that in the majority of cases, whilst the customer was unhappy with the actions of the service, there was no failure to follow correct procedure.

Informal complaints

In total, 810 informal complaints were received during the reporting period, an increase from 521 from the previous year. At the informal stage, the complaint is referred to the manager/team leader of the relevant team to address with the complainant directly. If the complainant remains dissatisfied, the complaint can be escalated for a formal investigation.

The breakdown for informal complaints is as follows:

ECONOMY AND PLANNING	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Planning Policy	6
Public Protection	6
Planning Control	3
Total	15

EDUCATION AND EARLY INTERVENTION	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Inclusion and ALN	4
Total	4

ENVIRONMENT AND TECHNICAL	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Waste Collection	285
Industrial Action	172
Highways Maintenance	50
Grounds Maintenance	15
Highways Infrastructure	10
Street Cleaning	8
Trees	6
Winter Maintenance	5
Parking Services	4
Enforcement	4
School Transport	4
Parks & Countryside	3
Streetlighting	1
Cemeteries	1
PROW	1
Total	4

FINANCE AND ICT	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Council Tax	9
Revenues & Benefits	8
Housing Benefit	2
Financial Assessment	2
Insurance	1
Total	22

GOVERNANCE AND CUSTOMER	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Customer Service	7
Legal & Demographic	4
Electoral	2
Welsh Language	2
Digital Development	2
Total	17

HOUSING	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
DLO repairs	50
Planned Maintenance	48
Estate Offices	29
Allocations Team	14
External Work	13
Housing options	8
Various	4
DLO Voids	3
Assets	3
Voids commissioning	2
Heating Services	1
Recharges voids	1
Kitchens and bathrooms	1
Cemeteries	1
Total	177

SOCIAL CARE	NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS
Adult Social Care	5
Children's Social Care	1
Total	6

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman provides the Council with an 'annual letter' in August which contains a breakdown of her involvement during the year in complaints made concerning the Council. A report is then presented to the Executive Board and the Governance & Audit Committee as per the requirements set out by the Ombudsman.

Welsh Language Standards

Most reports of alleged breaches of the standard are addressed via the Welsh Language Co-ordinator and these are reported on separately. The Council can consider complaints about welsh language services which are provided directly to the customer.

Compliments

The number of compliments received was the same as the previous year – 102. These related to:

Economy & Planning	5
Environment & Technical	21
Finance & ICT	1
Governance & Customer	20
Housing	19
Social Care	36

Monitoring

The Complaints Team liaise with senior managers regularly within each Department in relation to complaint management and identifying areas for improvement. Departments are able to request a breakdown of the complaints for their services to assist with their own performance management. A copy of this report is also shared with Departments to enable them to identify service areas they may wish to scrutinise further.

APPENDIX 2:

Social Care Complaints & Compliments Report 2023/24

1. Summary

During 2023/24, the number of complaints received has increased, with 75 being received compared to 58 received during 2022/23. 7 complaints were investigated independently at Stage 2, an increase from 4 investigations the previous year.

36 compliments were received during 2023/24, highlighting the appreciation from service users and families for the support provided.

This report is an overview of the complaints and used as one of the tool/performance indicators to review practice. Management within the Social Care Department liaise with the Complaints Team regularly and can request specific case details to assist in the review of their service performance.

2. Overview

	2023/2024	2022/23	2021/22
Adult Social Care	34	20	14
Children's Social Care	41	38	26
Total	75	58	40

Whilst the number of complaints has increased, much work is done by both the Department and the Complaints Team to resolve issues quickly and effectively. The procedures state that verbal complaints which can be resolved within 1 working day are not required to be recorded through the statutory procedures. This may be a contributing factor to the relatively low numbers of complaints recorded.

For the purposes of reporting, the complaint outcomes are recorded as upheld, partially upheld and not upheld. An outcome is considered as partially upheld when the complaint contained a number of elements and at least one is upheld, though in many cases this relates secondary issues and the primary element of the complaint is not upheld.

The Complaints Team receive numerous contacts from service users and families regarding issues outside the jurisdiction of the procedures, such as safeguarding referrals or matters considered by the courts. The Team work closely with senior management within the Departments to ensure each case is addressed appropriately.

3. Adult Social Care Complaints

SERVICE	2023/2024	2022/23	2021/22
Disability	10	7	4
Safeguarding & Mental Health	4	8	3
Older People	16	5	6
Registered Services	4	0	1
Total	34	20	14

The Department has seen an increase in the number of complaints received during the year, up to 34 from 20. Of these, 33 were dealt with at Stage 1 and a further complaint bypassing the initial stage for an immediate independent investigation.

24 of the 34 complaints were 'upheld' or 'partially upheld', which equates to 71%, a slight increase from the 70% in the previous period. In all cases an apology was issued and steps taken to resolve the matters. Of the 34 complaints, 5 were escalated to Stage 2 for an independent investigation, which would indicate the complainants were satisfied that their concerns had been appropriately addressed at the initial stage.

Members requested the breakdown for each team within the Department in respect of the outcome to the complaints. These are as follows:

DISABILITY

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
All Age Disability Team	8	2	3	3
Direct Payment	2	1	0	1
Total	10	3	3	4

REGISTERED SERVICE

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Recovery Service	3	0	0	3
Parkview Respite	1	0	1	0
Total	4	0	1	3

OLDER PEOPLE

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Team for Older Persons	14	4	5	5
Commissioning & Contracts	2	0	2	0
Total	16	4	7	5

SAFEGUARDING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Wellbeing Team	2	1	0	1
Initial Response Team (IRT)	1	1	0	0
Occupational Therapy team (OT)	1	1	0	0
Total	4	3	0	1

TOTAL OVERALL

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Total	34	10	11	13

The details of the complaints independently investigated at Stage 2 complaints is as follows:

DISABILITY SERVICE

- A. A complaint was made by the mother concerning service provided to her adult child and herself as the parent. The matters were addressed at Stage 1 but the complainant was dissatisfied with this and subsequently added further concerns to the scope of the Stage 2 investigation. The complaint was partially upheld, finding the provision of information following a panel hearing was not sufficient. The investigation also upheld the claim that there had been a delay in progressing the complaint from Stage 1 to Stage 2.
- B. This complaint concerned the use of Direct Payment funding and the request of the complainant to use funds for items/services that the Department considered were outside the agreed terms. The Stage 1 investigation supported the decision of the team to decline the funding request. Following an independent investigation the complaint was not upheld and the findings confirmed the team had adhered to the policy correctly.

OLDER PEOPLE

- A. A complaint regarding the service provided by the Team for Older People to a person in relation to the charges for a residential placement was initially considered at Stage 1. The investigation found the family were fully consulted and in agreement when with the charges with the placement was made, contrary to the claims in the complaint. The family remain dissatisfied and escalated their complaint to Stage 2 which at the time of reporting is ongoing.
- B. A complaint was made regarding the reduction in care hours for a person in receipt of a Direct Payment. The initial investigation found the reduction was due to the hours not being utilised but that a further assessment could take place at the request of the supported person if they wished. They did not agree with the findings and escalated the case to Stage 2, where an Independent Investigation did not uphold the complaint and found the actions of the team to be appropriate.
- C. The complaint was made in respect of the funding arrangements for a care home placement. The family disagreed with the charges and felt they had not been adequately informed. The Stage 1 investigation found the charges to be correctly applied, however at Stage 2 the independent investigation determined the record keeping was insufficient to support this and therefore the Department agreed to waive the fees. Work is now ongoing to ensure clarity in the process and that information be developed to avoid similar confusion for future cases.

4. Children's Social Care Complaints Overview

SERVICE	2023/2024	2022/23	2021/22
Corporate Parenting	14	10	11
Care & Support ¹	23	20	12
Safeguarding & Quality Assurance ²	0	2	1
Disability ³	4	6	2
Total	41	38	26

¹⁻² Please note that due to internal restructures of the services, some teams may have moved from one service area to another, resulting in the yearly comparisons not being 100% accurate

³ The Disability Service is managed by Adult Social Care but supports both Adults and Children. Therefore, for reporting purposes, the complaints relating to children have been included within this Department.

The Service received 41 complaints, a slight increase from the 38 received in the previous year. Of these, 40 were addressed at Stage 1 with a further complaint being considered immediately at Stage 2 based on the complexities of the case.

Of the 40 Stage 1 complaints, 25 were 'upheld/partially upheld'. This equates to 63%, an increase from the 39% in the previous year. However, all but one complainant was satisfied with the action taken to address the complaint, along with an apology. The other escalated their complaint for an independent investigation at Stage 2.

As stated in the Adult Social Care section, Members requested the breakdown for each team within the Department in respect of the outcome to the complaints. These are as follows:

CORPORATE PARENTING

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Looked After Children (LAC) Team	9	1	4	4
Fostering	1	0	1	0
Leaving Care	1	1	0	0
N Wales Adoption Service (NWAS)	3	2	0	1
Total	14	4	5	5

CARE & SUPPORT

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Assessment & Intervention Team	6	2	1	3
Family Support Team	14	7	2	5
Single Point of Access (SPOA)	1	1	0	0
Other	2	1	1	0
Total	23	11	4	8

DISABILITY

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
All Age Disability Team	4	0	2	2
Total	4	0	2	2

TOTAL OVERALL

Team	Numbers of Complaints	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld
Total	41	15	11	15

The details of the complaint escalated to Stage 2 complaints is as follows:

CARE & SUPPORT

- A. This complaint was considered at Stage 2 due to the complexity around the issues and it involving a number of services. Primarily the complaint concerned the alleged poor practice by the Department in relation to the child. The complaint was made by the grandparents on behalf of their son (the child's father) but also in respect of their involvement.

The complaint contained 25 elements, of which 8 were upheld or partially upheld. A meeting was held with the family prior to the independent investigation being commissioned in which some of the errors in the case were discussed. It was highlighted that unfortunately given some of the members of staff involved had left the authority it presented a challenge to address some of the elements of the complaint. A key concern for the family was also access to the child but this was something the investigation could not comment on due to legal proceedings.

CARE & SUPPORT

- B. The complaint related to the involvement of the Local Authority in respect of safeguarding concerns around the children. The case also contained legal proceedings which are outside the scope of the complaints procedures.

The investigation considered six elements, of which four were not upheld regarding the core issue of the safeguarding investigations. Two elements were upheld relating to poor communication from the Department, for which an apology was given and a payment issued based on a recommendation by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

OTHER

A Stage 2 investigation was undertaken during the year in respect of a Stage 1 complaint submitted late in the previous reporting period, therefore the details of this can now be provided:

CORPORATE PARENTING

The complaint concerned a 'Care Leaver' who was questioning their eligibility for ongoing financial support. The complaint was made as a previous manager had incorrectly determined their edibility and when this mistake was identified, the person was unhappy with the removal of this.

The independent Investigation found the decision to be correct in line with policy so did not uphold this element. It is also important to highlight that the person was not left without any support at all, the complaint was about a specific element which is based on eligibility (time in care).

5. Actions Taken/Lessons Learned

As a result of the complaints received, a number of actions were taken/to be taken to ensure any shortcomings were rectified and improvements made across the Department. It is standard practice to offer an apology to the complainant where shortcomings were identified in addition to advising them of the specific action taken to resolve their concerns.

Below are some examples of systemic actions taken as a result of complaints received:

- Information/support for the Department by the Complaints Team regarding process, particularly for newer members of management
- Review of how financial charges are discussed and agreed in Adult Social Care with the supported person and their families
- Review of general communication between the teams and the people they are supporting, ensuring information is conveyed in a timely manner

The Social Care Department are provided with the detailed statistics and information for the complaints they have received for their consideration as part of ongoing performance monitoring. The information is also provided for Care Inspectorate Wales as part of the inspections of the service, meaning there is ongoing monitoring and consideration of complaints as part of a lessons learned approach.

6. Timescales

Much work has been done by both the Complaints Team and the Department to address the poor compliance with timescales. It is pleasing to note that the 88% of complaints were addressed within the statutory timescales (or with an extension agreed by the complainant) which is great progress but will look to be improved on in the coming year.

7. Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Ombudsman provides the Council with an 'annual letter' in August which contains a breakdown of her involvement during the year in complaints made concerning the Council. A report is then presented to the Executive Board and the Governance & Audit Committee as per the requirements set out by the Ombudsman.

8. Compliments

There were 36 compliments received during the year from service users and their families, a slight increase from the previous year (32 in 2022/23). Of these, 30 were for Adult Social Care and 6 for Children's Social Care.

Example of the compliment received by Adult Social Care:

"I'm just writing this email to thank M and his team with all the support they have give me and my family. They have stuck by us 100% all the way and been very supportive. I now have my adapted property with everything I need and have a bit of my independence back. I can do things with my daughter and for that I am very grateful".

Example of the compliment received by Children's Social Care:

"I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for the amazing teams you have in place in the Wrexham area. My family underwent a horrific event, with the removal of our granddaughter, which then went through the court process, which was a completely alien experience for my family, and whilst it was a stressful and upsetting time, I can confirm it would have been so much worse without the support and advice from your team.

"I would particularly like to mention how appreciative we are for the check-ins and making sure we were ok, I suspect this is above and beyond the normal role and it is appreciated".

APPENDIX 3:

Statements by each Chief Officer regarding complaints

It is encouraging that firstly, complaints within the Department are reducing and secondly that of the complaints made, none have been upheld. This would suggest that our processes and procedures are reasonably robust and are being followed.

That said, each complaint and response is reviewed in detail, irrespective of whether the complaint is upheld. The nature of the issue is examined by the relevant Team, with challenge from me, to establish whether there is any learning to be had and/or improvements to be made.

David Fitzsimon, Chief Officer Economy and Planning

Officers work proactively to address concerns to prevent escalation to complaint. The service monitors complaints to identify patterns and inform practice.

Whilst complaints concerning schools are addressed by the school directly in accordance with national policy, the Complaints Team often provide advice and support to officers, head teachers and governors to assist them in managing particularly difficult and sensitive issues.

Karen Evans, Chief Officer Education & Early Intervention

At the Environment & Technical Department we work closely with the Complaints Team and have internal processes in place that assists with the management of any complaints received. We receive both informal and formal complaints directly from the Complaints Team which are co-ordinated by an officer in the Business Support Team who liaises with the relevant delivery team for a response. We aim to resolve issues in a way that deals with the issue in the first instance so that we reduce repeated complaints about the same issue.

We keep a log of complaints received with details of the nature of the complaint along with location and teams/officers involved in the complaint. We review this information regularly to identify any patterns or trends so that we can implement changes to improve performance and reduce complaints moving forward.

Darren Williams, Chief Officer Environment & Technical

We learn from complaints and review periodically at our DMT. This helps us to understand if there are common or system issues, or patterns we need to address. Our culture is where we have got something wrong, we hold hands up, correct the issue and change process if appropriate.

Richard Weigh, Chief Officer Finance & ICT

We consider and respond to individual complaints on a case by case basis, and also consider whether there are any patterns or repeated complaints about similar issues. Procedures are reviewed and updated when any issues are identified.

As the Complaints Team sits within the department, complaint management is embedded within the performance management of the department overall and areas for systemic improvement across the Council as a result of the involvement of the Complaints Team is an ongoing process.

Linda Roberts, Chief Officer Governance & Customer

In the Housing and Assets Department we work very closely with the Complaints Team to review the breakdown of the complaints we receive as a department. This is part of our performance management and is shared with our senior managers across the service.

We have officers within our teams who keep a log of complaints we receive in order to identify any trends across our services. We proactively work with team managers to analyse any areas of dissatisfaction from our service users and we take steps to review our policies and procedures regularly in order to address any issues highlighted.

Our Performance, Projects and Business Lead is working with the Complaints Team to discuss complaints in dept, going forward the Complaints team will be acting as a critical friend in reviewing our template letters/policies etc before they go live so we can highlight any potential issues.

Julie Francis, Chief Officer Housing

Social Care Complaints are primarily dealt with under the specific social care procedure and they are reported upon yearly. Each is dealt with individually by the relevant Team Manager and we aim to respond at Stage 1 on the process as far as is possible. Where there are trends these will be picked up within Adult & Children's Management Teams. Important to note however as each case is very unique it is rare that a specific trend is highlighted. Management regularly liaise with the Complaints Team for advice and guidance in respect of complaint management.

Where complaints escalate to Stage 2 (where a report is completed) any and all actions arising from the report are collated into actions plans which are then used to influence practice as is required.

Details on complaints also inform part of the CIW inspection process which in turn informs service improvement

Alwyn Jones, Chief Officer Social Care