



Report of the Head of Digital & Customer Services

Governance & Audit Committee – 19 July 2023

Annual Complaints Report – Six Month Update

Purpose:	To provide assurance on the complaints handling process and a six month update covering 1 st April 2022 – 30 th September 2022.
Policy Framework:	Complaints Policies and Successful and Sustainable Swansea.
Consultation:	Finance and Legal.
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Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	Rhian Millar
For Information	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Annual Complaints report for 2021-22 was presented to the Governance & Audit Committee on the 11th of January 2023.
- 1.2 This report gives an update on progress six months on, covering the period 1st April to 30th September 2022. The Annual Complaints Report 2022-23 will be presented as soon as the Ombudsman's annual letter is received.
- 1.3 The Council attended the Public Services Ombudsman Wales (PSOW) annual sounding board meeting in March 2023 and met with the Ombudsman to discuss their new strategic plan. The PSOW uses the sounding board sessions to gather feedback from public bodies and then adapt or change ways of working.

2. Six Month Update: 1st April to 30th September 2022

- 2.1 Appendix A attached to this report gives the key performance indicators for the first six months of 2022-23 relating to both Corporate and Social Services complaints. Performance shows that:

- 794 corporate complaints at stage 1 were logged compared with 676 for the same period the previous year – an increase of 14.7%
- 81 corporate complaints at stage 2 were logged compared with 87 for the same period the previous year, a decrease of 7%
- There was no significant increase in any area apart from Housing Repairs and Culture and Tourism. Housing Repairs received 129 Stage 1 complaints compared with 86 in the previous period, an increase of 43 (33%). This is mostly due to increased demand, clearing the Covid backlog of internal repairs, and the transition period from the old Orchard repairs system to the new Oracle Field Services. Culture & Tourism received 54 Stage 1 complaints compared with 28 in the previous period, an increase of 16 (48%). 15 of these related to the Iron Man (Triathlon) which was staged for the first time. This accounts for almost 94% of the increase.
- Of the corporate complaints that were justified
 - 218 (27.4%) Stage 1 justified complaints in the first six months of 2022-23, compared with 214 (31.6%) the previous year
 - 12 (14.8%) Stage 2 complaints justified in the first six months of 2022-23 compared with 11 (12.6%) the previous year.
- There was an increase in Adult Social Services Complaints. In this period there were 111 stage 1 Adult Social Services complaints in comparison with 71 in first six months of 2021, an increase of 36%. However, it should be noted that 29 of these relate to one case. There was an increase in complaints about the Community Initial Assessment Team (CIAT) to 17 in 2022 from 10 in 2021, the majority of which related to delays. Contracting had no complaints in 2022 compared with 14 for the same period in 2021. There was only one complaint about financial assessments in 2022 compared with 11 the previous year. Of the 111 complaints received in this reporting period 37 were upheld which equates to 33% of complaints received. Of the 71 complaints received in 2021, 32% were upheld.
- There was an increase in Child & Family Social Services Complaints. This period there were 70 stage 1 Child & Family Social Services Complaints compared with 57 for the same period in the previous year, an increase of 22%. There were two teams in Child & Family Services with an increase in complaints:
 - The Looked After Children team saw an increase by 2 complaints to 11
 - There was an increase in Single Points of Contact (SPOC) by 3 to 9.
- Of the 70 complaints received in 2022, 18 were upheld. This is 25% of complaints received. Of the 57 Child & Family complaints received in

2021, 6 were upheld, which represented 10.5% of complaints received. However, there were no identifiable trends.

- 2.2 During this period there was a total of 8 stage 2 social services complaints. Two of those were done via the corporate process and both were not upheld. Of the remaining 6, 3 of the complaints were not upheld, 1 partially upheld, 1 upheld and 1 decided to take legal action. During the previous reporting period there was a total of 7 stage 2 complaints, none dealt with via the corporate complaint process. Of the 7 stage 2 complaints for the previous reporting period 1 upheld, 4 partially upheld, 1 not pursued and 1 matter was in court so the investigation did not proceed.
- 2.3 The Service Improvement and Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel requested tables and graphs of complaints over time. These will be included in the next Annual Complaints Report which will be produced following the annual letter from the Ombudsman.
- 2.4 All section 40 submissions were provided to the Ombudsman's office on time.
- 2.5 The new IT system for handling corporate complaints was launched at the beginning of July.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The additional six-month cost of running the service related to investigating Social Services complaints. Between 1st April and 30th September 2022 this was £15,473, including Child and Family costs of £5,111 and Adult Services of £10,362. This is significantly higher compared with the previous year's investigations cost of £4,201 due to the increase in stage two investigations and increase in price of independent investigators. This is currently a challenge for many Councils across Wales.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A Key Performance Indicators