

Members' Library Service Request Form

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Designation	Head of Council Resources
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REPORT TO: Members' Library Service

MEETING DATE:

BY: Head of Council Resources

SUBJECT: Customer Feedback Reporting, 2016/17

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2016/2017 (1 April 2016 to 30 September 2017).
- 1.2 To bring awareness to implemented and planned improved processes.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note the report and where appropriate highlight areas for further consideration.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council complies with the model complaints handling procedure (CHP) for local authorities introduced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO):

Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution) - Complaint dealt with at point of service within 5 working days

Stage 2 (Investigation) – Complaint investigated; acknowledged within 3 working days and response provided within 20 working days

If complainants remain dissatisfied after completing this process they have a legal right of appeal to the SPSO.

- 3.2 Customer feedback is recorded on the Council’s Customer Relationship Management system (CRM), which provides data on the types of complaints customers make about Council services, as well as complaint handling performance. This system also records comments and compliments from customers.
- 3.3 The Council records and reports on complaints received by the Contact Centre, local area offices and the Customer Feedback Team. Service areas are encouraged to report complaints they receive through these channels to ensure recording is as accurate as possible.

This report covers all council services.

3.4 OVERVIEW 2016/2017

3.4.1 During 2016/2017, East Lothian Council received **875** feedback complaints

This was made up of:

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	621	229	80
2	254		

3.4.2 Complaint **response times** were as follows:

Stage 1: 70% (435 of 621) responded to within 5 working days.

Stage 2: 66% (168 of 254) responded to within 20 working days.

3.4.3 Response times in 2016/2017 were not as high as would be expected. Resource issues in the Customer Feedback Team have led to acknowledgements not being sent within 3 working days. Now these issues have been resolved there has been a renewed focus going on ensuring that when more time is required to resolve a complaint that customers are provided with updates that more time is required. This will be reflected in the mid-year 2017/2018 reporting.

3.4.4 Long-term it is planned that the CRM can be utilised to send automated reminders for open cases which would further improve efficiencies and communication. This had been planned for Q4 however the current CRM does not allow for this and as such when a new CRM is acquired (estimated for 2018), this will be one of the requirements of the system.

3.4.5 Currently the volume of complaints taking more than 20 days to respond to is significantly too high. If there are clear and justifiable reasons for an extension, this should be agreed with the customer and a revised

timescale given. This decision should be taken by a senior officer. If the customer does not agree, the relevant Head of Service can approve an extension and set a new time limit, giving clear reasons for this to the customer.

3.4.6 **Appendix 1** shows examples of when an extension to timescale might be required.

3.5 2016/2017 ANALYSIS

3.5.1 Complaint **outcomes** were as follows:

Stage 1: 621 complaints

Not Upheld	37% (231)
Partially Upheld	27% (167)
Upheld	32% (201)
Moved to Stage 2	4% (22)

The service areas driving the volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2016/2017** were:

Waste Services 17% (107)

Property Maintenance 15% (91)

Community Housing 13% (83)

Stage 2: 254 complaints

Not Upheld	50% (127)
Partially Upheld	35% (90)
Upheld	15% (37)

The service areas driving the volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2016/2017** were:

Education 20% (51)

Community Housing 15% (37)

Engineering incl. Gas 9% (23)

Economic Development 9% (23)

Whilst **Waste Services** have a high volume of Stage 1 complaints this is a very small number in relation to the 130,000 customer service visits per

week. Overall the complaints relate to bins not being uplifted or awaiting delivery of new bins longer than expected. **Waste Services** also only received 1 Stage 2 complaint in the year; this reflects a positive handling of Stage 1 complaints. Waste Services also received 9% of all compliments received over the year.

Property Maintenance complaints are driven by outstanding work; customers waiting longer than advised for repairs to be completed and/or lack of communication of timescales. Work is ongoing to look at setting expectations and changes to these with customers at the time. Recommunication of policies relating to driving Council Vehicles was also carried out as the first quarter of the year saw complaints in relation to driving; no complaints were received on this in Q3 and Q4 following the communications.

Community Housing complaints are focused on the lack of housing and timescales as well as appointment times and updates for repairs. Work is ongoing focused on setting customer's expectations upfront on timescales and updates on pending works.

Education complaints crossed a variety of issues. Stage 2 complaints were driven by parents concerns with composite classes. This is due to the fact that complaints were about composite classes and parents being dissatisfied with this, however these are not upheld as the classes are compliant with the East Lothian Council Composite class policy.

Economic Development complaints were driven by a project involving external contractors and the installation of cavity insulation. This type of complaint and volume is not anticipated to be seen in future reporting.

Engineering Services including Gas team complaints were driven by trends in relation to gas charges, failed appointments and level of service. Customer feedback insight has been shared with the Service with a view to create recommendations to improve the customer experience and reduce upheld complaints.

Please note the current process doesn't allow for the accurate recording of Stage 1 complaints that escalate to Stage 2. A process improvement is being implemented allowing for reported figures in 2017/2018 to have a confirmed accuracy as a result.

3.5.3 **A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2016/2017 is shown in Appendix 2.**

3.5.4 **229** compliments were received in **2016/2017**

The following Service Area received a high percentage of compliments:

Customer Services 30% (69)

Adult Wellbeing 21% (49)

Property Maintenance 9% (21)

Waste 9% (20)

3.5.5 **80** comments were received in 2016/2017.
There is no trend of comments specific to any one Service Area.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONIONS

4.1 None

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial - None

6.2 Personnel - None

6.3 Other - None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1 CHP Extension to Timescale

7.2 Appendix 2 Breakdown by Service Area Table

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DATE	31 st January 2018

Appendix 1

Extension to the timescale - Not all investigations will be able to meet this deadline. For example, some complaints are so complex they require careful consideration and detailed investigation beyond the 20-day limit. However, these would be the exception and every effort should be made to deliver a final response within 20 working days. If there are clear and justifiable reasons for an extension, this should be agreed with the customer and a revised timescale given. This decision should be taken by a senior officer. If the Customer does not agree, the relevant Head of Service can approve an extension and set a new time limit, giving clear reasons for this to the customer. Examples might include:

- Essential accounts or statements, crucial to establishing the circumstances of the case, are needed from staff, customers or others but they cannot help because of long-term sickness or leave.
- You cannot obtain further essential information within normal timescales.
- Operations are disrupted by unforeseen or unavoidable operational circumstances, for example industrial action or severe weather conditions.
- The customer has agreed to mediation as a potential route for resolution.

Taken from Complaint Handling Procedure:

http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/5896/complaints_procedure

Appendix 2: Customer Feedback Stage 1 Complaints by Service 2016/2017

Service	Stage 1	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to Stage 2	Responded to within 5 working days
Building Standards	2	0	1	1		50%
Building Maintenance	1		1			100%
Engineering Gas	40	8	7	24	1	78%
Economic Development	2	1	0	0	1	50%
Environment Services Food & Safety	0					
Environment Services Protection	5	3	1	1		60%
Planning	5	1	3	1		75%
Customer Services	27	15	10	2		67%
Community Housing	83	36	23	18	6	63%
Corporate Policy Web	2	0	1	1		50%
Corporate Policy Media	1	0	1	0		100%
Corporate Policy & Improvements	1	1	0	0		100%
Homelessness	5	3	1		1	40%
Facilities	9	1	1	6	1	89%
Property Maintenance	91	26	25	39	1	62%
Roads	55	21	17	16	1	71%
Transport	9	3	1	5		56%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	53	21	16	14	2	57%
Waste	107	40	20	46	1	91%
Benefits	1	0	1	0		100%
HR & Payroll	3	3	0	0		100%
Revenues and Welfare Support	21	14	2	4	1	97%
Finance	2	1			1	50%
IT	0					
Legal	0					
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services	6	3	1	1	1	50%
Education	45	20	18	6	1	70%
Adult Wellbeing	37	5	16	15	1	35%
Children's Services	8	5	0	1	2	63%

Customer Feedback Stage 2 Complaints Breakdown by Service 2016/2017

Service	Stage 2	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Responded to within 20 working days
Building Standards	0				
Building Maintenance	0				
Engineering Gas	23	3	5	15	70%
Economic Development	23	1	20	2	61%
Environment Services Food & Safety	0				
Environment Services Protection	1	1	0	0	100%
Planning	4	3	0	1	50%
Customer Services	4	3	1	0	100%
Community Housing	37	22	13	2	35%
Corporate Policy Web	0				
Corporate Policy Media	0				
Corporate Policy & Improvements	0				
Homelessness	13	13	0	0	62%
Facilities	5	1	1	3	100%
Property Maintenance	20	4	10	6	45%
Roads	6	2	4	0	50%
Transport	1	1	0	0	0%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	9	4	4	1	67%
Waste	1	1	0	0	100%
Benefits	4	2	1	1	50%
HR & Payroll	0				
Revenues and Welfare Support	8	4	4	0	74%
Finance	1	0	1	0	100%
IT	0				
Legal	0				
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services	1	0	1	0	100%
Education	51	35	14	2	49%
Adult Wellbeing	31	11	7	3	78%
Children's Services	21	16	4	1	59%

**Customer Feedback Stage 2 Compliments and Comments by Service
2016/2017**

Service	Compliments	Comments
Building Standards	1	
Building Maintenance		
Engineering Gas	3	1
Economic Development	1	
Environment Services Food & Safety	1	
Environment Services Protection	1	
Planning		
Customer Services	69	24
Community Housing	11	9
Corporate Policy Web		
Corporate Policy Media		
Corporate Policy & Improvements	3	
Homelessness		
Facilities	3	
Property Maintenance	21	2
Roads	8	2
Transport		
Sports Countryside & Leisure	11	8
Waste	20	28
Benefits	9	
HR & Payroll		
Revenues and Welfare Support	8	2
Finance		
IT		
Legal		
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services	8	0
Education	1	3
Adult Wellbeing	49	
Children's Services	1	1