

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee

MEETING DATE: 20 June 2018

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Resources and People Services)

SUBJECT: Customer Feedback Reporting 2017/2018

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2017/2018 (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018).
- 1.2 To raise awareness of implemented and planned improved processes as result of trends seen in the reporting.

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 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK OVERVIEW 2017/2018

- 3.4.1 During 2017/2018, East Lothian Council received **922** complaints, compared with **875** in 2016/2017. Whilst there is a small increase, overall 2017/2018 was a positive year in terms of Customer Feedback in relation to decrease in Stage 2 complaints and the number of not upheld complaints. This will be detailed further in the report.

2017/2018

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	761	178	79
2	161		

2016/2017

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	621	229	80
2	254		

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

Stage 1: 65% (487 of 761) responded to within 5 working days.

Stage 2: 55% (89 of 161) responded to within 20 working days.

- 3.4.3 Response times have decreased further since 2016/2017 from 70% to 65% for Stage 1 and from 66% to 55% for Stage 2. Focus will be taken moving forward to support the Service Areas to improve the overall response time. Whilst the response time is longer than the SPSO guidelines, customers are advised if their Stage 2 complaint is going to take more than 20 days and provided with regular updates, where required.

- 3.4.4 In previous reports it was highlighted that a new CRM could be utilised to send automated reminders for open cases which would further improve

efficiencies and communication. Whilst this is still the case the acquiring of a new CRM which was estimated for 2018 has now been pushed back to 2019.

3.5 COMPLAINT ANALYSIS 2017/2018

3.5.1 Complaint **outcomes** were as follows:

Stage 1: 761 complaints received

Not Upheld 54% (414)

Partially Upheld 27% (209)

Upheld 17% (130)

Escalated to Stage 22% (21)

Totals will not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2017/2018** were:

Property Maintenance 19% (143)

Community Housing 15% (114)

Waste Services 14% (109)

Stage 2: 161 complaints received

Not Upheld 52% (82)

Partially Upheld 35% (56)

Upheld 10% (16)

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 2** complaints in **2017/2018** were:

Education 27% (43)

Adult Wellbeing 14% (23)

Community Housing 11% (18)

Whilst **Waste Services** receives 14% of all Stage 1 complaints, this is a very small number in relation to the 130,000 customer service visits per week. Of the complaints received, over 60% are not upheld. The total of all feedback is nearly the same as 2016/2017 (107 Stage 1, 1 Stage 2 and 20 compliments and 28 comments). This is positive and reflects the improvements made as a result of previous feedback that was driving upheld complaints:

- Returning containers to designated collection points in a careful and considerate manner.
- Improving deliveries of replacement containers with time monitored performance from request to sign off.
- CPC driver training with feedback discussion on performance including driving style and speed.

Property Maintenance Stage 1 complaints have risen from 91 in 2016-2017 to 143 in 2017/2018. However, Stage 2 complaints have seen a positive decrease from 20 to 12.

In addition, over 50% of Stage 1 complaints are not upheld, much of this is driven by customers expecting work to be carried sooner than is feasible. Further work is going to be undertaken in the management of customer expectations and communications with a view to reduce the overall complaint volume.

Following the merging of the Housing Asset and the Housing Repairs Teams into Property Maintenance, local processes are being reviewed and improved. For example, the Housing Repairs Team has been given autonomy to authorise fencing and external doors upgrades. In addition, the ongoing Property Maintenance service review has proposed an additional resource dedicated to the co-ordination of larger scale projects within the Housing Asset Team. It is expected over time that this will help improve the communication and turnaround time for customers. A review is also ongoing focusing on improving the process from the initial customer contact when work required in a property is assessed, through to the repair being carried out and advising customers of timescales from the outset.

Work is also taking place looking at how systems such as CRM and Orchard can be better utilised to manage customer contact and returning customer queries.

Community Housing Stage 1 complaints have risen from 83 in 2016-2017 to 116 this year. However, Stage 2 complaints have seen a positive decrease from 37 to 18.

As with **Property Maintenance**, the outcome of Stage 1s have remained fairly static with just under 50% not upheld. With the Housing Asset Team and Repairs Officers having moved from **Community Housing** to **Property Maintenance** the actions detailed above are expected to reflect in future reporting under **Property Maintenance** and it is expected **Community Housing** complaint numbers will reduce.

Education complaints that were partially upheld were driven by complaints where the service considers that a school can improve on its approach to working in partnership with parents in line with the parental engagement strategy. Upheld complaints resulted in a review of practice within schools and further support being provided to the school to address the area for improvement.

Adult Wellbeing introduced a new team in Q4 of 2017/2018 focused in improving invoicing services and query handle. This is as a result of a trend in upheld

complaints relating to this issue. It is anticipated a reduction in upheld complaints will be seen in 2018/2019.

3.5.3 A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2017/2018 is shown in Appendix 2.

3.6 COMPLIMENTS OVERVIEW 2017/2018

3.6.1 **178** compliments were received in **2017/2018**.

The following Service Area received a high percentage of compliments:

Adult Wellbeing 26% (46)

Property Maintenance 9% (24)

Customer Services 13% (23)

Waste 12% (21)

This follows the trend seen in previous years as these Service Areas have a high volume of customer facing interactions and as such have more opportunity to receive more feedback; both compliments and complaints.

3.7 COMMENTS OVERVIEW 2017/2018

3.7.1 **79** comments were received in 2017/2018. There is no trend of comments specific to any one Service Area.

3.8 SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AS A RESULT OF FEEDBACK

3.8.1 As a result of feedback received the following improvements and actions have been carried out:

High Hedges

Concerns raised with the Scottish Government about their guidance on High Hedges. Until this is progressed by the Scottish Government when ELC receive a High Hedge application the first action taken is to attend the site by a Landscape Officer to establish if it is a High Hedge or not.

Landlord Registration

Democratic and Licensing received 2 upheld complaints that were focused on internal service communication with Council Tax with regard to dates of registering landlords and queries needed to assist Council Tax. As a result training was delivered to the Licensing Officers on using the Landlord Registration System thus reducing key person dependencies.

Insurance Claims

Following feedback from the SPSO further wording was added to insurance claims form to ensure transparency for customers on other evidence that can be submitted when receipts are not available when making a claim.

Complaint Handling Process and Recording

Complaints handled at Stage 1 where customers are not satisfied with the response are now recorded separately. This ensures that the reporting of complaints “escalated to Stage 2” are more accurate.

Contact is also received that does not fall under the CHP however Customer Feedback Team provides support for such wider cross service issues. This includes; providing support to Legal team on what previously was a complaint/going through legal process. Call handling and de-escalation such as when Community Alarm fee increase letters were issued and customers had additional questions.

Community Alarms

Community Alarm letters also highlighted the need for a review of the recording of deceased customers, ensuring letters are not issued in the name of people who have passed away; this review is currently in progress.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONIONS

4.1 None

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial - None

5.2 Personnel - None

5.3 Other - None

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2017/2018

7.2 Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2017/2018

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DATE	1 June 2018

Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2017/2018

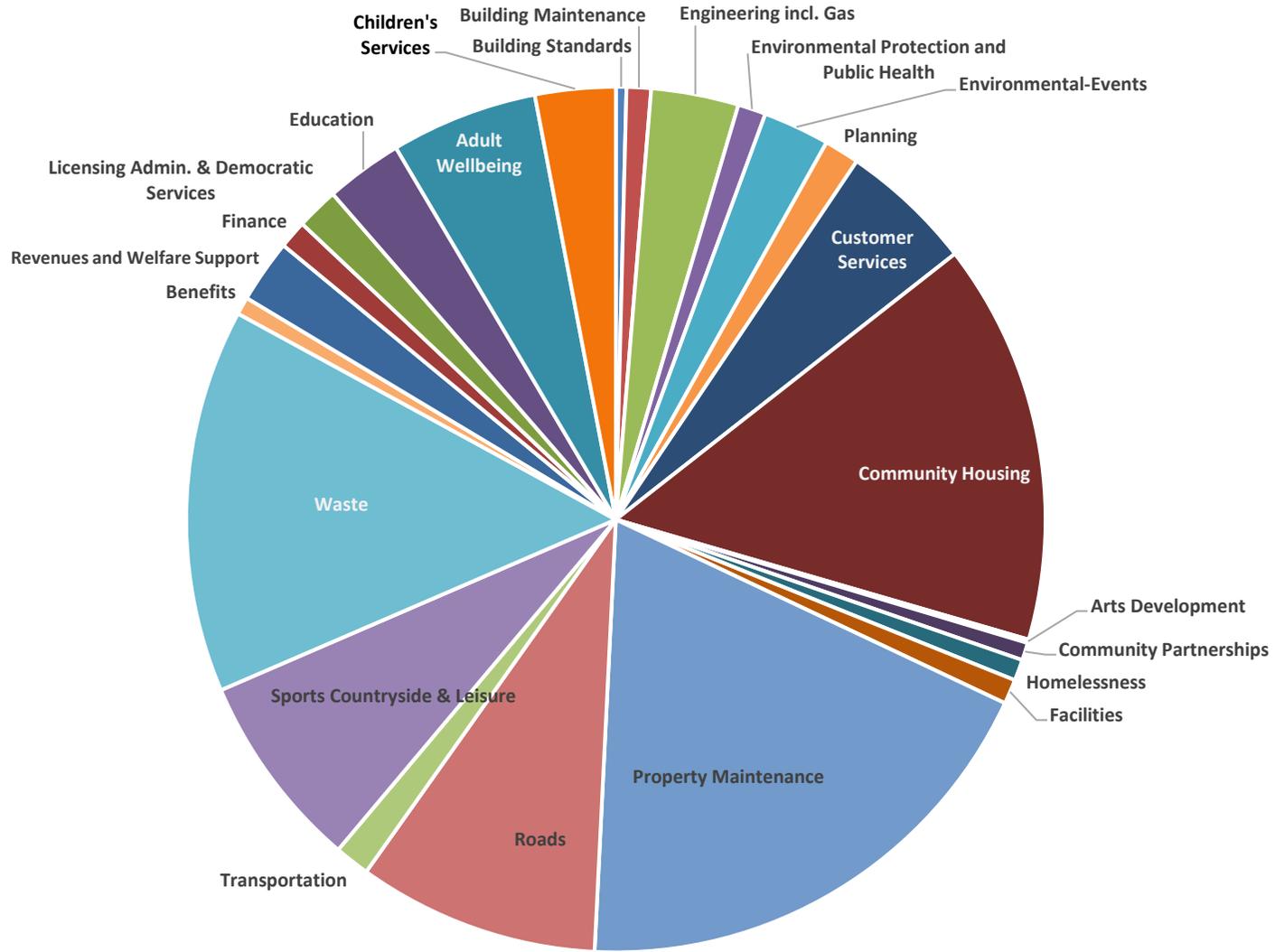
Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to Stage 2	Compliments	Comments
Building Standards							
Stage 1	3	1	0	2	1		
Stage 2	1	1					
Building Maintenance							
Stage 1	7	3	2	1	0		2
Stage 2	0						
Engineering incl. Gas							
Stage 1	25	14	9	2	1	3	3
Stage 2	3	0	1	2			
Economic Development							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Environment Services							
Food & Safety							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Environmental Protection and Public Health							
Stage 1	8	7	0	1	0	1	2
Stage 2	1	0	1	0			
Environmental-Events							
Stage 1	19	9	5	5	0		
Stage 2	0						

Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to Stage 2	Compliments	Comments
Planning							
Stage 1	10	2	6	2	0		
Stage 2	6	5	1				
Customer Services							
Stage 1	38	30	5	3	2	23	16
Stage 2	8	7	1	0			
Community Housing							
Stage 1	114	55	36	23	3	10	3
Stage 2	18	8	9	1			
Corporate Policy Web							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Corporate Policy Media							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Corporate Policy & Improvements							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Arts Development							
Stage 1	1	0	0	1	0	5	0
Stage 2	0						
Community Partnerships							
Stage 1	5	3	1	0	0	2	1
Stage 2	4	4	0	0			
Homelessness							
Stage 1	6	2	3	0	0	1	
Stage 2	2	1	0	0			
Facilities							
Stage 1	7	3	3	1	1	2	1
Stage 2	1	0	0	1			

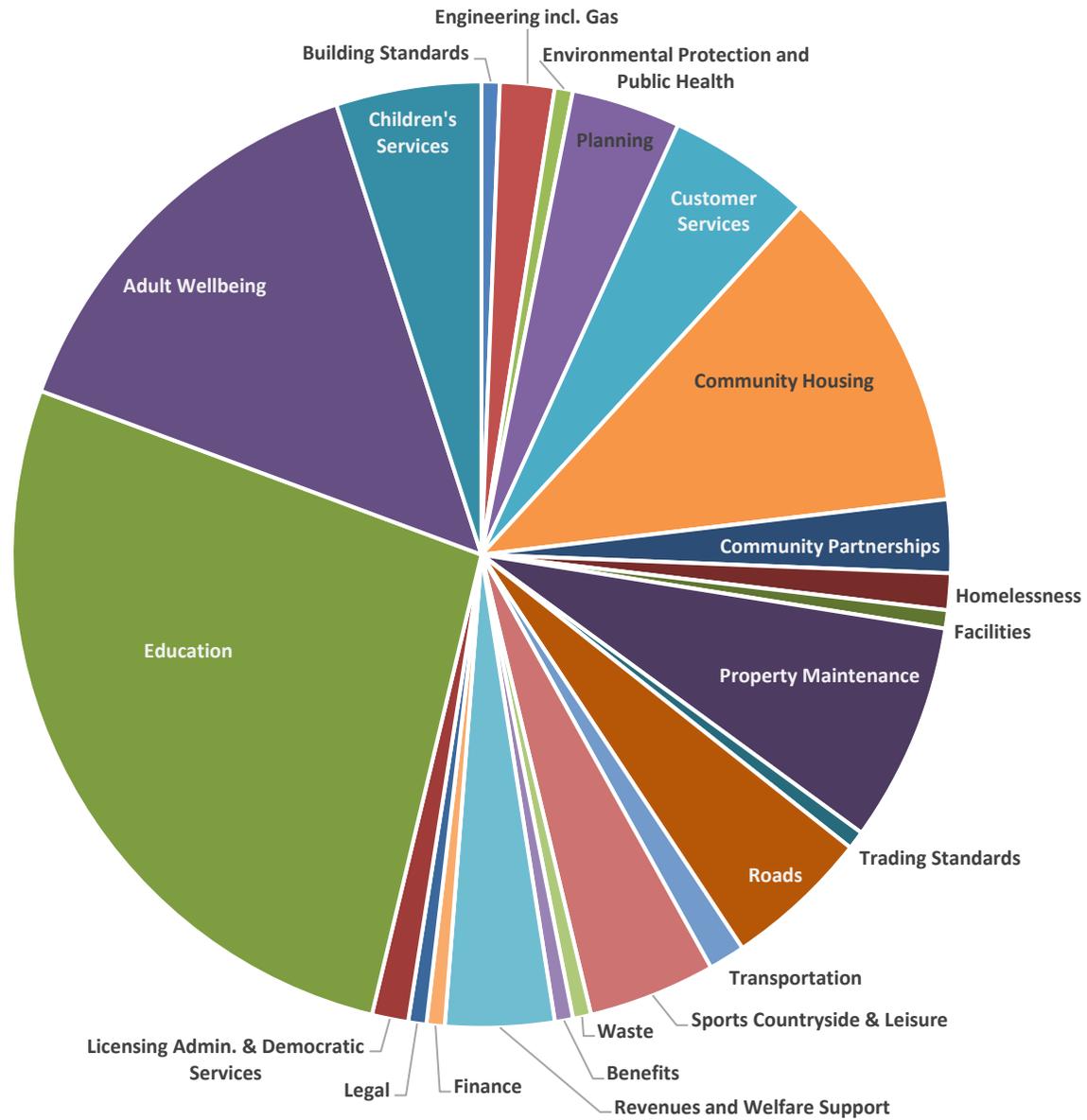
Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to Stage 2	Compliments	Comments
Property Maintenance							
Stage 1	143	76	37	29	3	24	1
Stage 2	12	5	6	0			
Trading Standards							
Stage 1					1		
Stage 2	1	1					
Roads							
Stage 1	69	39	15	15	4	11	11
Stage 2	8	4	4	0			
Transportation							
Stage 1	10	4	4	1	0	0	2
Stage 2	2	1	0	1			
Sports Countryside & Leisure							
Stage 1	56	30	15	9	2	12	7
Stage 2	7	5	1	1			
Waste							
Stage 1	109	66	28	15	1	21	13
Stage 2	1	1	0	0			
Benefits							
Stage 1	5	3	1	1	0	3	
Stage 2	1	1	0	0			
HR & Payroll							
Stage 1	0						1
Stage 2	0						
Revenues and Welfare Support							
Stage 1	18	13	3	2	0	6	3
Stage 2	6	3	3				
Finance							
Stage 1	8	5	2	1			1
Stage 2	1	1	0	0			

Service Area	Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Escalated to Stage 2	Compliments	Comments
IT							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	0						
Legal							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	1		1				
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services							
Stage 1	12	9	3	0	0	4	2
Stage 2	2	1	0	1			
Education							
Stage 1	22	14	5	3	0	2	6
Stage 2	43	18	13	8			
Adult Wellbeing							
Stage 1	42	12	18	12	0	46	3
Stage 2	23	8	11	2			
Criminal Justice							
Stage 1	0						
Stage 2	2	2					
Children's Services							
Stage 1	23	17	5	1	1	2	2
Stage 2	8	5	3	0			

Stage 1 Complaints Received-by service area



Stage 2 Complaints Received-by service area



Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2017/2018

Service Area	% Responded to in 5 working days	% Responded to in 20 working days
Building Standards	33%	0%
Building Maintenance	29%	
Engineering incl. Gas	72%	67%
Environmental Protection and Public Health	75%	100%
Environmental-Events	53%	
Planning	70%	17%
Customer Services	76%	93%
Community Housing	59%	44%
Arts Development	100%	
Community Partnerships	20%	100%
Homelessness	83%	100%
Facilities	71%	0%
Property Maintenance	55%	25%
Trading Standards	0%	100%
Roads	86%	75%

Transportation	60%	50%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	57%	43%
Waste	92%	100%
Benefits	80%	
Revenues and Welfare Support	89%	100%
Finance	63%	0%
Legal		0
Licensing Admin. & Democratic Services	67%	50%
Education	41%	49%
Adult Wellbeing	40%	52%
Criminal Justice		100%
Children's Services	57%	50%

