

**REPORT TO:** Policy and Performance Review Committee

**MEETING DATE:** 09 June 2022

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** Customer Feedback Reporting 2021/2022

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## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2021/2022 (1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022).
- 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. Complaints handled at Stage 1 where customers are not satisfied with the response escalate to Stage 2. Such complaints continue to be recorded separately. This ensures that the reporting of complaints “escalated to Stage 2” are more accurate.

- 3.3 The Customer Feedback and FOI team has welcomed a new member to the team over the past year. A continuation of cross skilling has enabled the team to provide continued stabilisation within both teams. The teams have continued to work from home with no impact on services delivery allowing the teams to comply with the regulatory requests in accordance with legislation.
- 3.4 The Complaint Handling Completion Form continues to capture valuable data, including resolutions and learning points that help to improve practices. The learning points and service improvements are captured within each Service area's Improvement log and shared with Service Managers quarterly. This remains a valuable tool for supporting Services in making continuous improvements and maintaining a Customer First approach.
- 3.5 The customer satisfaction survey has now been fully embedded. The survey captures the feedback around how the complaint process was handled. We sent 219 survey requests to customers and 30 were returned. The findings are included in our quarterly benchmarking data and shared with our regulator.
- 3.6 The Council continues to record and report 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.
- 3.7 In previous reports it was highlighted that CRM (Customer Relationship Management software – case handling) was being replaced with the new OCP (On-line Customer Portal). I can now confirm that the new system is live and all build requirements implemented are working well. Improved processes and on-line capability have further improved efficiencies.
- 3.8 This report covers all Council Services.

## **CUSTOMER FEEDBACK OVERVIEW 2021/2022**

- 3.9 During 2021/2022, East Lothian Council received **861** complaints, compared with **622** in 2020/2021. Overall 2021/2022 saw an increase in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints in terms of Customer Feedback. This is detailed further below. There has been a significant increase in comments received, particularly in relation to the new recycling collections (51%) of all comments received.

### **2021/2022**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Complaints</b>	<b>Compliments</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>767</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>939</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>94</b>		

## 2020/2021

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	570	386	673
2	52		

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

**Stage 1: 54%** (412 of 767) responded to within 5 working days.

**Stage 2: 50%** (47 of 94) responded to within 20 working days.

3.11 Response times have improved since 2020/2021 from 45% to 54% for Stage 1 and increased from 38% to 50% for Stage 2. Greater complexity around the stage 2 requests have required lengthy investigations by ELC service areas extending the 20 working day timescale in some instances.

3.12 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.

## COMPLAINT ANALYSIS 2021/2022

3.13 Complaint **outcomes** were as follows:

**Stage 1: 767** complaints received

Not Upheld - 25% (195)

Partially Upheld - 6% (49)

Upheld - 7% (51)

Resolved - 61% (472)

Escalated to Stage 2 - 3% (23)

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

3.14 The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2021/2022** were:

**Property Maintenance 30% (233)**

**Waste 21% (158)**

**Community Housing 10% (77)**

3.15 **Stage 2: 94** complaints received

Not Upheld 53% (50)

Partially Upheld 43% (40)

Upheld 4% (4)

Resolved 0% (0)

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

3.16 The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 2** complaints in **2021/2022** were:

**Education 52% (49)**

**Property Maintenance 14% (13)**

**Community Housing 20% (19)**

**Waste** received 21% (158) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2021/2022 (767). Of the complaints received, over 25% were not upheld.

**Community Housing** received 10% (77) of all Stage 1 complaints (767) and has seen a slight increase from 75 in 2020/2021. Of the complaints received, over 28% were not upheld.

**Property Maintenance** received 30% (233) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2021/2022 (767). Stage 1 complaints have seen a slight increase from 228 in 2020/2021 to 233 this year. Of the complaints received, over 56% were resolved.

3.17 A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2020/2021 is shown in Appendix 1. Service Area Response Timescales are shown in Appendix 2.

## **COMPLIMENTS OVERVIEW 2021/2022**

3.18 **248** compliments were received in **2021/2022**.

3.19 The following Service Areas received a high percentage of compliments:

**Property Maintenance 13% (32)**

**Customer Services 22% (54)**

**Roads 18% (44)**

- 3.20 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.

### **COMMENTS OVERVIEW 2021/2022**

- 3.21 **939** comments were received in 2021/2022.

- 3.22 The following Service Areas received a high percentage of comments:

**Roads 18% (171)**

**Sports Countryside & Leisure 11% (99)**

**Waste 51% (479)**

- 3.23 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 comments.

### **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AS A RESULT OF FEEDBACK**

- 3.24 As a result of feedback received, the following improvements and actions have been carried out and comment from the individual services is contained in Appendix 2

## **4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 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 None.

**Appendix 1:** Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2021/2022

**Appendix 2:** Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2021/2022

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## Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2021/2022

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Compliments	Comments
<b>Adult Wellbeing</b>													
Total	37	7	4	5	15	7	6	4	3	2	0	26	5
<b>Building Maintenance</b>													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Building Standards</b>													
Total	3	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Children's Services</b>													
Total	16	5	2	0	8	1	5	1	3	0	0	0	1
<b>Community Housing</b>													
Total	77	21	5	5	43	4	19	9	6	0	0	8	43
<b>Community Partnerships</b>													
Total	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3
<b>Corporate Policy &amp; Improvements</b>													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Customer Services</b>													
Total	15	8	2	1	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	54	16
<b>Economic Development</b>													
Total	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	4
<b>Education</b>													
Total	58	8	4	5	33	5	49	16	18	1	0	0	0
<b>Engineering incl. Gas</b>													
Total	51	5	2	1	42	1	3	1	2	0	0	2	10

Service Area	Stage 1 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Escalated to stage 2	Stage 2 Received	Not Upheld	Partially Upheld	Upheld	Resolved	Compliments	Comments
<b>Environmental Services</b>													
<b>Total</b>	26	12	2	2	8	4	6	3	1	0	0	10	34
<b>Planning</b>													
<b>Total</b>	16	9	1	0	3	3	8	5	1	0	0	2	9
<b>Facilities</b>													
<b>Total</b>	6	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	20
<b>Property Maintenance</b>													
<b>Total</b>	233	54	12	19	131	1	13	3	5	1	0	32	19
<b>Roads</b>													
<b>Total</b>	47	9	0	1	33	2	4	1	2	0	0	44	171
<b>Transportation</b>													
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
<b>Sports &amp; Countryside</b>													
<b>Total</b>	47	5	4	3	31	2	7	6	0	0	0	20	99
<b>Waste</b>													
<b>Total</b>	158	40	9	10	96	0	1	1	0	0	0	25	479
<b>Revenues Services</b>													
<b>Total</b>	19	8	0	0	10	1	1	1	0	0	0	16	10
<b>Finance</b>													
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Governance</b>													
	4	0	0	1	3	0	3	1	2	0	0	0	3
<b>People and Council Support</b>													
	4	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	3



## Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2021/2022

Service Area	Stage 1 % responded to within 5 Working days	Stage 2 % responded to within 20 Working days
Adult Wellbeing	27%	33%
Building Maintenance	**	**
Building Standards	50%	0%
Children's Services	56%	33%
Community Housing	40%	27%
Community Partnerships	100%	**
Corporate Policy & Improvements	**	**
Customer Services	87%	0%
Economic Development	100%	0%
Education	64%	43%
Engineering incl. Gas	49%	**
Environment Services	50%	50%
Facilities	50%	**
Finance	**	**
IT	**	**
Governance	50%	0%
People and Council Support	75%	0%
Planning	44%	50%
Property Maintenance	44%	62%
Revenues Services	58%	100%
Roads	51%	100%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	49%	71%
Transportation	**	**
Waste	68%	100%
** no complaints recorded		

## **SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS AS A RESULT OF FEEDBACK**

### **Community Housing**

The Community Housing service continues to carefully consider customer feedback through both complaints and positive comments, as well as satisfaction survey data, in order to continuously review its processes. Customer satisfaction remains relatively high but complaints analysis, especially around upheld complaints, is being factored into ongoing service development activity. A comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey will be undertaken around August/September 2022, which will allow us to further analyse customer sentiment and enable us to plan for further improvements.

### **Property Maintenance**

The entire business planning cycle has effectively been on hold while we have been in business continuity response mode.

Despite major restrictions and higher than average absence rates, we have been able to maintain all essential repair services throughout the course of the pandemic.

### **Transport & Waste Services**

Feedback information received is used within Transport & Waste services to highlight and act on service issues where required. This has been particularly useful with the new roll-out of our recycling service in November 2021 which has been provided through a contractor.