

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

**MEETING DATE:** 15 June 2023

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** Customer Feedback Reporting 2022/2023

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To report on the use of the Council's Complaints Handling Procedure for 2022/2023 (1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023).
- 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 have welcomed two new members 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 learnings and it helps develop new practices. The learnings and service improvements are captured within each Service areas 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 129 survey requests to customers and 18 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 The new OCP (On-line Customer Portal) is working well. Further adaptations and improved processes continue to ensure improved efficiencies.
- 3.8 This report covers all Council Services.

### **3.9 Customer Feedback Overview 2021/2022**

- 3.9.1 During 2022/2023, East Lothian Council received **714** complaints, compared with **861** in 2021/2022. Overall 2022/2023 saw a decrease in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints in terms of Customer Feedback. This is detailed further below. There has been a significant decrease in comments received, particularly in relation to the new recycling collections (27%) of all comments received compared to (51%) in 2021/2022.

## 2022/2023

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	569	250	444
2	67		

## 2021/2022

Stage	Complaints	Compliments	Comments
1	767	248	939
2	94		

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

**Stage 1: 42%** (237 of 569) responded to within 5 working days.

**Stage 2: 66%** (44 of 67) responded to within 20 working days.

3.9.3 Response times have decreased since 2021/2022 from 54% to 42% for Stage 1 and increased from 50% to 66% 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.

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.

## 3.10 Complaint Analysis 2022/2023

### Stage 1 complaints

Outcomes in 2022/2023 were as follows:

**569** complaints received

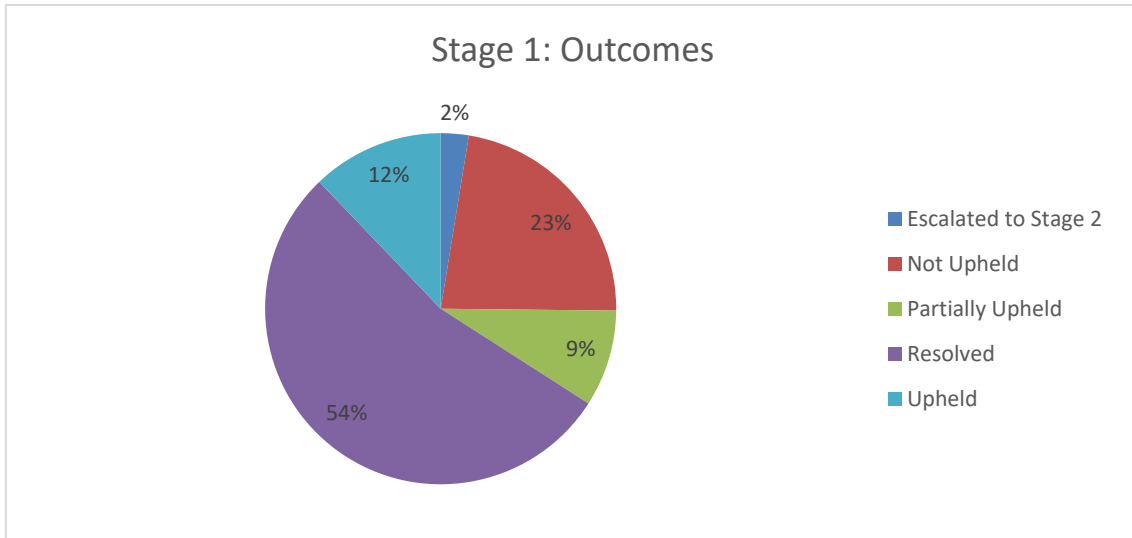
Not Upheld - 132

Partially Upheld - 52

Upheld - 71

Resolved - 314

## Escalated to Stage 2 - 15



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

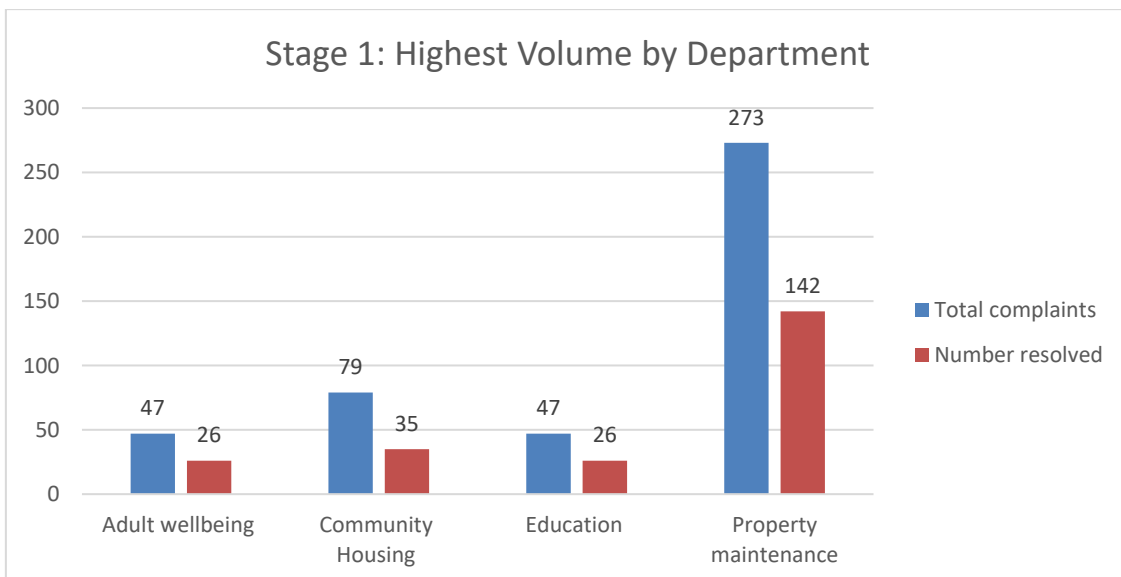
The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 1** complaints in **2022/2023** were:

**Property Maintenance 48% (273)**

**Education 8% (47)**

**Adult Wellbeing 8% (47)**

**Community Housing 14% (79)**



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

**Education** received 8% (47) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2022/2023 (569). Of the complaints received, over 55% were resolved.

**Adult Wellbeing** received 8% (47) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2022/2023 (569). Of the complaints received, over 55% were resolved.

**Community Housing** received 14% (79) of all Stage 1 complaints (569) and has seen a slight increase from 77 in 2021/2022. Of the complaints received, over 44% were resolved.

**Property Maintenance** received 48% (273) of all Stage 1 complaints received in 2022/2023 (569). Stage 1 complaints have seen a slight increase from 233 in 2021/2022 to 273 this year. Of the complaints received, over 52% were resolved

### Stage 2 complaints

Outcomes in 2022/2023 were as follows:

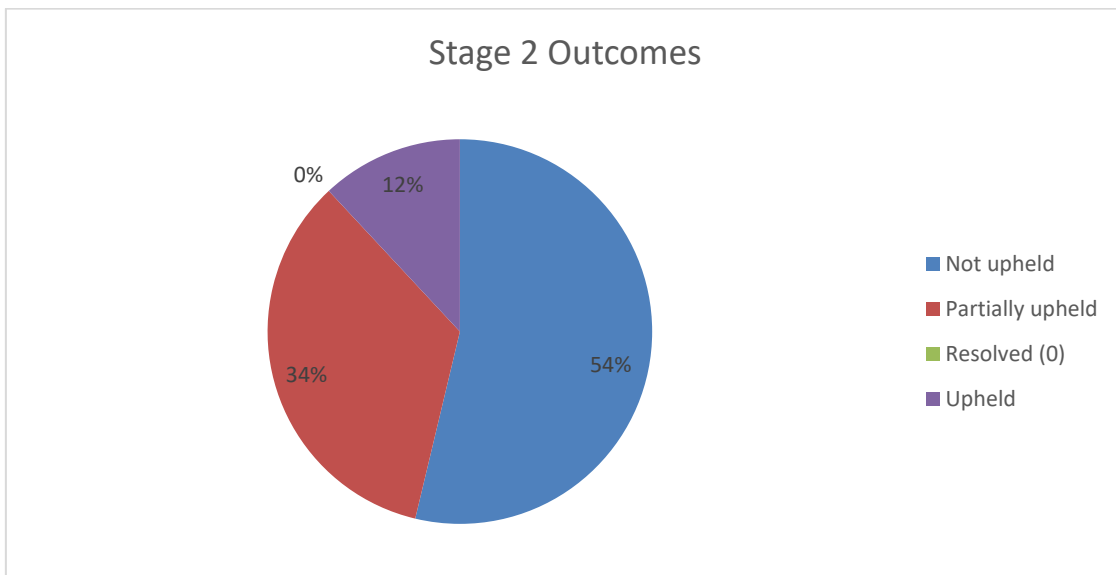
**67** complaints received

Not Upheld - 36

Partially Upheld - 23

Upheld - 8

Resolved - 0



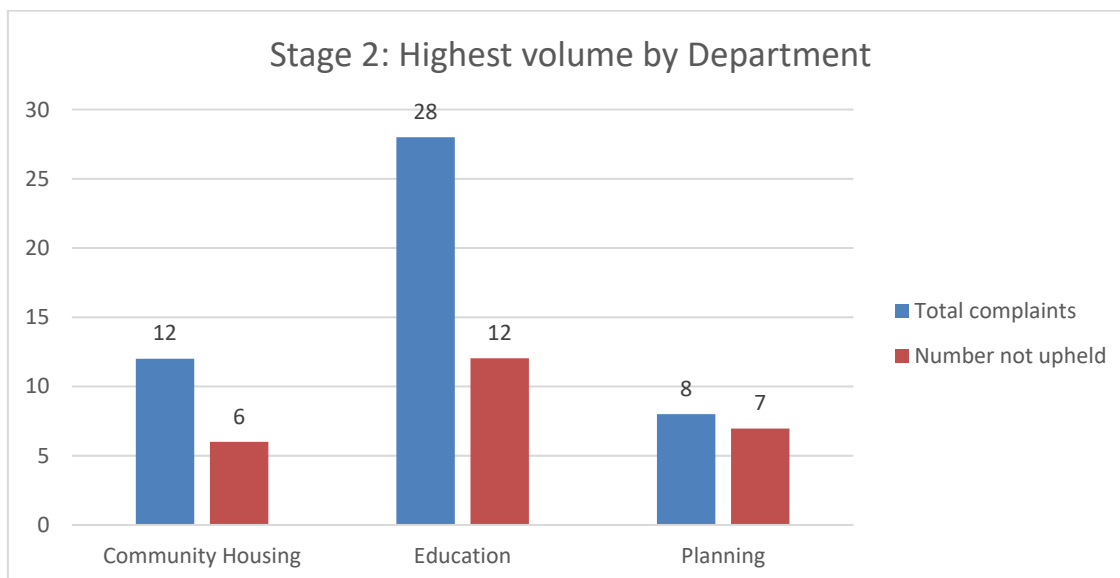
Please note: Totals may not match as not all complaints are closed in the same quarter as in which they are received.

The service areas receiving the highest volume of **Stage 2** complaints in **2022/2023** were:

**Education** 42% (28)

**Planning** 12% (8)

**Community Housing** 18% (12)



**Education** received 42% (28) of all Stage 2 complaints received in 2022/2023 (67). Of the complaints received, over 43% were not upheld. 36% of Education complaints were in relation to bullying and 21% were in relation to ASN pupils.

**Planning** received 12% (8) of all Stage 2 complaints received in 2022/2023 (67). Of the complaints received, over 87% were not upheld.

**Community Housing** received 18% (12) of all Stage 2 complaints (67). Of the complaints received, over 50% were not upheld.

3.10.2 A table of all Service Area Complaints in 2022/2023 are shown in Appendix 1. Service Area Response Timescales are shown in Appendix 2.

### 3.11 Compliments Overview 2022/2023

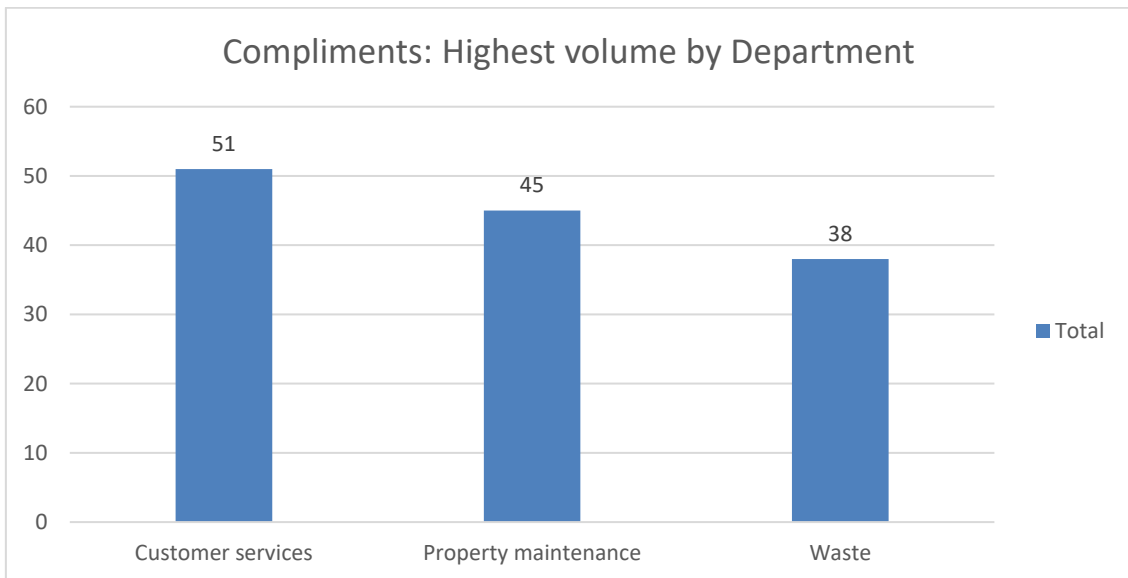
3.11.1 **250** compliments were received in **2022/2023**.

The following Service Areas received a high percentage of compliments:

**Property Maintenance** 18% (45)

**Customer Services 20% (51)**

**Waste 15% (38)**



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.

### 3.12 Comments Overview 2022/2023

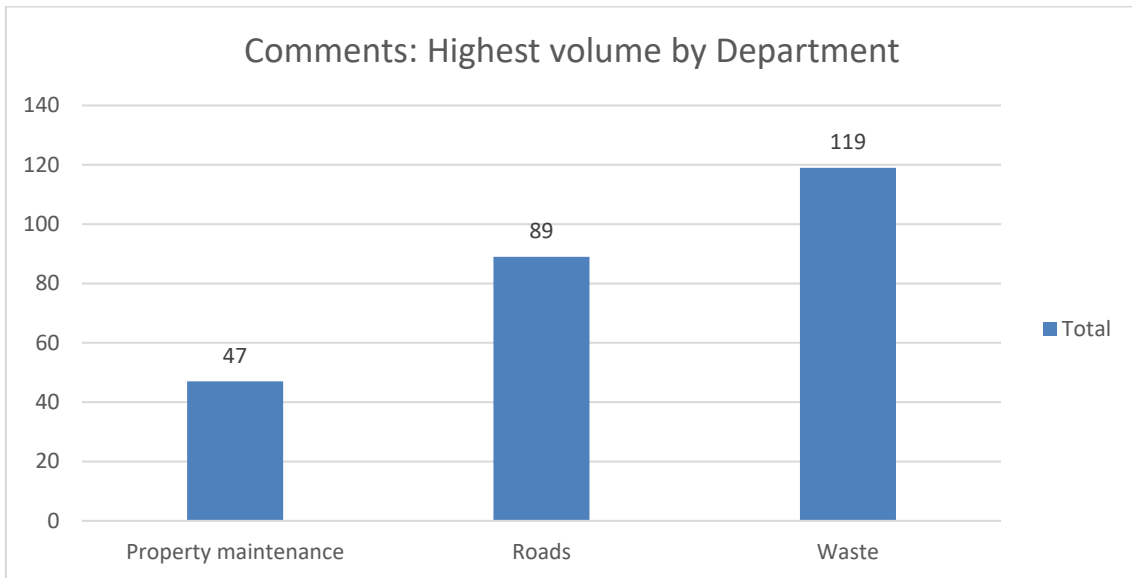
3.12.1 **444** comments were received in 2022/2023.

The following Service Areas received a high percentage of comments:

**Roads 20% (89)**

**Property Maintenance 11% (47)**

**Waste 27% (119)**



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.

### 3.13 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. An independent comprehensive tenant satisfaction survey has been undertaken between July and October 2022, which shows generally high levels of tenant satisfaction against all Housing Charter indicators compared to the local authority average. These findings will allow us to further analyse customer sentiment through customer focus groups and tenant scrutiny activity and will help enable us to plan for further improvements.

#### Property Maintenance

As a result of the feedback received, Property Maintenance have reviewed processes around plasterwork and external builder work repairs, directing inspections of such jobs to dedicated trade supervisors, meaning one less visit from report to completion. Also, following a trend of failures resulting from a particular subcontractor, enhanced contract scorecard measures were implemented.

#### Waste Services

The feedback process and monitoring provided have allowed the service to improve performance to our residents and users. Officers have been able to act on the information provided and make service improvements as required



## **Education**

In the Education Service we use complaints as a means of self-evaluation. We have monitored the themes in our complaints and have tightened up our processes around investigating them. Themes arising have been included in our improvement priorities, such as approaches to anti-bullying, providing excellent learning and teaching experiences and nurturing approaches.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 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 None

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<b>DATE</b>	25/05/2022

## Appendix 1 Customer Feedback Breakdown by Service 2022/2023

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	47	5	8	6	26	2	4	0	2	2	0	26	7
<b>Building Standards</b>													
Total	5	3	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Children's Services</b>													
Total	20	6	4	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	2
<b>Community Housing</b>													
Total	79	22	6	8	35	8	12	8	6	1	0	8	32
<b>Community Partnerships</b>													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2
<b>Web &amp; Corporate Communications</b>													
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Customer Services</b>													
Total	7	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	11
<b>Education</b>													
Total	47	13	4	3	26	5	28	11	14	3	0	13	10
<b>Engineering Services</b>													
Total	7	0	0	0	7	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	4

Service areas which have not received any complaints or comments/compliments in 2022/2023 have not been included in this overall report

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>	12	5	2	1	4	2	5	5	1	0	0	5	22
<b>Planning</b>													
<b>Total</b>	10	5	2	0	1	3	8	7	2	0	0	0	7
<b>Facilities</b>													
<b>Total</b>	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	14
<b>Property Maintenance</b>													
<b>Total</b>	273	52	15	40	141	4	6	2	4	2	0	45	47
<b>Roads</b>													
<b>Total</b>	27	5	5	1	15	2	2	3	1	0	0	15	89
<b>Transportation</b>													
<b>Total</b>	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
<b>Sports &amp; Countryside</b>													
<b>Total</b>	12	1	2	1	8	0	2	2	0	0	0	14	42
<b>Waste</b>													
<b>Total</b>	37	7	2	4	24	1	1	1	1	0	0	38	119
<b>Revenues Services</b>													
<b>Total</b>	20	10	0	0	10	3	1	2	2	0	0	16	15
<b>Governance</b>													
<b>Total</b>	3	1	0	2	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	7	9
<b>Strategic Asset &amp; Estates</b>													
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

Service areas which have not received any complaints or comments/compliments in 2022/2023 have not been included in this overall report

## Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Response Times by Service 2022/2023

Service Area	Stage 1 % responded to within 5 Working days	Stage 2 % responded to within 20 Working days
Adult Wellbeing	51%	50%
Building Standards	0%	100%
Children's Services	45%	50%
Community Housing	27%	83%
Customer Services	100%	**
Education	45%	71%
Engineering Services	43%	100%
Environment Services	42%	60%
Facilities	66%	**
Strategic Asset & Estates	**	100%
Governance	67%	100%
Planning	10%	87%
Property Maintenance	31%	83%
Revenues Services	70%	100%
Roads	41%	100%
Sports Countryside & Leisure	25%	100%
Transportation	0%	**
Waste	81%	100%
** no complaints recorded		