
Corporate Complaints – Annual Report 2019-20

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The report provides information on how the Council has dealt with complaints during the period between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020 and performed against the statutory indicators which have been agreed between the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Local Authorities Complaint Handlers Network.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Audit and Scrutiny Committee consider and note the content of this report.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 All Council services follow the SPSO's model complaint handling procedure (CHP). A requirement of this model procedure is that the Council report to the SPSO on a standard set of statutory performance indicators, and prepare an annual report for consideration by Members. The report attached at appendix 1 has been prepared in order to satisfy this requirement.
- 3.2 The scope of this report includes complaints received in relation to Live Argyll, but does not include complaints which relate to the Argyll and Bute HSCP. These are administered under the Social Work complaints process, which follows the same model complaint handling procedure, but is reported separately.
- 3.3 After consideration of the 2018-19 annual complaints report, Members requested more detailed information about the categories of complaints, and an interim report was provided to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee in March 2020. Members were keen to see the full picture of what our complaints are about, and also indicated that area-based information would be useful. Details of the area, where applicable, is now recorded in the complaints system, and reports containing this information will be available in relation to complaints received from April 2020 onwards. Details around the common themes of complaints, service areas and further analysis of the root causes of complaints are provided within Appendix 2 to this report. This additional information is provided to allow

Members to consider this information when reviewing future service planning and decisions, and more details about specific issues or types of complaint can be made available if required.

- 3.4 The annual report usually features a section on benchmarking, where we provide a comparison of data between our “family group”. This data is not available from the Local Authority Complaints Handlers Network (LACHN) yet, and will be presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee once it has been circulated by LACHN.
- 3.5 Within the SPSO section of the report, it is noted that the SPSO investigated 1 complaint against Argyll and Bute Council. This complaint was in relation to a noise complaint investigated by Regulatory Services. The SPSO found that there was a lack of evidence held by the Council in relation to their investigation of the complaint, and issued recommendations for the Service to provide an apology to the customer and follow up on any outstanding issues in connection with the original complaint.
- 3.6 The corporate complaints procedure is administered centrally by the Compliance and Regulatory team within Legal and Regulatory Support, and quarterly performance reports are provided to SMT. These performance reports are published on the Council’s website: <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/do-it-online/comments-and-complaints>
- 3.7 During 2019-20 the Compliance and Regulatory team introduced a monthly performance update report, which is circulated to all Heads of Service and Directors, to draw attention to any areas where complaints performance may be falling.
- 3.8 The SPSO has issued a new model complaints handling procedure, which all Scottish Local Authorities will be expected to implement during 2021. Further work in relation to complaints management is planned in the later part of 2020, both to prepare for the implementation of the revised procedure and to address the declining trend in performance to timescales that has been noted over recent years. Alongside the review of the complaints handling procedure, work will be carried out to improve the details that are recorded against each complaint, to allow more specific reporting on categories and themes to be made available.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Council has dealt with the majority of complaints it has received in accordance with the requirements of the complaints handling procedure and has complied with the obligation to prepare an annual report. Once it has been presented to the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, the annual report will be published on the Council’s website.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1	Policy	None
5.2	Financial	None
5.3	Legal	Statutory requirement to prepare report
5.4	HR	None
5.5	Equalities	None
5.6	Risk	None
5.7	Customer Service	None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Annual Complaints Report 2018-19

Appendix 2 - Complaints common themes and service areas