
Corporate Complaints – Annual Report 2020-21

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The report provides information on how the Council has dealt with complaints during the period between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 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 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 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>
- 3.6 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. This has been improved throughout 2020-21 and now includes more detailed information including the ward area and reasons for late response
- 3.7 The SPSO issued a new model complaints handling procedure, which all Scottish Local Authorities had to implement by 1st April 2021. This revised procedure has now been fully implemented with the Council. Alongside the review of the complaints handling procedure, work has been undertaken to improve the details that are recorded against each complaint, to allow more specific reporting on categories and themes to be made available. Training has been provided to Complaints Officers and Investigating Officers, both on the changes, and a refresher on general handling of complaints.

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
5.5.1	Fairer Scotland Duty	None
5.5.2	Equalities – Protected Characteristics	None
5.5.3	Socio Economic Duty	None
5.5.4	Islands	None
5.6	Risk	None
5.7	Customer Service	None

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Annual Complaints Report 2020-21

Appendix 2 - Complaints common themes and service areas