
Report To: Policy and Resources Committee **Date:** 14 November 2017

Report By: Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications **Report No:** HR/38/17/GB

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Subject: Annual SPSO Statistical Return April 2016 – March 2017

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the complaint handling performance for year 1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017 for Inverclyde Council with the exception of the Health and Social Care Partnership which are supported separately. This includes a breakdown by service of complaint volumes received. The service improvement register provides an update on service improvements that have been implemented during the period following complaints and demonstrates our learning from complaints and demonstrates our focus on improving services.

2.0 SUMMARY

2.1 The Council received and handled 181 complaints in the period and closed 151 complaints within this period (appendix one). The SPSO handled 21 complaints against Inverclyde Council during the same period (appendix three). On average the Council is closing 80% of stage one complaints within five working days with the average age of cases being three days.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee note:

- APPENDIX 1: Local authority complaints handling procedure performance Indicators annual update (April 2016 to March 2017)
- APPENDIX 2: Service improvement register CMT update (April 2016 to March 2017)
- Appendix 3: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) annual statistics for Inverclyde Council
- That ALEOs Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde are now using the SPSO model complaints handling procedure and that data should be reported in 2018.

Steven McNab

Head of Organisational Development, Human Resources and Communications

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 In April 2013 the Council introduced a revised complaints handling procedure moving from a three stage to a two stage process in line with the guidance by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). At the same time a new corporate wide system for recording complaints through Lagan was rolled out across the Council.
- 4.2 A number of issues with complaint handling across the Council were highlighted with concerns raised over whether complaints were being actioned within the correct timescales and whether all complaints that come into the Council are being recorded and monitored through Lagan.
- 4.3 A preliminary review was carried out of all complaints logged on Lagan since it was introduced in April 2013. The data has been interrogated and this has highlighted the following issues:
- A high percentage of complaints (39%) have not been actioned within 20 working days.
 - Lagan is not being used by all services to record complaints.
 - Those services that do use Lagan are not using it properly.
- 4.4 A corporate working group was established with representation across all services and chaired by a Corporate Director. An action arising from this working group was the creation of complaint officer post in corporate communications to support corporate oversight of complaint handling within the Council. The post was filled on 26 September 2016 and oversight and action of the complaint improvement plan, including training of council staff across all services, has commenced.

5.0 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 The Council received and handled 181 complaints in the period and closed 151 complaints within this period (appendix one). The SPSO handled 21 complaints against Inverclyde Council during the same period (appendix three).
- 5.2 On average the Council is closing 80% of stage one complaints within five working days with the average age of cases being three days. Of the complaints closed we upheld 27 complaints that equates to 22.3% and partially upheld 31 cases which equates to 25.6%.
- 5.3 On average Council services are closing 86% of stage two complaints within 20 days with the average age of cases being 11.7 days. Of the complaints closed four were upheld which equates to 17.4% and the Council partially upheld seven cases which equates to 30.4%.
- 5.4 85.7% of all complaints that are escalated are closed. There were five complaints escalated with the average age of cases being closed within 11.4 days. Of the complaints reviewed and closed we upheld two cases which equates to 28.6% and partially upheld two cases which equates to 28.6%.
- 5.5 Service improvement recording commenced in November 2016 and we have identified six service improvements during this period which have been implemented within the services (appendix two).
- 5.6 Members are reminded that essential changes were made to LAGAN in order to improve the complaint management system in preparation for it to be adopted as the universal complaint recording system for the Council. During this process closed complaint data was lost which impacts on the extent of complaints finally recorded in 2016.

5.7 The complaint handler network requested all councils to complete a survey in connection with complaint handling reporting being submitted to the network to review prior to formal reporting to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. During the completion of the survey it highlighted the requirements for councils to report complaint handling performance for arm's-length external organisations (ALEOs). Inverclyde Council has two ALEOs which are Inverclyde Leisure and Riverside Inverclyde that require to adhere to and report on complaints handling procedure. Both are now using the SPSO model complaints handling procedures and annual data should be available for review in 2018.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial implications - One off Costs

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Year	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments

Financial Implications - Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if applicable)	Other Comments

6.2 Legal implications - There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Human resources implications – There are no direct human resources implications.

6.4 Equalities implications – There are no direct equalities implications from this report.

6.5 Repopulation implications - There are no direct repopulation implications arising from this report.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 There are no consultations required in the updating of the quarterly statistical data.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None.

APPENDIX 1: Local authority complaints handling procedure performance

Indicators annual update (April 2016 to March 2017)

SPSO Local Authority Complaints Handling Procedure - Performance Indicators			
	Note Fields		
INDICATOR 1a - complaints received between April 2016 to March 2017			
1(i) total number of complaints received in the period		181	
1(ii) population (mid year population estimates)		79860	
1a the total number of complaints received per 1,000 population Note: the definition of a complaint is that which is defined in the SPSO LA CHP. This does not include requests for service, but does include complaints that are later withdrawn or remain unresolved. The aim of these indicators is to measure progress against the LA CHP. The LA CHP does not relate to social work and therefore social work complaints should not be counted in any of these indicators. Note field only - to clarify complaints not included in 1(i)	<i>8 Service Request are not included in the 181 figure</i>		2.3
INDICATOR 1b - complaints closed between April 2016 to March 2017 in any financial year **All counts for Indicators from 1b through to 6 are based on "case closed" (i.e. responded to) to ensure complaints are counted at the point they end.			
1 (iii) total number of complaints closed in the year		151	
1 (iv) population (mid year population estimates)		79860	
1b the total number of complaints closed per 1,000 population Note: This does not include requests for service, nor does it include complaints that are later withdrawn or remain unresolved. This is applicable to all indicators from 1b onwards. Note field only - to clarify volume and reason(s) for complaints not included in 1(iii) and the gap between the number of complaints received and closed in the same year	<i>181 complaints received Less 8 withdrawn Less 13 not IC related or insufficient information/poor quality complaint Less 8 received in March 2017 and not respond to in April 2017</i>		1.9
INDICATOR 2			
2 (i) number of complaints - closed at stage 1		121	
2a the number of complaints closed at stage 1 as % all complaints closed			80.1%
2 (ii) number of complaints - closed at stage 2		23	
2b the number of complaints closed at stage 2 as % all complaints closed			15.2%
2 (iii) number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
2c the number of complaints closed after escalation as % all complaints closed			4.6%
INDICATOR 3 - stage 1			
3 (i) number of complaints - upheld at stage 1		27	
stage 1 number of complaints - closed at stage 1 (frontline resolution)		121	
3a the number of complaints upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 1			22.3%
3 (ii) number of complaints - not upheld at stage 1		63	
stage 1 number of complaints - closed at stage 1 (frontline resolution)		121	
3b the number of complaints not upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 1			52.1%
3 (iii) number of complaints - partially upheld at stage 1		31	
stage 1 number of complaints - closed at stage 1 (frontline resolution)		121	
3c the number of complaints partially upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 1			25.6%

INDICATOR 3 - stage 2			
3 (iv) number of complaints - upheld at stage		4	
stage 2 number of complaints - closed at stage 2 (investigation)		23	
3a the number of complaints upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 2			17.4%
3 (v) number of complaints - not upheld at stage 2		12	
stage 2 number of complaints - closed at stage 2 (investigation)		23	
3b the number of complaints not upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage 2			52.2%
3 (vi) number of complaints - partially upheld at stage 2		7	
stage 2 number of complaints - closed at stage 2 (investigation)		23	
3c the number of complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed in full at stage			30.4%
INDICATOR 3 – escalated			
3 (vii) number of complaints - upheld after escalation		2	
Escalated number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
3a the number of escalated complaints upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed in full at stage 2			28.6%
3 (viii) number of complaints - not upheld after escalation		3	
Escalated number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
3b the number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed in full at stage 2			42.9%
3 (ix) number of complaints - partially upheld after escalation		2	
Escalated number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
3c the number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed in full at stage 2			28.6%
INDICATOR 4 - stage 1			
4 (i) sum of the total number of working days taken for all complaints closed at stage 1		367	
stage 1 number of complaints - closed at stage 1 (frontline resolution)		121	
4a the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 1			3.0
INDICATOR 4 - stage 2			
4 (ii) sum of the total number of working days taken for all complaints closed at stage 2		269	
stage 2 number of complaints - closed at stage 2 (investigation)		23	
4b the average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 2			11.7
INDICATOR 4 - escalated			
4 (iii) sum of the total number of working days taken for all complaints closed after escalation		80	
Escalated number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
4c the average time in working days for a full respond to complaints after escalation			11.4
INDICATOR 5 - stage 1			
5 (i) number of complaints - closed at stage 1 within 5 working days		104	
stage 1 number of complaints - closed at stage 1 (frontline resolution)		121	
5a the number of complaints closed at stage 1 within 5 working days as % of total number of stage 1 complaints			86.0%
Note field only - total number and % of complaints closed at stage 1 within agreed timescales (i.e. within 5 working days) and also within 10 working days where extension has been authorised	5 cases had time extension approved and were completed within the 10 day threshold 5		

	4.1%		
INDICATOR 5 - stage 2			
5 (ii) number of complaints - closed at stage 2 within 20 working days		20	
stage 2 number of complaints - closed at stage 2 (investigation)		23	
5b the number of complaints closed at stage 2 within 20 working days as % of total number of stage 2 complaints Note field only - total number and % of complaints closed at stage 2 within agreed timescales (i.e. within 20 working days) and also within the agreed timescale where extension has been authorised	0 There were zero cases at stage 2 time extended		85.7%
	0%		
INDICATOR 5 - escalated			
5 (iii) number of complaints - closed after escalation within 20 working days		6	
Escalated number of complaints - closed after escalation		7	
5c the number of complaints closed after escalation within 20 working days as % of total number of escalated complaints Note field only - total number and % of complaints closed after escalated within agreed timescales (i.e. within 20 working days) and within the agreed timescale where extension has been authorised	1 time extension although fell outside 20 days 0		85.7%
	%		
INDICATOR 6 - stage 1			
6 (i) number of complaints - closed at stage 1 where extension was authorised		5	
stage 1 total number of complaints - closed at stage 1		121	
6a number of complaints closed at stage 1 where extension was authorised as % of all complaints at stage 1			4.1%
INDICATOR 6 - stage 2			
6 (ii) number of complaints - closed at stage 2 where extension was authorised		0	
stage 2 total number of complaints - closed at stage 2		23	
6b number of complaints closed at stage 2 where extension was authorised as % of all complaints at stage 2			0.0%
INDICATOR 6 - escalated			
6 (ii) number of complaints - closed after escalated where extension was authorised		6	
stage 2 total number of complaints - closed after escalated		7	
6b number of complaints closed after escalated where extension was authorised as % of all complaints escalation			85.7%

APPENDIX 2: Service improvement register CMT update (April 2016 to March 2017)

Service	Improvements made
Customer Services Centre	<p>Following a few anonymous complaints after customers registering births with the registrars they had a need for baby changing facilities however customer services facilities were not equip with these.</p> <p>Following a review of potential locations by our Property Services team agreement was reached and baby changing facilities were installed into the disabled toilet ensuring all customers can have the use of the required facilities when necessary. Equality considerations have been taken.</p>
Customer Services Centre	<p>A complaint highlighted that we had issued a contact letter to the wrong person resident in the same household. Following this complaint a review of existing process identified an improvement to the process to mitigate the issue.</p> <p>A change was introduced to remove the need for input addresses manually to the templates which mitigates the error moving forward.</p>
Benefits & Customer Service Centre	<p>Following an outage of one of the core systems used by Benefits team it resulted in a higher number of calls making enquiries with regard to claims in progress and timescales for them to be completed.</p> <p>To improve communications with claimants we arranged to have messaging prepared and played on our IVR messaging to assist customers understand the impact to timescales for processing claims as a result of the system outage. This positively influenced improved customers' experience and reduced call traffic when in place and will be adopted as a best practice approach for future situations.</p>
Education	<p>A complaint was received from a parent of child who was a pupil of a primary school requested a change in the school's policy to allowing dogs in playground and on health grounds. This was having a detrimental impact on the parent of the child when collecting their child from school.</p> <p>A change in approach was approved and implemented to no longer permit dogs in the playground.</p>
Education	<p>Following a complaint about an accident on the bus with a wheelchair a review of the controls was undertaken with our Health and Safety officials. This resulted in revised measures which were implemented to strengthen the stability of the wheelchair while in transit.</p> <p>In particular when using fixed clamp to supplement the inertia reel clasps to keep wheelchair in place and checking the wheel alignment being a key control. Seating arrangements for escorts was reviewed and adjusted.</p> <p>A review of accident management procedures is underway this will include reviewing parental communication methods will be included.</p>
Discretionary payments	<p>Following a complaint that was received surround a staff member's attitude in the handling of an enquiry a review of the situation identified a training need and action plan was put in place to assist staff handle such situations more effectively.</p> <p>Staff who are involved in discretionary payments were supported in completing some communication training via the E Learning modules to increase their awareness on dealing with difficult situations.</p> <p>A plan was put in place to complete the e learning with the key priority being given to the staff member who had not handled the situation as well as they could have. This will improve customer service standards across the team who deal with a lot of difficult circumstances regularly.</p>

Appendix 3 – Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) annual statistics for Inverclyde Council

Local Authority Complaints Determined

Stage	Outcome Group	2016 -17		2015-16	
		Inverclyde Council	Sector Total	Inverclyde Council	Sector Total
Advice	Not duly made or withdrawn	1	279	2	321
	Out of jurisdiction (non-discretionary)	0	3	1	5
	Outcome not achievable	0	1	0	6
	Premature	8	467	7	606
	Total	9	750	10	944
Early Resolution	Not duly made or withdrawn	3	43	0	54
	Out of jurisdiction (discretionary)	1	82	0	104
	Out of jurisdiction (non-discretionary)	1	111	4	196
	Outcome not achievable	2	115	0	185
	Premature	0	57	0	58
	Proportionality	2	132		
	Resolved	0	20	1	29
	Total	9	560	5	626
Early Resolution 2			0	86	
Investigation 1	Fully upheld	1	52	1	23
	Some upheld	2	42	0	36
	Not upheld	0	60	0	40
	Not duly made or withdrawn	0	1	0	4
	Resolved	0	1	0	4
	Total	3	156	1	107
Investigation 2			0	161	
Total Complaints		21	1466	16	1,764