

Report

Cabinet Meeting

Part 1

Date: 11th November 2020

Subject **Annual Report on Compliments, Comments and Complaints Management 2020**

Purpose The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with an overview of all Corporate and Social Services compliments, comments and complaints received during 2019/2020. The report provides a summary of complaints received and recommendations for improvement. This report provides an update of statutory duties conducted in line with Public Services Ombudsman Act 2019, that received Royal Assent in July 2019. This report shares the Ombudsman's 2019/2020 Annual Letter to Newport City Council.

Author Complaint Resolution Manager

Ward All

Summary Newport City Council operates under a combined Corporate and Social Services Comments, Complaint and Compliments Policy. With regards to complaint management, 'corporate' in this instance means any service areas that are not part of Social Services. The Policy had been aligned with the Model Concerns outlined by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales following Welsh Government Guidance from 2011. However, since the now recently published; Guidance for Public Service Providers on Implementing the Concerns and Complaints Policy by the Complaints Standards Authority it is our statutory obligation to ensure our practice and that of our policies align with the new legislation.

Following the introduction of the Public Services Ombudsman Act 2019 the Ombudsman's aim is to bring practices back into broad alignment – providing basic standards, a common language and a set of principles to underpin how complaints are handled throughout public services. This has been the very focus of the Complaints Team to ensure this also applies to all services within Newport City Council.

Social Services statutory requirements remain in operation alongside the Corporate Policy to ensure they are aligning with; Social Services Complaints Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the Representations Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014, ("the Regulations").

Over the past 12 months the Complaints Team has worked closely with the Complaints Standards Authority (CSA) within the Ombudsman's Office, providing quarterly data regarding complaints received. The CSA has regularly shared positive feedback regarding the complaint model that the Council has implemented, and the CSA has referred other Local Authorities to make contact with NCC's Complaints Team to benefit from the best practice adopted here.

The positive feedback from the Ombudsman reflects the efforts NCC have made over the past 12 months, but in line with the Ombudsman's Principle of 'Continuous Improvement'

there is further progress to be made over the next 12 months. The Complaints Team continue to work closely with all Council Services to offer support and assistance to ensure our statutory duties are met, and that residents are provided with an experience that aligns to the policy.

All compliments and complaints received for Corporate and Social Services have been recorded since April 2011. Since November 2018 compliments, comments and complaints received for all service areas are recorded on the My Newport platform, which continuously has been developed over the past 12 months to provide a robust and efficient access point for the customers of Newport and to provide effective recordings.

This report provides an overview for the year 2019/2020, broken down by services area, complaint types and the time taken to respond where available. The report highlights key trends or themes drawn from the data for consideration.

Complaints about schools are reported separately as they are subject to a distinct statutory framework; however, there are some circumstances where complaints are recorded and treated as complaints about Education services. For example, where they concern administrative processes.

Proposal Cabinet to consider the volume, nature and themes regarding compliments and complaints received, and the Council's performance regarding complaint management in 2019/2020.
Cabinet to note the content of the Ombudsman's letter.
Cabinet to comment on any issues arising from the report or letter.
Cabinet to endorse the recommendations for improvement set out within the report, which ensure that the Council comply with their obligations under the new Public Service Ombudsman for Wales Act 2019

Feedback We hope that the report has provided a detailed overview into Compliments, Comments and Complaints for the Council, however, we welcome your feedback to help improve or to implement a preferred way that the report is presented to include how information and data is preferred for Cabinet.

Action by Heads of Service
Complaint Resolution Manager

Timetable Throughout 2020/2021.

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Head of City Services
- Head of People and Business Change
- Head of Finance
- Head of Law and Regulation
- Service Manager – Customer Experience

Signed

Background

The policies and procedures in place for Comments, Compliments and Complaints comply with the legislative requirements of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and associated standards, specifically ensuring that the Council promote the 'Active Offer'. On 30th September 2020, the Ombudsman wrote to the Council to notify that a revised Statement of Principles, Model Complaint Handling Process, and Guidance had been published by the Ombudsman, and in compliance with Section 38 of the new Act, all public bodies are required to reflect on how their own practices and procedures comply with the stated guidance and consider how they will ensure that all complaints are captured appropriately. The Ombudsman requires a written update on this reflection within 6 months of receipt of the letter.

Initial assessment indicates that the Council's existing policy is largely in line with the newly publicised guidance, but the existing policy will be reviewed to ensure that they continue to reflect the latest guidance and legislation, within the timescales specified by the Ombudsman.

Data collection (period April 2019- March 2020)

Data has been collected quarterly as follows;

Q1- April 1st 2019 – June 30th 2019

Q2- July 1st 2019- September 30th 2019

Q3- October 1st 2019- December 31st 2019

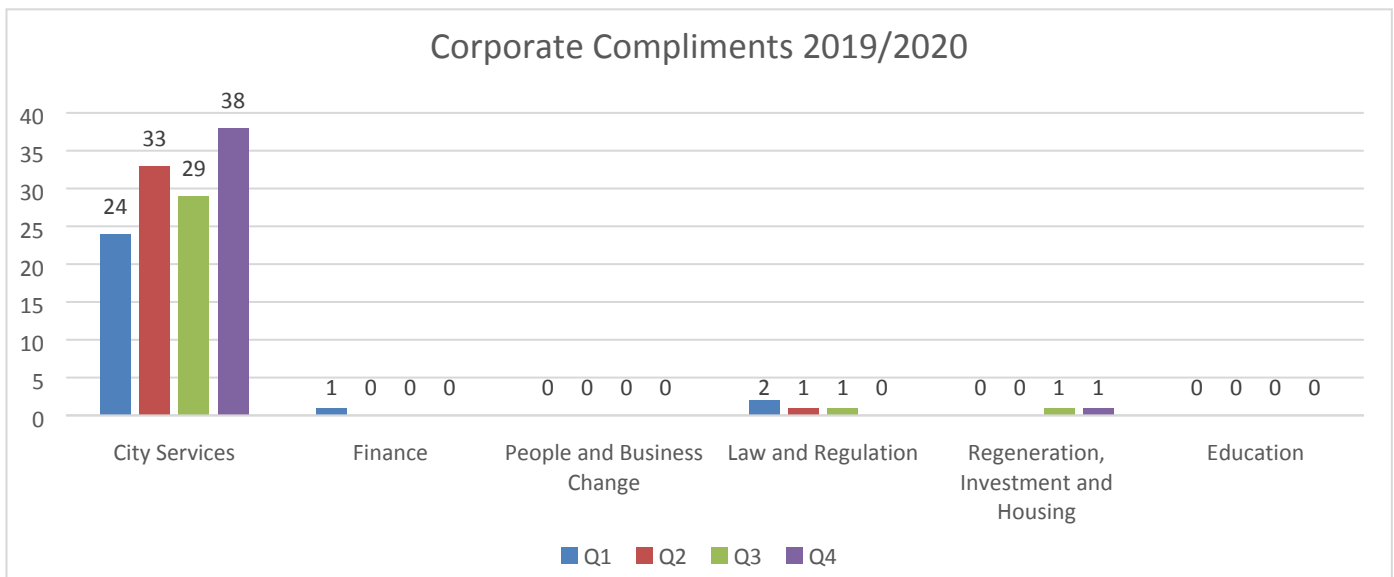
Q4- January 1st 2020- March 31st 2020

COMPLIMENTS – Corporate Summary

A total of 131 compliments were recorded in 2019/2020. The opportunity to provide positive feedback is more accessible to residents using improved web forms, the Council app or customer accounts than in previous years. This was the first full year that these options were available to residents.

City Services continue to account for almost all compliments received – this is in largely due to the high visibility of these services to the public and high number of interactions with residents.

The graph below shows the number of compliments received by each corporate service area.



COMMENTS

1,505 Comments were recorded during 2019/2020; the majority of these were for Corporate Services, with 15 comments recorded for Adult and Children’s Services.

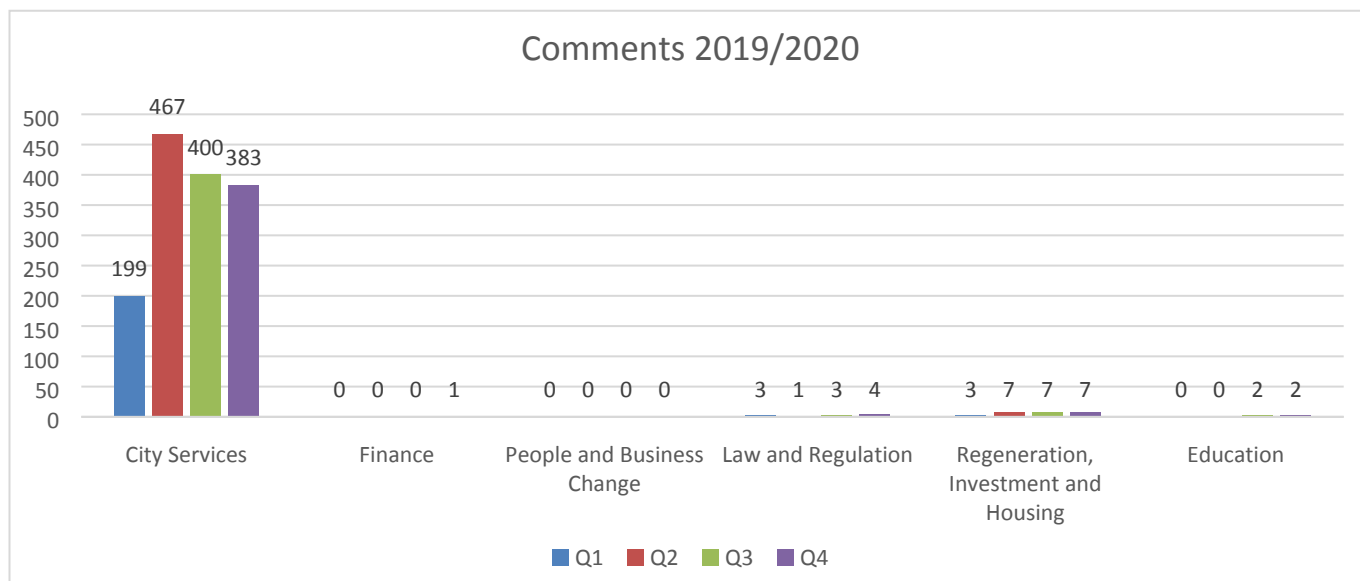
Comments are recorded when a resident is dissatisfied with a policy or decision made by the Council that has been implemented and applied correctly. For example, residents may be unhappy with the scheduled number of grass cuts in the City, or the times when streetlights are switched on. In line with the Ombudsman’s guidance this feedback is recorded and if appropriate, responded to, but is not recorded as a complaint.

This record is significantly higher than in previous years; however, since the ‘My Newport’ platform has provided improved accessibility for residents to share their feedback, this is expected.

Another contributing factor of the volume of customer feedback is due to the number of changes that were implemented from the beginning of the financial year and throughout summer. These changes included smaller bin sizes, hygiene waste collections and the transfer of Civil Parking Enforcement from the Police service to the Council. All of these changes were ‘properly made decisions’ that had effected on every household in Newport and resulted in more feedback than in usual years, combined with the ease of access to record feedback.

During the last 12 months the Council has been able to utilise this feedback to inform services and in some cases suggest recommendations for change. For example, amending the criteria for accessing hygiene bag collections to reflect households with medical needs.

Similarly, to compliments, the highest number of comments recorded are for City Services in line with the visibility of the services they provide, which is shown below. The increase fluctuations in the different quarters reflect the period where changes had the most impact.



COMPLAINTS – Corporate Summary

Please see below data that has been taken from the My Newport platform to inform this report, along with the data collated as submitted for the Ombudsman’s quarterly data collection. Reporting categories has been altered for this report to reflect how the Ombudsman Office has requested the data.

Complaints accounted for 1.84% of the total customer contacts received by Customer Services in 2019/2020.

The table below shows the breakdown of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 in accordance with the Ombudsman’s categorisation;

| Complaints Stage 1 | Quarter 1 | | Quarter 2 | | Quarter 3 | | Quarter 4 | | Total | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------|---------|------------------------------------------|---------|------------|---------|--------------|----------|
| Total Complaints Received | 631 | | 349 | | 201 | | 236 | | 1,417 | |
| Stage of Complaints | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 |
| Waste and Refuse | REPORTED AS PART OF ENVIRONMENT UNTIL Q4 | | REPORTED AS PART OF ENVIRONMENT UNTIL Q4 | | REPORTED AS PART OF ENVIRONMENT UNTIL Q4 | | 75 | 0 | 75 | 0 |
| Finance and Council Tax | 9 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 8 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 43 | 1 |
| Benefits Administration | Not a category reported on until Q3 | | Not a category reported on until Q3 | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Community Facilities | 21 | 0 | 30 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 89 | 1 |
| Environment & Environmental Health | 469 | 2 | 140 | 3 | 83 | 0 | 17 | 0 | 709 | 5 |
| Housing | 16 | 1 | 12 | 1 | 11 | 3 | 13 | 0 | 52 | 5 |
| Roads and Transport | 50 | 1 | 92 | 1 | 41 | 1 | 44 | 0 | 227 | 3 |
| Planning & Building Control | 6 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 15 | 1 |
| Education | 2 | 0 | 15 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 34 | 6 |
| Other | 53 | 1 | 28 | 2 | 33 | 3 | 29 | 2 | 143 | 8 |

The complaints have taken a significant drop as the year has progressed. You will notice Environment and Environmental Health presenting the most complaints, however, as the Ombudsman has considered Waste and Refuse as part of this category this is where the increase is compared to previous years' records. This is also reflective of the accessibility to customers and the changes within waste service provision.

The increase of complaints for Road and Transport reflect complaints received regarding Civil Parking Enforcement, following the transfer of duties to the Council in July 2019.

The information has been shown in the below table to reflect on previous years' data and the proportion of complaints that have been considered by the Ombudsman's Office, and that of the Stage 1 complaints that have progressed to Stage 2

| Year | Stage 1 Complaints | Stage 2 Complaints | | Ombudsman Complaints | |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|------|----------------------|------|
| 2011/2012 | 375 | 18 | 4.8% | 1 | 0.3% |
| 2012/2013 | 520 | 21 | 4.0% | 1 | 0.2% |
| 2013/2014 | 475 | 30 | 6.3% | 2 | 0.4% |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|----|-------|----|-------|
| 2014/2015 | 386 | 50 | 13.0% | 8 | 2.1% |
| 2015/2016 | 293 | 34 | 11.6% | 9 | 3.1% |
| 2016/2017 | 297 | 30 | 10.1% | 28 | 9.4% |
| 2017/2018 | 284 | 24 | 8.5% | 37 | 13.0% |
| 2018/2019 | 271 | 28 | 10.3% | 38 | 14.0% |
| 2019/2020 | 1,417 | 30 | 2.11% | 38 | 2.68% |

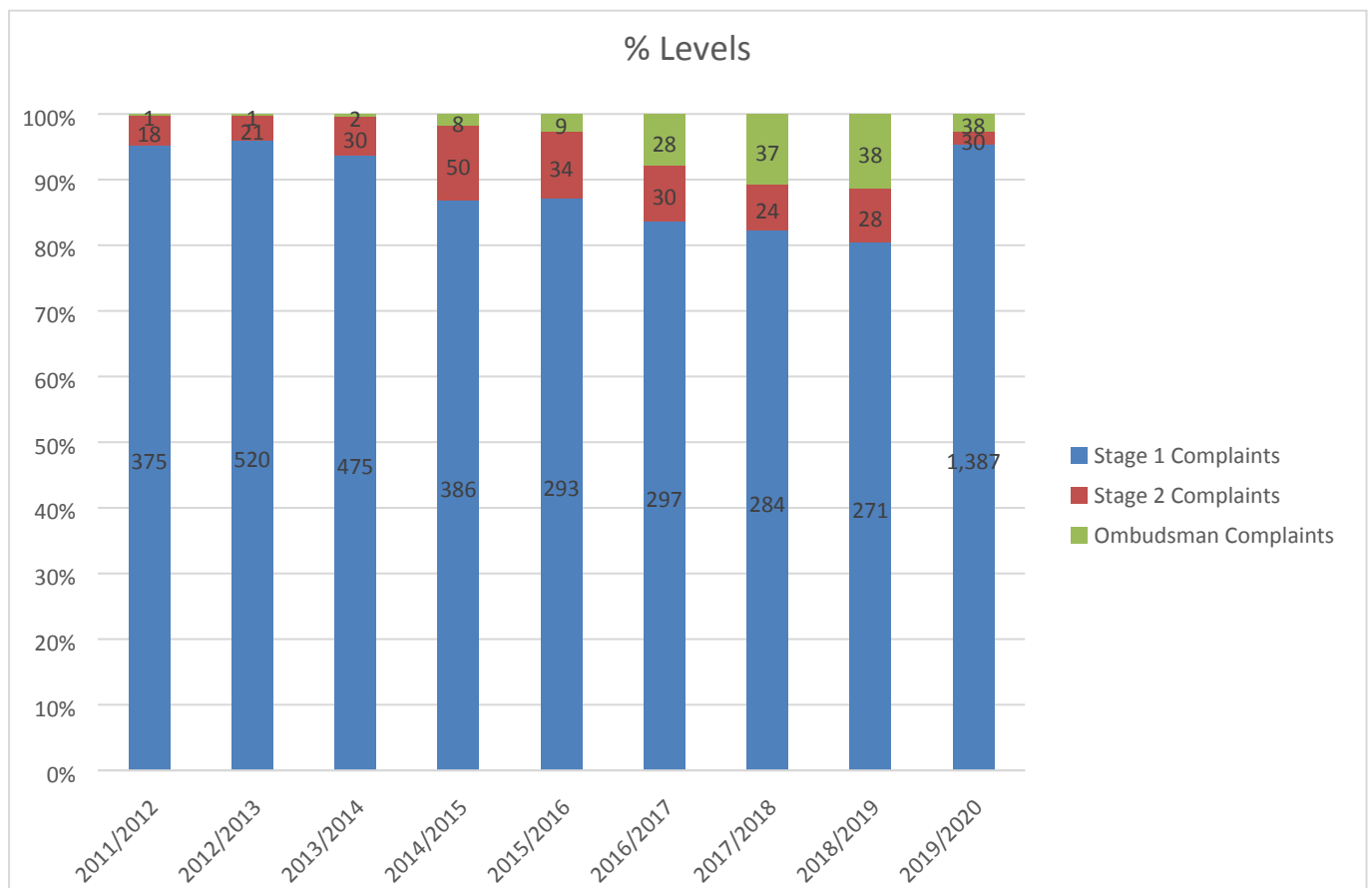
The proportion of complaints dealt with at Stage 1 that progress to a Stage 2 has increased year on year, however, the proportion of Stage 1 complaints has significantly increased during 2019/2020, meaning that the level of Stage 2 has decreased for 2019/2020.

Whilst Stage 1 is a significant increase, the increased accessibility has impacted the figures significantly. This can be reflected on as a positive step forward, as the Ombudsman’s guidance states that the complaint process must be ‘accessible to all’ and that residents should be made aware of how to make complaints.

As referred to earlier in this report, the changes implemented within City Services such as Civil Parking Enforcement and waste services, have generated an increase in customer interactions. 2019/2020 was the first year that all complaint data was collated on the My Newport platform, so next year will provide a more meaningful context when we will be able to compare ‘like with like’ in terms of volumes.

25.5% of complaints investigated were upheld in full or in part. This proportion has remained broadly the same for the last few years.

The graph below shows the percentage of complaints dealt with at each of the two stages since 2012/2013, including those considered by the Ombudsman. Whilst the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman remains the same as in 2018/2019, these account for a much smaller proportion of the overall number of complaints received.



Social Services Complaints

There were 146 complaints recorded for Social Services in 2019/2020. This being a slight increase this year compared to last, however, better accessibility for customer contact would account for this increase.

| Social Services Complaints | Quarter 1 | | Quarter 2 | | Quarter 3 | | Quarter 4 | | Total | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|---------------|
| Total number of complaints received | 34 | | 24 | | 51 | | 37 | | 146 | |
| Stages of Complaint | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 1 total | Stage 2 total |
| Adult Services | 17 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 30 | 1 | 23 | 0 | 82 | 1 |
| Children Services | 16 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 20 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 59 | 4 |

In Children and Families Services 4 of the 63 complaints progressed to Stage 2 investigation by an external investigator. Of the 4 at stage 2, 1 was part upheld, 1 was not upheld, 1 was resolved at stage 2, and 1 was on hold due to the impact of Covid-19

1 of the 83 complaints received in Adult and Community Services were progressed to a Stage 2 investigation by an independent investigator, with that one partially upheld.

Whilst the volume of complaints received at Stage 1 increased year on year, this is not considered a cause of concern, as the aim is to move towards a culture of learning from complaints and utilising this to inform service provision and quality. Fewer complaints received progressed to Stage demonstrating improved case handling and reaching an early resolution. No complaints were investigated by the Ombudsman.

Complaints to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales/Annual Ombudsman Letter 2019/20

The information included in this section of the report is drawn from the Annual Letter produced by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales dated the 7th of September 2020, which is included in **Appendix 1** and includes statistics for all Welsh Local Authorities.

It is positive to report that all actions provided by the Ombudsman in last year's annual letter have been achieved. The number of cases referred to the Ombudsman for residents in Newport was lower than the national average, and reduced by 2 cases year on year.

38 complaints were referred to the Ombudsman, 4 of these complaints received were recommended for an early resolution by the Ombudsman. The Council followed the Ombudsman's recommendations, which were to make apologies and in some instances to make small reimbursements for 'time and trouble' in making the complaint, which was the sum of £150 this year.

13 complaints received by the Ombudsman were closed after initial consideration. This action is taken when the Ombudsman are satisfied that actions taken by the Council is appropriate and cannot be taken forward any further.

5 complaints were outside of the Ombudsman jurisdiction and 16 out of time/Right to Appeal or premature.

Based on last year's annual letter report the Ombudsman had 2 less complaints whereby an early resolution or voluntary settlement was proposed to the Council demonstrating less intervention.

Complaints handling continues to be the main cause of complaints that have been received by the Ombudsman for the past year, however, they have seen a reduction in 2019/20 with a record of 7 compared to the recorded 10 in 2018/19. The Council continues to take positive steps to improve complaints handling, which over the past year included the ongoing development and use of My Council platform, the Complaints Team and increased collaboration with service areas. This area will continue to be the focus with planned training and the continued collaborative approach to complaint handling with all Service Areas.

Lessons Learnt

Over the past year the Council have been utilising the My Newport platform to monitor and track complaints. This has provided an opportunity to collate lessons learnt. Some examples of the lessons learnt have been provided below, which have informed continuous improvements across the Council. Service areas have oversight of the complaint which are used to inform their own improvement plans, however further development of the monitoring of lessons learnt and how service areas implement and manage these will be part of the improvements over the next year.

- General communication issues – this will be addressed as part of training to be rolled out
- Communication – keeping customer informed of delays and/or advising why a service request may not be responded to yet.
- Customers are informed of terms and conditions by Disabled Facilities Grants at the onset of service, including updates to literature that is sent to customer for a better customer experience and increased transparency.
- Amendments to published timescale (Service Level Agreement) for assessment of dropped kerbs
- Council Tax notice system omitting Welsh translation during printing
- Errors with online access for uploading documents for resident parking permit
- Automated response for bus pass application supplying misleading information to customer
- Requirements for more structure and consistency for decision making concerning resident permit passes – this is currently out for public consultation prior to recommendation of changes
- Clarification for Civil Parking Enforcement records of complaints/comments
- Passenger Transport Unit complaints – a review of this service is now being carried out to identify and close any gaps in current customer provision
- Addresses not included at first request for a new bin or recycling box – not capturing all relevant data from self-service customers was causing delay in service which resulted in complaints.
- Minor amendments to be implemented to reporting service requests and receiving for street cleansing in system.
- Support provided to out-sourced recycling service to align complaints policy and improve management of customer contact, improving customer experience
- Communication between Passenger Transport Unit and Special Education Needs team has improved, providing a better end to end service provision and customer experience.
- Bereavement Services identified the opportunity to improve their policies.
- Kennel Services updated their administration practices, reflecting corporate policies.

In addition to the lessons learnt directly learnt from complaints, we have recognised that following reporting we could explore further the use of social media and complaints management, engaging further with our communications services on how we can capture and monitor the use of social media and how this captures complaints. Possibility to explore how the complaints team can have some further involvement with this source of customer contact.

Action Plan

The Council is committed to developing the service provided to meet the revised legislation and to meet the expectations of residents who wish to submit their feedback.

Significant progress has been made in 2019/20 towards delivering this.

Actions completed include;

- An Unacceptable Actions group has been established to provide additional support to the service areas to manage customer expectations and inappropriate or difficult customer contact. This has helped service areas to manage the effects that spurious or unreasonable complaints have on provision of services to other residents, and the costs involved.
- Development of the recording system further to increase accountability and transparency regarding complaint management.
- Kennel Services developed a plan of action to work based on lessons learnt from complaints and feedback that improved operational practice
- Feedback received from residents was reflected in policies developed by Bereavement Services.
- Disability Facilities Grants update their terms and conditions, and developed their practice to ensure that expectations and limitations are clear from the onset of engagement with the team
- Quarterly data provided to the Ombudman in line with the new requirements following the implementation of the Act.
- Feedback from residents captured by the Complaints Team was considered as part of consultation regarding a review of Resident Parking Permits.
- Support has been provided to Service Areas regarding the response and handling of complaints.
- The Complaints Team have attended virtual training provided by the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

These actions are part of a development plan with further actions to be delivered in the next 12 months;

- Guidance for staff to provide step by step complaints handling.
- Formalise a process and guidance for staff on handling complaints of discrimination.
- Improve how we monitor and track performance following the identification of lessons learnt, so that the feedback and lessons learnt from complaints can be tracked through to service improvements.
- Development of training modules concerning complaint management and customer service that all Officers can access.
- Inviting complainants to tell us more about themselves when they make complaints so that we can understand if the demographics of complainants are representative of all Newport residents.
- Review of policies and procedures to align with the revised Guidance, Principles and Model Policy recently published by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Financial Summary

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Risks

| Risk | Impact of Risk if it occurs* (H/M/L) | Probability of risk occurring (H/M/L) | What is the Council doing or what has it done to avoid the risk or reduce its effect | Who is responsible for dealing with the risk? |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Failure to comply with the requirements of the Public | H | L | The Council has; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implemented a new system of recording and monitoring complaints | Service Manager – Customer Experience |

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| <p>Services Ombudsman for Wales in dealing with complaints</p> | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allocated adequate resource to support Officers throughout the Council in dealing with complaints appropriately • Policies in place for dealing with complaints • Developed a 2020/21 plan for improving complaint handling across the Council • A full year of reporting to the Ombudsman has taken place • Improved monitoring of complaints records • Lessons learnt have been utilised for the previous year to inform service improvements • Complaints team has attended PSOW training • The Council has developed a positive relationship with the Ombudsman's office that includes regular interaction and feedback. <p>The Council will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a set of training modules to support Officers who interact with the public and deal with complaints • Continue to refine the end to end case management of complaints in the monitoring and recording system • Formalise the process for reflecting on and embedding lessons learnt • Review policies to make sure they reflect the latest guidance. | |
| <p>Failure to meet the public's expectation for dealing with complaints</p> | <p>H</p> | <p>L</p> | <p>The Council has;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consulted with the public to find out what is important to them relating to complaints and complaint handling • Consulted with Officers to find out what support is needed to help them | <p>Service Manager – Customer Experience</p> |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| | | | <p>respond to complaints effectively</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access for customers to provide feedback or raise their complaint • Used lessons learnt to improve practices and implemented measures for a better customer experience. • <p>The Council will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate the feedback gathered during the consultations into the development of policy, process, guidance and training for responding to complaints effectively • Introduce an option for complainants to provide feedback on their experience of making a complaint • Consider a campaign to ensure customers are aware of how they can share their feedback and promote the access to making a complaint • Carry out an impact assessment prior to review of the policy and procedures to consider the impact on customers and ensure consideration | |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|

* Taking account of proposed mitigation measures

Links to Council Policies and Priorities

The visions set out for Newport 2020 in the following service areas all highlight the importance of managing demand by improving customer service at first enquiry, and supporting the move towards self-service;

- Law and Standards
- Finance
- Adult and Community Services
- Children and Family Services
- Education
- Regeneration, Investment and Housing
- City Services

Comments of Chief Financial Officer

There are no financial implications associated with the proposals contained within this report. All improvement actions will be delivered using existing budgets.

Comments of Monitoring Officer

There are no specific legal issues arising from the Report, which sets out information regarding the compliments and complaints received regarding Council services during 19/20, both in relation to corporate complaints and those dealt with under the statutory social services complaints procedure. The report also contains details of the numbers of complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales during this period, which were either not accepted for investigation or resolved locally by way of settlement. The number of stage 1 complaints dealt with internally by the Council has risen significantly since last year, but the numbers that have progressed to stage 2 have reduced. Also, the numbers of Ombudsman complaints was exactly the same as the previous year and were average compared to other Welsh councils, having regard to population figures. It is pleasing to note that, once again, there were no formal findings of maladministration against the Council during this period and no public interest reports were issued. The Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 has increased the investigatory powers of the Ombudsman, particularly in relation to accepting informal complaints and undertaking public interest investigations on his own initiative, without any complaint. The Council will need to review its own internal procedures to ensure that they meet the new Statement of Principles, Model Complaint Handling Process, and Guidance published by the Ombudsman in accordance with his new statutory powers under the legislation.

Comments of Head of People and Business Change

Analysis of compliments, comments and complaints supports the Council in achieving continuous improvement in the delivery of its services and ultimately in its mission to improve people's lives. The report notes significant progress in 2019-20 including the introduction of a continuous improvement approach so that the feedback and lessons learnt from complaints can be tracked through to service improvements. It is noted that as the report covers the first year where the 'My Newport' platform was used to track complaints the data does not allow for year on year comparisons, but this will provide a more complete picture in subsequent years.

The report also notes how analysing compliments, comments and complaints supports the Council in embedding the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 'sustainable development principle' within its operations for instance in acting in a more preventative way and promoting citizen involvement in service improvement.

There is further potential for compliments, comments and complaints data to be reviewed against public perception survey data (perception of the Council) and this will be explored going forward.

There are no HR implications relating directly to this report. The action plan for 2020/21 will include the development of training modules concerning complaint management and customer service that all Officers can access; guidance for staff on step by step complaints handling and a formalised process and guidance for staff on handling complaints of discrimination.

Comments of Cabinet Member for Community and Resources

It is positive to see the results of technology used to support residents. It provides meaningful and timely feedback to the Council. The lessons learnt help the Council to improve the way it provides services. This will continue to be our focus over the next 12 months. The Council's performance is strong in comparison to the rest of Wales, and I am pleased that we continue to improve thanks to our positive engagement with the Ombudsman's office

Cabinet Member for Social Services

Feedback from residents continues to play a vital role in informing service delivery and decisions made, and it is now much easier for residents to do that online or through the Council app. It is positive to see the number of compliments recorded during this period. Increasing communication to promote the different ways to provide feedback, to both residents and staff, will support greater engagement over the next 12 months.

Local issues

This report is relevant to all Wards.

Equalities Impact Assessment and the Equalities Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 contains a Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on 06 April 2011. The Act identifies a number of 'protected characteristics', namely age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation; marriage and civil partnership.

The report notes that the Council records all complaints where the customer believes they have experienced unlawful discrimination, and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act. This information is reported in more detail in the Equalities Annual Report.

Children and Families (Wales) Measure

Although no targeted consultation takes place specifically aimed at children and young people, consultation regarding complaints was open to all of our citizens regardless of their age via public access Wi-Fi, and the Council's website. People replying to consultations are not required to provide their age or any other personal data, and therefore this data is not held or recorded in any way, and responses are not separated out by age.

Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This report enables Members to monitor the current position of the council's performance, this helps to drive improvement over the short and long-term and prevent poor performance.

Performance measures are also reported through the service plans and the improvement plan, which take into account the sustainable development principle promoted in the Act and the five ways of working; long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement.

Any changes to service provision as a result of feedback received would consider the five ways of working and the sustainable development principle as part of the decision making process.

- Long term: the actions being put into place will ensure that the Council is able to respond to feedback and complaints now and in the future.
- Prevention: Understanding what is important to residents and why we have received complaints will help the Council to make improvements that prevent similar complaints from occurring again.
- Integration: Reviewing the Council's policies regarding feedback from residents will help to ensure that the principles of the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019 are embedded in service provision.
- Collaboration: the approach to responding to feedback from complainants requires collaboration across the Council. All service areas receive and deal with complaints and their feedback as part of consultation will inform the development of training, guidance and support.
- Involvement: Public consultation has provided valuable insight into what is important for customers when they are unhappy with a service provided by the Council. This will be used to inform the development of training, guidance and support.

Consultation

Background Papers

[Comments, Compliments and Complaints Policy](#)
[Unacceptable Actions by Complainants](#)

Appendix 1 – 2019/2020 Annual PSOW letter



PSOW Annual
Letter 2019.2020 New

Link to the Public Service Ombudsman Act 2019 and Guidance documents
<https://www.ombudsman.wales/complaints-standards-authority/>

Dated: 19th October 2020