

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 16th March 2017

Lead Member/Officer: Lead Member for Customers and Libraries
Interim Principal Manager, Support Services

Report Author: Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer

Title: Your Voice report – Q3 2016/17

1. What is the report about?

The report provides an overview of compliments, suggestions and complaints received by Denbighshire County Council under the council's customer feedback policy 'Your Voice' during Q3 2016/17. The report also includes Social Services complaints received under the statutory complaints procedure.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To enable the Committee to fulfil its scrutiny role in relation to the council's performance in dealing with customer feedback.

To provide the Committee with information regarding specific examples where council services have been learning from complaints.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee considers the content of this report and, if appropriate, identify any areas that require further scrutiny.

4. Report details

Headlines for Q3 (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

- The council received 115 complaints during Q3 (5% [6] fewer than the previous quarter).
- The council received 132 compliments during Q3 (18% [29] fewer than the previous quarter).
- The council received 16 suggestions during Q3 (24% [5] fewer than the previous quarter).

4.2 Complaints regarding commissioned services (please see appendix 1 for further detail):

During Q3:

- 4 *stage 1* complaints were received regarding services provided by Civica (compared to 10 in Q1)
- 14 *stage 1* complaints were received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security (compared to 25 in Q1). This accounts for 50% of complaints received for Planning and Public Protection during Q3

- There were no *stage 2* complaints received regarding services provided by Civica (compared to 1 in Q2)
- There were no *stage 2* complaints received regarding services provided by Kingdom Security (compared to 2 in Q2)

Performance – Q3 2016/17

- 90% (99/110) of stage 1 complaints were responded to within timescales. This does not meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 1 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 1 complaints. In four years, the corporate target was only met in four quarters. However, as previously discussed with the committee, the corporate targets are purposely very ambitious, and to meet the targets would represent a position of “excellence”.
- 60% (3/5) of stage 2 complaints were responded to within timescale. This does meet the corporate target of 95%.
- Chart 2 in appendix 1 provides a four year trend of performance in relation to responding to stage 2 complaints. Of the nineteen quarters highlighted, the target was met seven times.

Stage 1 complaints

Four service areas are highlighted as having RED status for stage 1 complaints (table 1, appendix 1). RED status means less than 90% of stage 1 complaints were dealt with within the timescale of 10 working days. Further detail regarding the complaints where timescales were exceeded for those services are provided below:

Legal, HR and Democratic Service

1. **Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld

Summary of complaint: Alleged that Councillor had not attended any council meetings for over 6 months, therefore under the Local Government Act 1972 they should no longer be considered an acting councillor.

Reason for being late: This issue had been addressed with the complaint previous to the complaint being re-directed from the ombudsman. Further consideration was given to the challenge and the statutory provisions were revisited to ensure that the complaint could be comprehensively addressed. Unfortunately, we were unable to respond before the due date of the 19 December and the Christmas and New Year holiday period resulted in the reply to the complaint.

Customers

1. **Complaint Outcome:** Upheld in part .

Summary of complaint: Operator attitude was poor/unhelpful.

Reason for being late: Delay in Galw Gofal (out of hours service) feeding back results of their investigation

2. **Complaint Outcome:** Upheld

Summary of complaint: Operator attitude was poor/unhelpful, incorrect information provided.

Reason for being late: Galw Gofal is our commissioned out of hours service. The Galw Gofal management undertook a significant investigation and produced a corrective action plan, while thorough in their approach, this did exceed corporate timescales. This information is used in our quality performance reviews with Galw Gofal.

Planning and Public Protection

- 1. Complaint Outcome:** Not upheld – 1 day late
Summary of complaint: Incorrect information provided to a business
Reason for being late: Officers tried to contact the complainant to clarify the issues and this delayed the process
- 2. Complaint Outcome:** Not upheld – 4 days late
Summary of complaint: Parking charges and parking time limits
Reason for being late: High volume of emails / correspondence requiring a response
- 3. Complaint Outcome:** Upheld – 1 day late (following extension)
Summary of complaint: Failure to comply with Welsh Language Standards during issue of Fixed Penalty Notice for littering
Reason for being late: Investigating Officer was on leave over Christmas period and complainant had to be contacted to gain further clarification / information which delayed the process.
- 4. Complaint Outcome:** Upheld – 10 days late
Summary of complaint: Unhappy with the way 'works in default' was handled, about an overgrown garden
Reason for being late: Very complex case with several officers/services involved. The investigation was time-consuming and several queries needed to be fully investigated before responding

Children and Family Services

- 1. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld
Summary of complaint: Communication from social worker, contact issues.
Reason for being late: The complainant was unavailable when repeated attempts to contact were made.
- 2. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld
Summary of complaint: Service did not consider this a legitimate complaint, complainant clearly confused due to some health issues, but also issue of disguised compliance involved. Mum and child moved out of area, appropriate transfer arrangements made by practice leader as child was on the Child Protection Register.
Reason for being late: Practice leader spoke to complainant day after complaint and explained process of registration transfer. This was unfortunately not confirmed in writing. Prior to transfer in conference, all involved staff visited to ensure continuity of care.
- 3. Complaint Outcome:** Not Upheld
Summary of complaint: Complainant unhappy with social worker, as he believed that she was discussing his support with his ex-partner.
Reason for being late: Response was late as the enquiries that had to be undertaken to respond to the complaint and took longer than anticipated, this included a member of staff being unavailable due to sick leave.

Learning from complaints – examples of customer feedback influencing service design and delivery:

Customers: Review of staff training in general, training on standards of customer service required, and an increase the quality monitoring of calls.

Facilities, Assets & Housing: 1. Staff training to ensure all staff can explain to customer's reasons for costings. 2. All staff attending customer service course.

Highways & Environmental Services: Commitment to undertake a review of the Council's existing literature regarding the procedure for dealing with contaminated bins.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

The Your Voice scheme directly contributes to the corporate priority of: Modernising the Council.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

All costs relating to customer feedback are absorbed within existing budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

This is a performance report and no decision is being sought to make any changes that would impact on staff or the community. Therefore a Well-being Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

Monthly reporting to the Senior Leadership Team.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

There are no obvious financial implications arising from the report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

By not dealing with complaints effectively, the reputation of the Council may suffer.

11. Power to make the Decision

Sections 7.3 and 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines the Committee's remit and powers with respect of Services' performance.

Contact Officer:

Statutory and Corporate Complaints Officer

Tel: 01824 706597.