

**Report To:** Performance Scrutiny Committee  
**Date of Meeting:** 21 February 2013  
**Lead Member / Officer:** Jackie Walley, Head of Customers and Education Support  
**Report Author:** Steven Goodrum, Corporate Complaints Officer  
**Title:** Performance standards revealed through the Complaints process

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**1 What is the report about?**

To present analysis of the feedback received via Denbighshire County Council's customer feedback policy 'Your Voice' for Quarter 3 of 2012/13.

**2 What is the reason for making this report?**

To provide information regarding any performance issues identified by 'Your Voice', and to make recommendations to address these accordingly.

**3 What are the Recommendations?**

3.1 That the Committee note and comment on the performance of services.

**4 Report details**

Highlights

The Council responded to **89%** (160/179) of recorded complaints in accordance with the 'Your Voice' timescales in Quarter 3. This is up from the previous quarter (85%) and is short of the corporate target which is 95%. The council were 10 complaints short of achieving the target of 95%.

The authority received 210 compliments during quarter 3.

Complaint response times

The overall performance of the council has improved in the last quarter.

- Housing and Community Development (formerly Housing Services), have improved their performance in each of the last 3 quarters, achieving 100% in quarter 3 against an increase in the volume of complaints.
- Environmental Services continue to perform well, having performed consistently at or above the corporate target. This is despite them receiving the highest volume of complaints.
- Complaint volumes for Highways dropped by almost half but the performance fell dramatically, responding to only 50% of complaints within timescale. The new Head of Service has been made aware of the situation and is taking steps to address this.
- Stage 1 complaints is where the issue is in terms of failing to respond within the timescales – with 89% responded to within timescale.

Improving performance

The Corporate Director: Customers emailed all Heads of Service following receipt of the December monthly summary report. This is copied below and highlights the Corporate focus on improving performance.

Dear all

How the Council deals with and responds to its customers is a key element of Denbighshire County Council's Priorities for 2012-17: '**Monitoring the Council to deliver efficiencies and improve services**'. We want to be the best performing Council and deliver the best possible service to our customers. This includes complaints handling.

Having looked at the December Your Voice report (attached again for information), I note that only 90% (or 447/498) of complaints received since 1 April 2012 have been responded to within timescale. The target for this measure is 95%, and it is disappointing to see that this figure cannot now be met in the current reporting year.

Some service areas are performing well - consistently above the 95% target - and should be commended. Conversely, there are others some way from this target.

Whilst I recognise that each area of the Council faces different challenges and delivers very different services, responding to complaints within the target timescale needs to be improved. I would ask that this is given attention and staff reminded of the need to keep our customers informed of the outcome of their complaint in a timely fashion. We must strive to perform better in the coming months and I would expect that we all hit the 95% target - though I would like to see this nearer 100%.

The Corporate Complaints Officer can offer support, training and guidance in complaints handling. The post is currently being administered by Steven Goodrum whilst Clare O'Gorman is on secondment. He can be contacted by e-mail or via extension 6197.

I look forward to seeing improvements in the coming months and thank you for your support in driving improvements forward.

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

An excellent Council, close to its community.

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

None – existing role of Corporate Complaints Officer.

**7 What consultations have been carried out?**

Monthly reporting to Senior Executive Team.

**8 Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Not applicable.

**9 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.

**10 Power to make the Decision**

## Article 6.3.4 of the Council's Constitution

## Appendix A – ‘Your Voice’ information

### A1 Your Voice’ reporting periods

A1.1 The following periods are used for reporting data in regards ‘Your Voice’:

Quarter 1: 1-Apr to 30-Jun

Quarter 2: 1-Jul to 30-Sep

Quarter 3: 1-Oct to 31-Dec

Quarter 4: 1-Jan to 31-Mar

### A2 Complaint response timescales

A2.1 The ‘Your Voice’ feedback policy states that the following timescales should be adhered to when responding to complaints:

Stage 1: **10** working days

Stage 2: **25** working days

Stage 3: **15** working days

### A3 ‘Your Voice’ performance measures

A3.1 A traffic light system will be used to highlight performance in relation to response timescales to complaints. Performance is rated according to:

<b>Red</b>	Less than 80% of complaints responded to within timescale
<b>Orange</b>	when more than 80% but less than 90% of complaints responded to within timescale
<b>Yellow</b>	when more than 90% but less than 95% of complaints responded to within timescale
<b>Green</b>	more than 95% of complaints responded to within timescale

A3.2 To assist with identifying whether a service area’s performance has changed from the previous period(s), the following key has been developed:

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Indication</b>
▲	Improvement in performance
▼	Decline in performance
◀	No change in performance
–	No data for period for comparison

## Appendix B – ‘Your Voice’ Quarter 3 2012/13 data

### B1 Overall complaint response times for the current year

Service Area	Quarter 1 (12/13)				Quarter 2 (12/13)				Quarter 3 (12/13)			
	Recd	Within	%	Status	Recd	Within	%	Status	Recd	Within	%	Status
Social Services Adults	14	11	79%	▲ R	13	11	85%	▲ O	12	8	67%	▼ R
Social Services Children	18	17	94%	▲ Y	20	15	75%	▼ R	10	6	60%	▼ R
Business Planning and Performance	0	0	n/a	– –	0	0	n/a	– –	0	0	n/a	– –
Legal and Democratic Services	1	1	100%	– –	1	1	100%	◀ G	1	1	100%	◀ G
Customers and Education Support	4	4	100%	◀ G	2	1	50%	▼ R	10	10	100%	◀ G
Environment	26	25	96%	◀ G	44	42	95%	▼ G	64	64	100%	▲ G
Finance and Assets	7	5	71%	▼ R	8	6	75%	▲ R	4	3	75%	◀ R
Housing and Community Development	26	21	81%	▲ O	15	14	93%	▲ Y	25	25	100%	▲ G
Regeneration	1	1	100%	◀ G	3	3	100%	◀ G				
Planning and Public Protection	17	17	100%	▲ G	11	10	91%	▼ Y	24	24	100%	▲ G
Highways and Infrastructure	24	23	96%	▲ G	33	31	94%	▼ Y	18	9	50%	▼ R
Communication, Marketing and Leisure	9	9	100%	▲ G	12	11	92%	▼ Y	10	10	100%	▲ G
School Improvement	1	1	100%	– –	0	0	0%	– –	0	0	0%	– –
Other	1	1	100%	– –	4	0	0%	– –	0	0	0%	– –
	<b>149</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>▲ Y</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>▼ O</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>▲ O</b>

### B2 Corporate response times according to each complaint stage for the current year

Q1	Count	Within	%
Stage 1	137	125	91
Stage 2	8	7	88
Stage 3	3	3	100
PSOW*	1	1	100
	<b>149</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>91</b>

\*Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Q2	Count	Within	%
Stage 1	159	138	87
Stage 2	8	8	100
Stage 3	4	3	75
PSOW*	0	0	
	<b>171</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>87</b>

Q3	Count	Within	%
Stage 1	161	143	89
Stage 2	13	12	92
Stage 3	5	5	100
PSOW*	0	0	
	<b>179</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>89</b>

### B3 Compliments received during the current year

Service Area	Q1	Q2	Q3
Social Services Adults	68	147	82
Social Services Children	10	8	13
Social Services Corporate	0	0	0
Business Planning and Performance	0	0	0
Legal and Democratic Services	1	1	0
Customers and Education Support	2	2	5
Environment	42	44	73
Finance and Assets	0	0	0
Housing and Community Development	24	4	15
Regeneration	1	1	0
Planning and Public Protection	7	4	8
Highways and Infrastructure	12	20	10
Communication, Marketing and Leisure	10	10	4
School Improvement	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
	<b>177</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>210</b>