

Report to: Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting: 16 May 2013
Lead Member / Officer: Head of Customers and Education Support
Report Author: Corporate Complaints Officer
Title: Performance standards revealed through the Complaints process

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 4 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 **95%** (163 / 172) of recorded complaints in accordance with the 'Your Voice' timescales in Quarter 4. The corporate target is 95% and this is the first time it has been achieved. This is up from the previous quarter (91%).

660 complaints were recorded during 2012/13 – an increase of 12% on the previous year.

Of these 600 (91%) were responded to within the 'Your Voice' timescales. Although below the corporate target, it is a significant improvement on the performance for 2011/12 when 78% (460 / 587) of complaints were responded to within timescale.

The authority also received 192 compliments during quarter 4. Over the year, 820 compliments were recorded.

Complaint response times

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

No service areas were highlighted as RED in quarter 4.

Of the 9 service areas that received complaints in quarter 4, over half (5) responded to all of their complaints within the corporate target.

Environmental Services continue to perform well, having consistently achieved or exceeded the corporate target in each quarter of 2012/13. This is despite them receiving the highest volume of complaints.

Environmental Services are the only 'corporate' service to receive more compliments than complaints. They account for over a quarter of all compliments received by the Authority.

The performance for Highways improved to 85% of complaints responded to within timescale.

Stage 1 complaints is where the issue is in terms of failing to respond within 10 working days – with 94% responded to within timescale. This is an improvement on previous quarters (see table in B4).

Complaint handling

The number of stage 2 complaints reduced during this quarter. It is too early to say whether this reflects improved complaint investigation at stage 1 and will require monitoring over coming periods.

The number of complaints investigated at stage 3 has increased in each quarter; from just over 2% of complaints considered by the Authority in Q1 to 3.5% in Q4. These should be reviewed to determine whether there is a specific reason for this increase and whether any assistance can be offered to the services.

Analysis of feedback

Following the recommendation of the Committee at the meeting on 21 February 2013, a sample of feedback received during Q4 from Environmental Services and Highways was undertaken.

Environmental Services recorded 67 complaints - all at stage 1. 61 of these were categorised as being 'Service' related. Further:

- 20 complaints were about the 'Quality of service';
- 12 complaints concerned 'Non-delivery of service';
- 8 complaints related to 'Length of time for service'.

In summary:

- 24/67 complaints concerned missed collections; 18 were upheld, 4 upheld in part and 2 not upheld.
- 8/67 related to non-delivery of bins/bags; 5 were upheld and 3 upheld in part.

53 Compliments were also received, with:

- 10 for collections;
- 6 for replacement requests;
- 4 for the X2 scheme;
- 3 for the recycling centre (all relating to Rhyl);
- 2 for staff effort during the bad weather;
- 2 general service;
- 1 for staff for the Christmas collection.

Highways recorded 26 complaints. 'Service' accounted for 20 of these. Further:

- 9/26 were about lack of gritting/snow clearance;
- 4/26 concerned lack of response to their enquiry;
- other issues included: the price of parking; the action of a bailiff; the painting of double yellow lines at Loggerheads; and alleged damage following council works.

33 Compliments were also received, with:

- 5 for gritting/snow clearance;
- 4 for the prompt response to enquiries;
- 3 for pot hole repairs; and
- 3 for road cleaning

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(b) of the Council's Constitution sets out the Committee's powers with respect to scrutinising performance in general and the performance of certain service areas.

Contact Officer:

Corporate Complaints Officer

Tel: 01824 706197