

---

**Report to:**                    **Housing, Health & Care Committee**

---

**Date of Meeting:**        **25 October 2012**

---

**Subject:**                    **Statutory Complaints Annual Report - Social Services  
2011-2012**

---

**Report by:**                **Acting Head of Social Services/Chief Social Work  
Officer**

---

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. This report presents the complaints activity within Social Services. The report outlines the number and nature of the complaints received and responded to by the Statutory Complaints Officer.
- 1.2. This information is reported as a matter of requirement to Committee on an annual basis.

### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee notes the position and trend over recent years.

### **3.0 Considerations**

- 3.1. Social Work Services are required by statute to have a formal complaints system. This process is in addition to those issues dealt with internally by operational teams. Clackmannanshire Council meets this requirement through the recruitment of an officer whose role is to investigate these complaints at "arms length" from service delivery. The Complaints Officer reports directly to the Chief Social Work Officer.
- 3.2. It should be noted however, for information only at this time, that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman has directed all Local Authorities to implement a new Complaints Handling process. At present social work is exempt from this, but a national Consultation is underway. Any changes to Social Work complaints would then have to be supported through legislative change.
- 3.3. To support the ongoing development of effective complaints management, the officers in Stirling and Clackmannanshire have begun to explore areas for collaboration and the sharing of good practice. A joint proposal to support shared services is in development.

- 3.4. The number of complaints received by the service remains comparatively low, and offers an indication of service quality and the ability of teams to manage issues at an early stage. In previous years there has been a reduction in stage 2 complaints investigated, however the complexity and time taken to conclude investigation has been increasing. This would suggest that only the most challenging and involved concerns are requiring formal attention which is appropriate.
- 3.5. There were five Stage 1 complaints against the service in 2011-12 (1 in Criminal Justice, 2 in Adult Care and 2 in Child Care) and no Stage 2 complaints recorded. This continues the trend experienced in recent years (see Appendix to this report) of reduced Stage 2 complaints.
- 3.6. Due to the low number of complaints, themes are difficult to identify, yet learning is absorbed into the service performance framework and addressed at team or service level. Disagreements in relation to assessments are an inevitability as personal and professional perspectives can of course differ, the low number of these issues escalating to stage two would again suggest positive management. Where poor service is identified the Complaints Officer will address this directly with the staff and management concerned.
- 3.7. Additional assistance has been offered to teams to support their efforts, this has been in the form of briefings outlining process and recording of complaints; thus offering consistent and accurate recording and allowing for analysis of trends.

#### **4.0 Sustainability Implications**

- 4.1. None.

#### **5.0 Resource Implications**

##### 5.1. Financial Details:

There are no additional financial implications associated with this report.

- 5.2. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate

##### 5.3. Staffing:

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

#### **6.0 Exempt Reports**

- 6.1 Is this report exempt? Yes  please detail the reasons for exemption below

No

## 7.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

### (1) **Our Priorities** (Please double click on the check box )

- |                                                                          |                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| The area has a positive image and attracts people and businesses         | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Our communities are more cohesive and inclusive                          | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| People are better skilled, trained and ready for learning and employment | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Our communities are safer                                                | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Vulnerable people and families are supported                             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Substance misuse and its effects are reduced                             | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| Health is improving and health inequalities are reducing                 | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The environment is protected and enhanced for all                        | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| The Council is effective, efficient and recognised for excellence        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### (2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

## 8.0 Equalities Impact

8.1 Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?

Yes  No

## 9.0 Legality

9.1 It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 10.0 Appendices

10.1 Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

Appendix 1 - Breakdown of complaints over last 6 years

## 11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered)

Yes  (please list the documents below) No

**Author(s)**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>TEL NO / EXTENSION</b>
<b>Valerie Corbett</b>	<b>Statutory Complaints Officer</b>	<b>01259 452446</b>

**Approved by**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>DESIGNATION</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>
<b>Val de Souza</b>	<b>Acting Head of Social Services/CSWO</b>	Signed: V de Souza
<b>Elaine McPherson</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	Signed: E McPherson

## BREAKDOWN OF COMPLAINTS OVER LAST 6 YEARS

Year	Classification	Sub-Class	Number of complaints	Total Per Year	Within/Outwith Timescale
2010/11	Quality of service Policy Decision	Timely response and poor standard of practice Disagreement over assessment	2 1	3	Within agreed revised timescale Within agreed revised timescale
2009/10	Quality of Service Policy Decision	Poor standard of service delivery Disagreement with decision	2 1	3	1 ongoing Yes
2008/09	Quality of Service Policy decision Employee	Poor standard provided Disagreement with decision Attitude	4 3 3	10	Yes 2 within - 1 outwith Yes
2007/08	Quality of Service Employee Policy Decision	Poor standard of service Attitude Disagreement with service decision	3 2 1	6	2 within - 1 outwith 2 within 1 within
2006/07	Quality of Service Quality of Service Quality of Service Employee	Poor standard of service Timeliness of action Communication issue Attitude	4 1 4 4	10	Yes Yes Yes Yes
2005/06	Quality of Service Quality of Service Quality of Service Employee Employee	Poor standard of service Poor standard of service Communication issue Knowledge of subject Attitude	2 2 1 1 1	7	Yes No Yes No Yes

