
Report to Audit & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 24th August 2023

Subject: Annual Complaints Report 2022/23

Report by: Strategy & Performance Adviser

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. This report presents an overview of performance in relation to complaints handling during the year 2022/23.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that Committee note, comment on and challenge the performance of Council services in handling complaints.

3.0 Considerations

- 3.1. Complaints provide a first-hand account of customers' views and experiences, and can highlight problems we may otherwise miss. This can help us address a customer's dissatisfaction and prevent the same problem from happening again. Complaints also offer valuable information that can help us to improve services and customer satisfaction.
- 3.2. Clackmannanshire Council's commitment to customer service is reflected in our values, in particular: Be the **Customer** - Listen to our customers, communicate honestly and with respect and integrity.

Complaints Handling Procedure

- 3.3. A complaint is:

An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by us or on our behalf.

- 3.4. Complaints we receive are dealt with according to our Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP), which is in line with guidance produced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The full CHP can be found on the Council website:

<https://www.clacks.gov.uk/site/documents/customerfeedback/clackmannanshirecouncilscomplaintshandlingprocedure/>

3.5. The CHP follows a 2 stage process:

Stage 1 (frontline response) aims to respond quickly (within five working days) to straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation.

Stage 2 is appropriate where:

- the customer is dissatisfied with the frontline response or refuses to engage at the frontline stage;
- the complaint is not simple and straightforward and therefore requires investigation; or
- the complaint relates to a serious, high-risk or high-profile issue

3.6. If, after the Council has fully investigated the complaint, the customer is still not satisfied with the decision or the way the Council has dealt with the complaint, then they can refer it to the SPSO.

3.7. By recording and tracking complaints we can analyse the causes of complaints, identifying any common themes or possible systemic problems, and ensuring that complaints are being dealt with efficiently and appropriately.

3.8. Under the LAMCHP, councils are required to publish annual performance information against a number of indicators, including complaints volumes, outcomes and timeliness of response.

3.9. The Complaints Performance Report for 2022/23 is shown in the appendix to this report.

4.0 Improvement Actions

4.1. A refresh of the Customer Charter has been completed. A period of engagement will take place prior to the charter being agreed published. An unacceptable behaviour policy has also been developed which will be published at the same time.

5.0 Sustainability Implications

5.1. There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

6.0 Resource Implications

6.1. Financial Details

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

6.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes

6.4. Staffing

7.0 Exempt Reports

7.1. 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)

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses & people and ensure fair opportunities for all

Our families; children and young people will have the best possible start in life

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

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

Customer Charter

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: Annual Complaints Performance Report 2022/23

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)

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Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
Stuart Crickmar	Strategic Director, P&P	

APPENDIX



Clackmannanshire
Council

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Comhairle Siorrachd
Chlach Mhanann

Clackmannanshire Council

Annual Complaints Performance Report 2022/23

Clackmannanshire Council aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to our customers, but we recognise that sometimes things can go wrong and we fail to meet expectations. We value all complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services.

We manage complaints in line with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Local Authority Model Complaints Handling Procedure, which consists of 2 stages:

Stage 1: (Frontline response) covers straightforward complaints that require little or no investigation, and should be responded to within 5 working days;

Stage 2: (Investigation) concerns complaints that have not been successfully resolved at Stage 1, or more complex or serious complaints that require investigation. Stage 2 complaints should be answered within 20 working days.

This report presents the Council's performance in relation to complaints handling from 1st April 2022 until 31st March 2023, against key performance indicators defined by the SPSO.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Performance Indicators

NB At the time of writing, the most recent Scottish benchmarking data available was for 2021/22. These figures have been included to allow comparison.

Indicator 1: Total number of complaints received

		2020/21	2021/22		2022/23
		Clacks	Clacks	Scotland	Clacks
1	Number of formal complaints received - Council	246	283	57,015	253
1a	<i>Number of complaints received per 1,000 population</i>	4.8	5.5	10.5	4.9
1b	<i>Number of complaints closed per 1,000 population</i>	3.8	5.5	10.2	4.2

Indicator 2: Complaints at each stage that were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days

		2020/21	2021/22		2022/23
		Clacks	Clacks	Scotland	Clacks
2(i)	Number of complaints closed at stage 1 within 5 working days as % of total number of stage 1 complaints	78.7%	60.9%	67.1%	73.1%
2(ii)	Number of complaints closed at stage 2 within 20 working days as % of total number of stage 2 complaints	80.0%	75.0%	63.4%	57.9%
2(iii)	Number of escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as a % of total number of escalated stage 2 complaints	70.0%	66.7%	61.6%	61.9%

Indicator 3: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

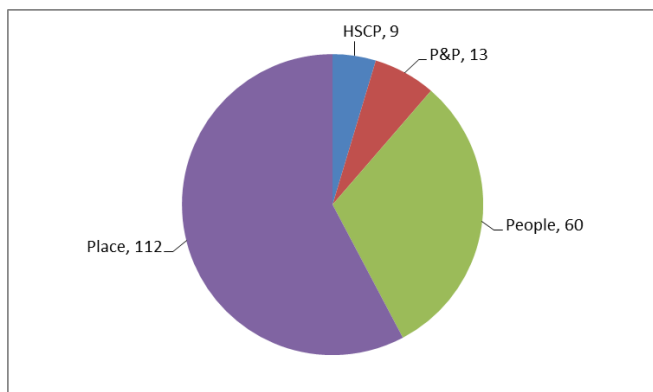
		2020/21	2021/22		2022/23
		Clacks	Clacks	Scotland	Clacks
3(i)	Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 1	5.8 days	6.1 days	6.3 days	6.8 days
3(ii)	Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at stage 2	19.6 days	20.4 days	20.7 days	25.5 days
3(iii)	Average time in working days for a full response to complaints after escalation	26.9 days	17.9 days	18.6 days	24.7 days

Indicator 4 Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage

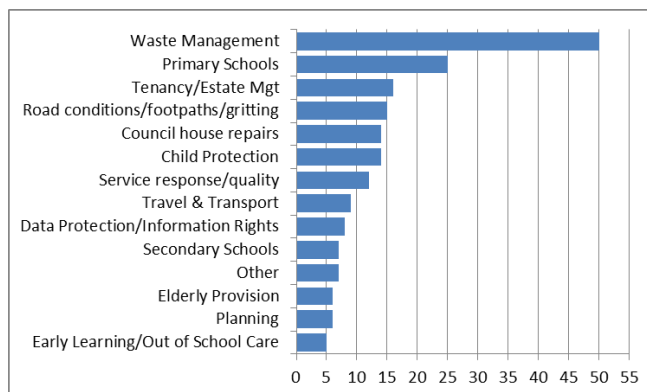
		2020/21	2021/22		2022/23
		Clacks	Clacks	Scotland	Clacks
4(i)(a)	Number of complaints upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed at stage 1	29.6%	25.9%	40.7%	25.0%
4(i)(b)	Number of complaints not upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed at stage 1	53.3%	42.4%	28.0%	41.7%
4(i)(c)	Number of complaints partially upheld at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed at stage 1	17.2%	14.0%	14.5%	17.3%
4(i)(d)	Number of complaints resolved at stage 1 as % of all complaints closed at stage 1	n/a	17.7%	16.8%	16.0%
4(ii)(a)	Number of complaints upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed at stage 2	0.0%	10.7%	18.3%	26.3%
4(ii)(b)	Number of complaints not upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed at stage 2	60.0%	42.9%	49.7%	31.6%
4(ii)(c)	Number of complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed at stage 2	40.0%	46.4%	20.7%	42.1%
4(ii)(d)	Number of complaints resolved at stage 2 as % of all complaints closed at stage 2	n/a	0.0%	11.3%	0.0%
4(iii)(a)	Number of escalated complaints upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage 2	10.0%	6.7%	24.6%	14.3%
4(iii)(b)	Number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage 2	60.0%	46.7%	46.7%	42.9%
4(iii)(c)	Number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage 2	30.0%	40.0%	21.0%	42.9%
4(iii)(d)	Number of escalated complaints resolved at stage 2 as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage 2	n/a	6.7%	7.7%	0.0%

Why people complain

Complaints by Service



Complaints by Subject



Complaints referred to the SPSO

During 2022/23, 12 complaints against Clackmannanshire Council were received and 14 determined by the SPSO. None of the complaints was upheld.

Complaints received by SPSO, by service

Subject Group	
Building Control	1
Education	3
Environmental Health & Cleansing	1
Housing	1
Legal & Admin	2
Planning	2
Social Work	2
Total	12

Outcome of complaints determined by SPSO

The SPSO reached determinations on 14 complaints about Clackmannanshire Council. None was upheld.

Stage	Outcome Group	
Advice	Premature	2
	Unable to proceed	1
Early Resolution	Discretion – Insufficient benefit would be achieved by investigation	4
	Discretion – Alternative route used or available	2
	Discretion - Good complaint handling	3
	Discretion - Resolved - both parties satisfied with proposed outcome	1
	Subject matter not in jurisdiction	1
Total		14

