

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Head of Regulatory Services
to Service and Performance Panel
of 4 June 2019**

Subject: Complaints – Scrutiny Update
Period: 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Elected Members with complaints performance information for the period from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 and compares performance to the same reporting period in 2017/18.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel:

2.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report; and

2.1.2 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April to 30 September 2019.

3. Background

- 3.1 Our complaints procedure, Listening to You, has 2 stages. We expect the majority of complaints to be resolved at Stage 1. If a customer remains dissatisfied after Stage 1, they can escalate their complaint to Stage 2. If an initial complaint is complex enough to require detailed investigation, it will be handled at Stage 2 from the outset. If the complainant is not satisfied with their response at Stage 2, the next stage in the Complaints Handling Procedure is for the complainant to approach the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and ask that they carry out an independent review into how the Council have investigated their complaint.
- 3.2 The following report provides performance data on all Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints closed from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 and is based on SPSO reporting indicators, including a breakdown per service of complaints performance.
- 3.3 Appendix 1 provides an analysis of our complaints data measured against the SPSO's reporting indicators, for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2017/18.

- 3.4 Appendix 2 provides a breakdown of the reasons why complaints were raised against the Council, for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 and compares our performance to the same reporting period in 2017/18.
- 3.5 Appendix 3 outlines service improvement case studies relating to Stage 2 complaints that were upheld or partially upheld where a service improvement outcome was identified and implemented.
- 3.6 Appendix 4 outlines details of complaints that have progressed to the SPSO during this reporting period, which have had recommendations made by the SPSO for the Council to improve service provision.
- 3.7 Appendix 5 provides further information on Stage Two complaints received by the Council considered to be serious or high risk during the reporting period.

4. Proposals

4.1 It is proposed that the Panel:

- 4.1.1 scrutinises the contents of this report and identifies any performance concerns or required improvement actions; and
- 4.1.2 requests a further report to a future meeting of the Panel providing an update on the Council's complaints performance during the period 1 April to 30 September 2019.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals in this report have been assessed through the Equality Impact Assessment Scoping process. There are no significant potential positive or

negative equality impacts of agreeing the recommendations and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required. A copy of the Equalities Scoping Assessment is attached as Appendix 6.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

- 10.1 **Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

- 11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

- 12.1 The matters referred to in this report contribute to the Council strategic objective to 'increase the profile and reputation of South Ayrshire and the Council' and within that to the outcome 'Improve trust and confidence in the Council and increase customer satisfaction with services'.

13. Results of Consultation

- 13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.
- 13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor Peter Henderson, Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers **None**

Person to Contact: **Catriona Caves, Head of Regulatory Services**
County Buildings, Wellington Square, AYR
Tel: 01292 612556
Email: Catriona.caves@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

Date: **28 May 2019**

Complaints Data Analysis Against SPSO Reporting Indicators

Please find below analysis of our complaints data measured against the SPSO's reporting indicators for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, with comparison to the same reporting period in 2017/18:

SPSO Indicator 1 – Complaints received per 1,000 of population

2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	3 per 1,000
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	3 per 1,000 ◀▶

The number of complaints received by the Council per 1,000 of the population has remained consistent over the reporting period 2017/18 and 2018/19.

SPSO Indicator 2 – Complaints closed at Stage 1 and Stage 2 as a percentage of all complaints closed

		Total	Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	363	322 (89%)	10 (3%)	31 (8%)
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	386 ▲	333 (86%) ▼	17 (4%) ▲	36 (9%) ▲

The number of complaints received by the Council has increased by a total of 23 in reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 compared to the same reporting period in 2017/18.

The following services have shown a significant *increase* in complaints in this reporting period compared to 2017/18:

- **Neighbourhood Services**

In reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 Neighbourhood services received a total of 87 complaints, an increase of 50 complaints in comparison to the 37 received for the service for the same reporting period in 2017/18. Neighbourhood Services have indicated this increase is attributed to the Council's introduction of a new waste re-cycling scheme. These related mainly to the nature of the service, particularly the frequency of collections. There was also an increase in complaints relating to the removal of 'unapproved' 2nd green bins from households that did not meet the qualifying criteria, and missed collections on new routes.

- **Leisure Services**

In reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 Leisure services received 28 complaints, compared to 11 in the same reporting period for 2017/18. No trends have been identified to account for this increase.

- **Property Maintenance**

The Property Maintenance service received 16 more complaints between 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, in comparison to the same period in 2017/18 (ie - 2017/18 55 complaints, 2018/19 71 complaints). Please see [Annex 1](#) for further information on Property Maintenance complaints.

In terms of our reporting statistics, over the same reporting period several Council Services have received a decrease in complaints received. The most significant decreases are as follows:

- **Housing**

In reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 Housing received 47 complaints, compared to 75 for the same reporting period in 2017/18, ie - a decrease of 28 complaints. No trends have been identified to account for this decrease.

- **Planning**

The Council's Planning Service has shown a significant 50% decrease in the complaints received between 2017/18 and the same reporting period in 2018/19 – a decrease from 18 complaints to 9. No trends have been identified to account for this decrease.

SPSO Indicator 3 – Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 1

		<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	76 (23%)	67 (21%)	179 (56%)
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	127 (38%) ▲	42 (13%) ▼	164 (49%) ▼

A total of 333 complaints were closed at Stage 1 which is a slight increase of 11 complaints, from 322 complaints for the same reporting period in 2017/18.

Of these 333 Stage 1 complaints 51% were either upheld or partially upheld compared to 44% in the same reporting period for 2017/18. This indicates that over half our customers have raised genuine concerns regarding the provision of Council services – suggesting we are continuing to actively listen to our customers to establish where services can be improved.

Outcome of Complaints Closed at Stage 2

		<i>Upheld</i>	<i>Partially Upheld</i>	<i>Not Upheld</i>
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	5 (50%)
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	5 (29%) ▲	2 (12%) ▼	10 (59%) ▲

A total of 17 complaints were closed at Stage 2 which is an increase of 7 complaints compared to the 10 complaints investigated at Stage 2 for the same period in 2017/18. This suggests that the Council continues to recognise when a complaint is of a serious nature and should be investigated immediately at the Stage 2 level. Of these 17 complaints, 59% were not upheld in comparison to 50% in the same reporting period in

2017/18. This indicates that after investigation it was established 9% fewer customers had raised a substantive Stage 2 complaint about Council services

Outcome of Escalated Complaints

		Upheld	Partially Upheld	Not Upheld
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	7 (23%)	10 (32%)	14 (45%)
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	6 (17%) ▼	7 (19%) ▼	23 (64%) ▲

In 2017/18 55% of complaints that were escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 investigation were either upheld or partially upheld in comparison to 36% in the same reporting period for 2018/19. This decrease of 19% suggests the Council is investigating our complaints thoroughly at Stage 1 resulting in a higher percentage of Stage 2 complaints agreeing with or accepting the Stage 1 outcome.

Further detailed analysis of Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints is outlined in Appendix 2.

SPSO Indicator 4 – Average Times (in days)

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	5	22	17
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	14 ▲	21 ▼	44 ▲

The average time taken to investigate and respond to a Stage 1 complaint has increased to 14 working days which is significantly higher than the 5 working day timescale. A significant increase has also been noted for Escalated complaints, where the time taken to investigate and respond has increased from 17 to 44 days, which is again significantly higher than the 20 working day time scale.

This increase in the average times is attributed to the large volume of HSCP Community Care complaints that currently remain in the investigation stage, thereby increasing the over-all average time taken to respond to complaints at both Stage 1, and when escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. The undernoted outlines the average times taken to respond to Stage 1, Stage 2 and Escalated complaints when Community Care cases are excluded:

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	5	22	17
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	5 ◀▶	21 ▼	24 ▲

Excluding HSCP Community Care complaints, the Council average for Stage 1 complaints meets the SPSO timescale of 5 working days, while the average time taken to respond to Escalated complaints when HSCP Community Care complaints are not included reduces from 44 days to 24 days.

SPSO Indicator 5 – Performance against Timescales

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	85%	60%	84%
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	74% ▼	71% ▲	56% ▼

A decrease has been shown in the Council's response against SPSO statutory time scales for both Stage 1 and Escalated complaints. 74% of Stage 1 complaints for this reporting period were responded to within statutory SPSO time scales (ie - 5 working days) which is a decrease of 11% from the same reporting period in 2017/18. This is due to the HSCP Community Care complaints that remain outstanding for this reporting period, as outlined above.

56% of escalated cases were investigated within the statutory SPSO time scale of 20 working days, in comparison to 84% for the same reporting period in 2017/18, a decrease of 28%. While it is disappointing fewer cases escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 investigation have not been resolved within time scales, services are encouraged to ensure they fully investigate Council complaints and provide a high level of service to our customers. It is noted that when extensions to time scales are taken into account, our response figure increases to 83%.

A significant improvement has been made in the Council's response times for investigating and responding to Stage 2 complaints, showing an increase from 60% in 2017/18 to 71% in 2018/19 (ie - 11%).

SPSO Indicator 6 – Number of Cases where an Extension is Authorised

		Stage 1	Stage 2	Escalated
2017/18	01/10 – 31/03	20	1	4
2018/19	01/10 – 31/03	22 ▲	2 ▲	10 ▲

An extension, when required, is undertaken in consultation with the complainant when it is established the complaint is complex and requires time to fully investigate.

For this reporting period 34 complaints were subject to an authorised extension in comparison to 24 for the same reporting period in 2017/18, ie - an increase of 10 cases. The increased use of this practice indicates our complaints investigators recognise when a complaint is complex and requires adequate time to fully investigate, for the benefit of our customers.

SPSO Indicator 7 – Customer Satisfaction

To gauge Customer Satisfaction in our complaints process we actively encourage members of the public to provide us with their feedback on their experience. This feedback allows us to establish where our process can be strengthened to meet customer needs. A survey is available online for anyone using our service to complete, and Information Governance also invites a sample of customers to provide us with this helpful feedback. In April 2018 improvements were made to our Survey, to streamline responses and help us obtain additional meaningful customer feedback, which included rephrasing

questions and updating the options available for customers responding to those questions. As our questions have changed, and the options to respond have also changed since April 2018, there are no comparative figures for responses from 2017/18.

Between 1 October 2018 and 31 March 2019, 60 requests were issued to members of the public inviting them to participate in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. 23% of our customers responded to our invitation, which is an increase of 3% from the 20% return in 2017/18. It is anticipated this is due to the Information Governance team amending the wording of the email invitation that is issued to our customers, which now clearly outlines the importance of the feedback to our Complaints Handling procedure.

Feedback received from the 23% who responded indicates that:

	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
<i>It was easy for me to make a complaint to the Council</i>	57%	43%
<i>My complaint was understood by the Council</i>	50%	50%
<i>My complaint was thoroughly investigated</i>	50%	50%
<i>My complaint was taken seriously</i>	57%	43%
<i>I was kept up-to-date with the progress of my investigation</i>	50%	50%
<i>I was given a clear explanation of the decisions made</i>	43%	57%
<i>The information I was given was easy to understand</i>	57%	43%
<i>I am satisfied the investigation addressed my concern</i>	43%	57%
<i>My complaint was responded to within the appropriate time scales</i>	64%	36%
The procedure for taking my complaint to the next stage was clear	50%	50%

Analysis of the response received indicates:

Things we are doing well

Almost two-thirds of our customers (64%) were satisfied that the Council had responded to their complaint within appropriate time scales. Over half the customers responding to our survey also either Strongly Agreed or Agreed that:

- **It is easy to make a complaint to the Council**
- **We understood their complaint**
- **The complaint was thoroughly investigated**
- **The complaint was taken seriously**
- **That they were kept up-to-date with progress**
- **The response was easy to understand, and**
- **The procedure for taking a complaint to the next stage was clear**

Things we could do better

57% of respondents indicated their dissatisfaction in:

- **Being provided with clear explanation to decisions made**
- **Being satisfied the investigation addressed their concerns**

It is noted that this feedback is received during a period where the Council has not upheld a larger percentage of Escalated and Stage 2 complaints, in comparison to the same reporting period in 2017/18. Analysis of this feedback also established that those respondents who had indicated having had an unsatisfactory experience had also not received the response they had hoped for from the Council following our complaints investigation. This maybe a contributing factor to the dissatisfaction noted above.

Information Governance has recently made improvements to the explanation issued to customers when invited to complete our survey, outlining the importance of their feedback in allowing the Council to gauge where our Complaints Process can be improved. It is hoped this will increase the percentage of our customers engaging with our feedback survey in the future.

SPSO Indicator 8 – Learning from Complaints

Please see [Appendix 3](#) for further information on learning from complaints.

Additional Complaints Information

Most Common Reasons for Complaints

The top 3 reasons for complaints received by the Council (as categorised within the Complaints Handling system) for reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 are:

	2017/18		2018/19	
Stage 1	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision	1	Quality of Service/Service Provision
	2	Employee Behaviour	2	Employee Behaviour
	3	Other	3	Other
Stage 2	1	Quality of Service	1	Quality of Service
	2	Employee Behaviour	2	Policy and Procedure
	3	Other	3	Employee Behaviour

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for additional information.

Services with the Highest Volume of Complaints during reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019:

2017/18		2018/19	
Housing	75	Housing	47 ▼
Community Care	56	Community Care	47 ▼
Property Maintenance	55	Property Maintenance	71 ▲
Neighbourhood Services	37	Neighbourhood Services	87 ▲
Children and Families	29	Leisure	28

Please see [Appendix 2](#) for additional information.

Additional Information – Breakdown of Complaints by Service:

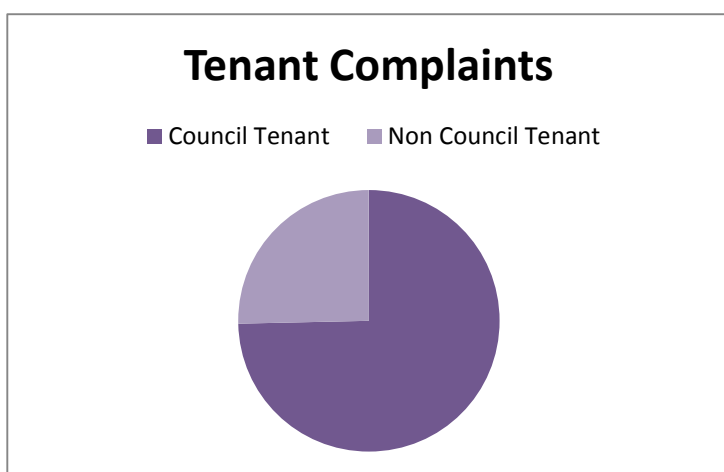
	2017/18	2018/19	
Benefits	3	7	▲
Children and Families	29	18	▼
Community Care	56	47	▼
Customer Services	15	1	▼
Early Years	1	0	▲
Education Central	3	2	▼
Environmental Health	2	4	▲
Facilities	6	2	▼
Housing	75	47	▼
Legal	2	3	▲
Insurance	0	1	▲
Leisure	11	28	▲
Libraries	2	0	▼
Licensing	1	0	▼
Neighbourhood Services	37	87	▲
Planning	18	9	▼
Property Maintenance	55	71	▲
Revenues	20	5	▼
SAMS	2	3	▲
Primary Schools	10	22	▲
Secondary Schools	3	8	▲
Scottish Welfare Fund	7	4	▼
Trading Standards	1	0	▼
Other	0	2	▲

Property Maintenance Complaints

The purpose of this annex is to provide more in depth information on the complaints received by one of our major front-line services, Property Maintenance. This annex relates to complaints submitted to Property Maintenance from October 2018 to March 2019.

Who made the complaint?

From the 71 complaints that were made to Property Maintenance during the period, 53 of these complainants were council tenants and 18 were non council tenants. The department identified complainants where 11 customers had each logged more than one complaint in the period. From the complainants who had logged multiple complaints to the department none of these complainants logged more than 2. With regards to the customers who had logged multiple complaints, 7 of these complainants were council tenants and 4 of the complainants were non council tenants.



Type of complaint

From the 71 complaints logged in the period, 61 of these complaints were stage 1 and 10 were escalated (stage 2).

Reason for complaint

The complaints when received have all been categorised further by Property Maintenance as follows:

- **Case unresolved – 2** – On both occasions this was a complainant escalating a previous stage 1 complaint to a stage 2 complaint, this shows they were dissatisfied with the original response. Also worth noting is that on both occasions the original stage 1 complaint was not upheld.
- **Damage to Property or Personal Injury – 3** – All 3 of these complaints were upheld and the complainant was issued with an explanation as to why.
- **Employee Behaviour – 1** – This complaint was partially upheld and the tenant was issued with an apology.

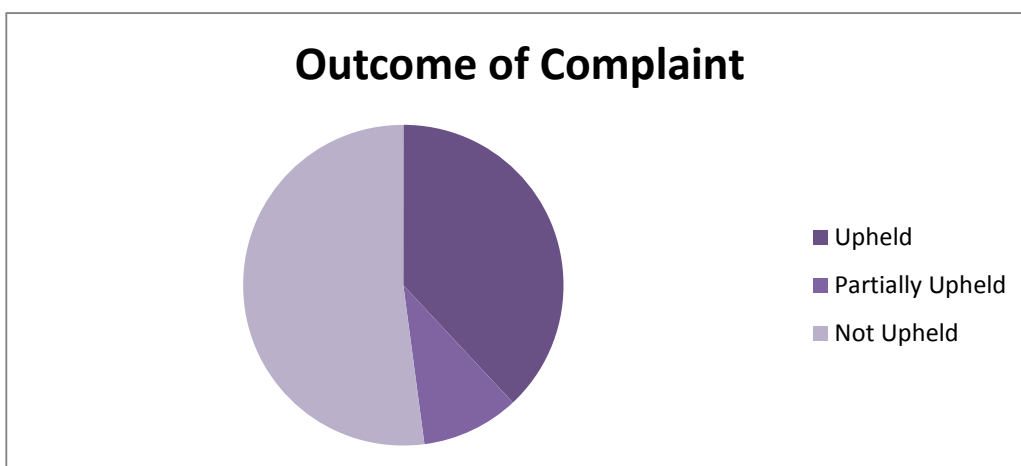
- **Policy or Procedure – 1** – This complaint was in relation to council appointed external contractor not displaying identification on site, complaint was upheld and apology issued.
- **Quality of Service/Service Provision – 61** – This is by far the largest volume of complaints we receive from complainants during the period, the general consensus of the main issues in relation to these complaints were
 - Poor standard of work
 - Incomplete Repair
 - Call not attended
 - Repair Not carried out

It has been established that each of the 4 main issues complainants have raised as above in relation to Quality of Service / Service Provision relate to:

- **Poor standard of work** – Of the 9 complaints logged of this nature, 4 were upheld, 1 was partially upheld and 4 were not upheld.
- **Incomplete repair** – Of the 9 complaints logged of this nature, 6 were upheld and 3 were not upheld.
- **Call not attended** – Of the 16 complaints logged of this nature, 4 were upheld, 1 was partially upheld and 11 were not upheld.
- **Repair not carried out** – Of the 3 complaints logged of this nature, 1 was upheld and 2 were not upheld.

Outcome of complaints.

From the 71 complaints logged during the period, 27 of these complaints were upheld, 7 were partially upheld and 37 were not upheld. The majority of complaints have been not upheld however this is only a slight majority.



Complaint Escalation

During the period out of the 71 complaints logged, 9 were escalated to Stage 2 complaints. From the 9 escalations 4 were non council tenants and 5 were council tenants. The outcomes of the escalations were as follows:

- **Upheld – 2**
- **Partially Upheld – 2**
- **Not Upheld – 5**

A majority summary of this data suggests that during stage 2 investigations it is identified that the stage 1 decision made was correct resulting in the complainant's stage 2 escalations being not upheld. On the two occasions respectively where the complaint was upheld or partially upheld, the complainant was issued with an apology by Property Maintenance.

Summary

Analysis of Property Maintenance complaints received in the period shows that there is no major trend that stands out as a point of concern. By far the largest volume of complaints received are in relation to poor work, calls not being attended to or incomplete or missed repairs, the majority of these complaints received however have not been upheld as Property Maintenance Complaints Investigators were satisfied the service acted appropriately in its service delivery. The complaints received are mostly in relation to day to day repairs. The overwhelming majority of these complaints (almost 75%) also come from council tenants rather than non-council tenants.

Analysis of complaints suggest that generally the Department is competent at investigating stage 1 complaints and responding satisfactorily as out of the 71 complaints logged only two were upheld at escalation stage. From this analysis and of the 71 complaints logged, 11 of the complaints were logged by complainants who had logged more than 1 complaint, some of these particular complainants are also regular complainants and perhaps see the complaints system as a way of having enquiries dealt with quicker rather than going through the normal reporting processes which should also be taken into account as a justifiable reason for an increase.

Reasons for Complaints

The undernoted Table 1 provides a breakdown of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 1, between 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019, in comparison to figures for the same reporting period in 2017/18. The categories allocated are based on pre-defined categories that can be allocated to a case within the Council's corporate complaints system, Lagan.

The categories reflect the high level categories stipulated by the SPSO.

Table 1 – Reasons for Stage 1 Complaints

Subject	2017/18		2018/19		
	Number	% of Total Stage 1	Number	% of Total Stage 1	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	235	73%	231	69%	▼
Other	29	9%	25	7%	▼
Employee Behaviour*	29	9%	47	14%	▲
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury	2	1%	5	2%	▲
Policy Procedure	5	2%	17	5%	▲
Lack of Information	11	3%	2	1%	▼
Waiting Times/ Missed App	11	3%	3	1%	▼
Case Unresolved					
Discrimination					
Service Cuts			3	1%	▲
Total	235	100%	333	100%	

* Please see below for further information regarding employee behaviour complaints.

The following categories have been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (Lagan) based on information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. This gives an overview of the Categories of Stage One complaints.

There is not a mandatory requirement for services to input this information when completing cases on our Lagan system but they are encouraged to complete these fields.

Service	Subject	2017/18	2018/19
Community Care	Arrol Park	4	3
	In House Homecare	19	21
	Older People Team Ayr North	1	1
	Older People Team Maybole Girvan	-	-
	Older People Team Troon	3	2
	Older People Ayr Hospital	1	-
	Older People Ayr South	-	1
	Older People Maybole & Girvan	-	-
	Older People Prestwick	2	1
	Occupational Therapy	1	1
	South Lodge	1	-
	Telecare	5	4
	Customer Services	Accuracy of Information	6
Customer Journey		2	-
Quality of Customer Service		3	1
Schools	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Ayr Grammar	1	-
	Alloway Primary	1	-
	Barassie Primary	-	4
	Belmont Academy	3	-
	Braehead Primary	-	1
	Carrick Academy	2	1
	Dailly Primary	-	1
	Doonfoot Primary	-	-
	Girvan Academy	1	-
	Girvan Primary	1	-
	Glenburn Primary	2	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	1
	Kingcase Primary	-	2
	Kyle Academy	-	1
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Newton Primary	-	1
	Prestwick Academy	-	-
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-
	St Johns Primary	-	-
Tarbolton Nursery	-	-	
Troon Primary	1	-	
Wallacetown Nursery	-	-	

Service	Subject	2017/18	2018/19
Facilities	Public Convenience	2	2
	School crossing patrol	-	-
Children and Families	Ayr North Locality Team	2	3
	Ayr South Locality Team	2	3
	Children and Families Disability Team	3	3
	Children's Houses	3	-
	Family Placement/Adoption Team	6	1
	Girvan and Maybole Locality Team	6	1
	Management Team	1	-
	Prestwick/Troon Locality Team	5	3
Housing	Housing Policy	-	1
	Housing Access	16	3
	Customer Landlord Relations	6	16
	Neighbour Communication	2	1
	Quality Maintenance	36	16
	Housing Service Value	4	4
	Travellers	1	-
Leisure	Citadel	3	7
	Golf	1	5
	Swimming Pools	4	8
	Other	-	6
	Town Hall	1	-
Revenues	Service Delivery	10	3
	Other	3	1
Neighbourhood Services	Missed Bin	5	18
	Cemeteries	-	-
	Fouling	-	-
	Grass Cutting	1	2
	Litter	4	8
	Other	7	4
	Recycling Facilities	1	10
	Special Uplifts	-	-
	Staff	1	1
	Street Sweeping	1	1
	Waste Collection	1	1
Benefits	Service Delivery	1	3
	Other	2	4
Property Maintenance	Quality Maintenance	3	-
	Staff	4	3
	Communication	6	2
	Dissatisfied with Repair	26	34
	Private Owner	2	4
	Other	12	1

The undernoted table provides an overview of reasons for complaints received and closed by the Council at Stage 2 between 1 October 2018 and 31 March 2019 compared to the same reporting period in 2017/18. These categories reflect the high level categories stipulated by the SPSO.

Table 2 - Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints

Category	2017/18		2018/19		
Subject	Number	% of Total Stage 2	Number	% of Total Stage 2	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	4	40%	8	47%	▲
Policy and Procedure	1	10%	7	41%	▲
Employee Behaviour	2	20%	1	6%	▼
Damage to Property/ Personal Injury					
Case Unresolved					
Discrimination					
Lack of Information*	1	10%	0	0%	▼
Other	2	20%	1	6%	▼
Total	10	100%	17	100%	

The undernoted categories have been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (Lagan) using information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. Providing this information on the Lagan system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints, although services are encouraged to provide this data:

Service	Subject	2017/18	2018/19
Children and Families	Ayr South Locality Team	-	-
	Management Team	1	-
Community Care	Older People Ayr South	1	-
	Older People Ayr Troon	1	-
	Arrol Park	1	-
	Private Home Care	2	-
	In House Home Care	1	-
Planning	Planning Applications	1	2
	Planning Objection	-	1
Housing	Quality Maintenance	-	1
	Customer Landlord Relations	-	-
Leisure	Swimming Pools	-	-
	Citadel	-	-
Property Maintenance	Employee Behaviour	-	1
Schools	Dalmilling Primary	-	-
	Glenburn Primary	-	3
	Kingcase Primary	-	2
	Belmont Academy	-	1
	Queen Margaret Academy	-	-

Table 3 - Reasons for Escalated Complaints

The following table provides a breakdown of the reasons for a complaint being escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2. A customer can ask for their complaint to be escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2 when they remain dissatisfied with our response at Stage 1:

Category	2017/18		2018/19		
Subject	Number	% of Total Stage 2	Number	% of Total Stage 2	
Quality of Service/ Service Provision	22	71%	20	56%	▼
Employee Behaviour	4	13%	7	20%	▲
Case Unresolved	3	10%	2	6%	▼
Damage to Property/Personal Injury					
Lack of Information			1	2%	
Policy and Procedure	1	3%	5	14%	▲
Other	1	3%	1	2%	▼
Total	31	100%	36	100%	

The following has been collated from the Council's Complaints Handling System (Lagan) using information entered by Services handling complaints at a service level. Providing this information on the Lagan system is not a mandatory requirement and it is therefore not logged for all complaints. However, services are actively encouraged to provide this information.

Service	Subject	2017/18	2018/19
Community Care	Arrol Park	1	1
	In House Home Care	2	1
	Telecare	-	-
	Older People Ayr South	-	1
	Older People Maybole/Girvan	2	1
	Older People Prestwick	1	-
	Older People Troon	2	-
Housing	Customer Landlord Relations	1	5
	Quality Maintenance	8	-
	Access	1	-
Leisure	Other	-	-
Neighbourhood Services	Open Spaces	-	-
	Recycling Facilities	1	-
	Grass Cutting	1	-
	Bin Return	2	-
	Other	-	1
Property Maintenance	Dissatisfied with Repair	1	4
Schools	Alloway Primary	1	-
	Braehead Primary	-	-
	Heathfield Primary	-	-
	Muirhead Primary	-	-
	Tarbolton Primary	-	-
	Ayr Academy	-	-
	Barassie Primary	-	1
	Dalmilling Primary	-	1
	Kingcase Primary	-	1
	Newton Primary	-	1
	Struthers Primary	-	1
	Symington Primary	-	1
	Kyle Academy	-	1
	Belmont Academy	-	-

Reasons for Stage 2 Complaints – Further Information

An increase in Employee Behaviour and Policy and Procedure complaints has been noted at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the process.

Employee Behaviour Complaints

In total, 55 complaints were made during this six month reporting period regarding Employee Behaviour. Of these, 14 were upheld which shows 25% of employee behaviour complaints were valid.

The services with the most Employee Behaviour complaints were:

- Housing – 16 complaints, 25% of which were upheld
 - Of the 4 upheld complaints, two related to the attitude of a Housing Officer, one to the attitude of a member of staff when answering a call, and one relating to the Mediation team. In all cases, an apology was issued and the staff member was spoken with, and training has been provided where appropriate.
- Neighbourhood Services – 10 complaints, 40% of which were upheld
 - Of 4 upheld complaints, two related to refuse collectors not uplifting bins, one related to poor driving of a refuse vehicle and one related to the attitude of a staff member when answering a call. In all cases, an apology was issued and staff members were spoken with where appropriate.
- Community Care – 9 complaints, 11% of which were upheld
 - One Community Care case was upheld, which related to an error in carers attending to provide care, due to an admin error in preparing a rota. An apology was issued to the complainant and staff involved were reminded of the process for passing on rota details.

The head-count of Council staff as at 9th March 2019 was 5,313 staff members. 55 complaints received relating to employee behaviour equates to 1% of Council staff receiving a complaint, with 0.26% of employee complaints being upheld in comparison to our employee head-count.

Policy and Procedure Complaints

In total, 29 complaints were made during this reporting period regarding Policy and Procedure. Of these, 4 were upheld which shows 14% of policy and procedure complaints were upheld.

The services with the most Policy and Procedure complaints were:

- Schools – 16 complaints, 6% of which were upheld
 - One complaint regarding a referral to CAHMS was made during this period. A breakdown in communication led to a parent not being transferred to the appropriate member of Educational Services staff as they were out of the office, resulting in a delay in the referral being made. An apology was issued and a new procedure has been put in place to ensure all staff members are aware of who calls should be transferred to in the event of staff absence.
- Planning – 4 complaints, 25% of which were upheld
 - One complaint was made that there had been an error in a Report of Handling. On investigation, it was clear that an error had been made. This

error was attributed to human error and an apology to the complainant was issued.

- Housing – 3 complaints, 33% of which were upheld
 - A complaint was made relating to a delay in refunding Home Contents Insurance following the termination of a Housing tenancy. An apology was made to the customer and the cheque that had been issued was cancelled, with a BACS transfer instead issued to ensure the money was received as soon as possible.

Service Improvement Case Studies

Building Standards

A complaint was made by a customer about the length of time taken to respond to an application for an amendment to a building warrant and completion certificate. Following an investigation it was found that an unreasonable time was taken and to address the issues that were raised, there was an increase in staff numbers within the Services, and processes were implemented to contact applicants at early stages within the Building Warrant assessment timeframe to highlight potential delays.

Housing

A complaint was made that an unreasonable delay in a refund being issued for an outstanding credit balance on a rent account. An investigation showed that whilst the Housing Service aims to issue rent credit refunds within a reasonable period of time, the timescale in this instance was excessive due to the volume of requests at the time and available resources. As a result of this complaint, procedural updates to ensure accurate review and monitoring on the progress of rent credit refund requested by tenants and an increase in the allocated resource time in this area of work activity to ensure rent credit refunds are progressed on a regular basis have been implemented.

Property Maintenance

A complaint was made to the Council regarding water penetration in one of our tenanted properties. The customer was dissatisfied that the wrong contractor was sent to undertake the work and the length of time that was taken to undertake the repair. He further complained that his repair was given a new target date for completion, that did not meet the original time scale.

As a result of this complaint, a new process has been put into place to ensure all water penetration works will be visited by an area Maintenance Officer or Multi-Trade Supervisor to determine what scope of works is required and that all jobs are then allocated to the correct priority. The tenant will also be advised of the exact date all works will start by phone and also by text the day before. Further to this, if an external contractor is being appointed to carry out these works the tenant will be advised of this and the original date will still apply.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Improvement Cases

There has been one complaint investigated by the Ombudsman during this reporting period. In this case, a member of the public complained that the Council failed to provide a reasonable response to her contact about leasing a unit. The complainant was in contact with both our Estates and Planning departments in relation to leasing a unit in an industrial estate. It was found the complainant required planning permission to allow her to use the unit for a business that included a take-away element. The complainant stated that throughout her contact with the Estates department, they did not voice concerns over her use of the unit. Later, after her application for Change of Use was considered, she was informed that it was likely the Estates department would refuse her application.

The Ombudsman found that the Council had not communicated reasonably with the complainant, and considered that the Estates department did not manage the complainant's expectations with respect to the viability of the proposed use of the unit, despite having sufficient information. The Ombudsman found that the Council were correct to advise the complainant to seek planning advice on the use of the unit. However, they were also of the view that we should have alerted the complainant earlier to the possible issues with the takeaway element.

Therefore, the Ombudsman upheld this complaint and asked that we undertook the following actions:

- Apologise to the complainant for failing to communicate concerns about the proposed use of the unit.
- In future, Estates should include in advertisement particulars which type of class uses are acceptable for a property, if applicable.

These recommendations were actioned and evidence provided to the Ombudsman in February 2019.

Stage 2 Complaints Monitoring

All Stage 2 complaints investigated by the Council are monitored and each quarter any complaints which are considered to be serious or high risk are reported to the Integrity Group.

The majority of Stage 2 complaints were undertaken at the Stage 2 level because they involved either a response from more than one service, or were too complex to resolve within 5 working days at Stage 1.

However, in reporting period 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 no Stage 2 complaints were identified as being serious or high risk, ie - those that would have a serious impact on the Council's ability to provide services to the public.

1. Proposal details

Proposal Title Complaints – Scrutiny Update	Lead Officer Wynne Carlaw
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2. Which communities, groups of people, employees or thematic groups do you think will be, or potentially could be, impacted upon by the implementation of this proposal? Please indicate whether these would be positive or negative impacts

Community, Groups of People or Themes	Negative Impacts	Positive impacts
The whole community of South Ayrshire	-	-
People from different racial groups, ethnic or national origin.	-	-
Women and/ or men (boys and girls)	-	-
People with disabilities	-	-
People from particular age groups for example Older people, children and young people	-	-
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and heterosexual people	-	-
People who are proposing to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process to change sex	-	-
Pregnant women and new mothers	-	-
People who are married or in a civil partnership	-	-
People who share a particular religion or belief	-	-
Thematic Groups: Health, Human Rights, Rurality and Deprivation	-	-

3. Do you have evidence or reason to believe that the proposal will support the Council to:

General Duty and other Equality Themes	Level of Negative and/ or Positive Impact (high, medium or low)
Eliminate discrimination and harassment faced by particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote equality of opportunity between particular communities or groups	Low impact
Foster good relations between particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote positive attitudes towards different communities or groups	Low impact
Increase participation of particular communities or groups in public life	Low impact
Improve the health and wellbeing of particular communities or groups	Low impact
Promote the human rights of particular communities or groups	Low impact
Tackle deprivation faced by particular communities or groups	Low impact

4. Summary Assessment

Is a full Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) required? (A full EQIA must be carried out on all high and medium impact proposals)		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Rationale for decision: This report is an analysis of performance that allows scrutiny. There are no proposals at this stage to alter the way we provide services or Council policies.			
Signed :	Catriona Caves	Head of Service	
Date:	10 May 2019	Copy to equalities@south-ayrshire.gov.uk	