

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

LEARNING & SKILLS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19th July, 2019

REPORT AUTHOR: Kelly Watts, Customer Services Manager

SUBJECT: Schools Service Complaints, Compliments and Comments

REPORT FOR: Information

1 Executive Summary

1.1. This report provides an overview of the Corporate Complaints procedure. It includes a summary of the complaints, compliments and comments received during the previous 12 months for the Schools service and informs of any emerging themes.

2 Background

2.1. All Local Authorities have a requirement to investigate complaints made against them. The Councils Corporate Complaints Policy is in the spirit of the model policy issued by the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) for handling concerns and complaints, the model policy is to establish across the spectrum of Public Service Providers

- Common principles for the effective handling of concerns and complaints
- A common model for dealing with concerns and complaints.

2.2. Service Areas are encouraged to review and monitor their complaints, ensuring that complaints raised are resolved quickly and efficiently and lessons learned are fed back to relevant teams.

2.3. The Councils complaints can help in identifying a picture of service delivery, and can assist in operational management, informing of necessary interventions and assisting in service planning and required improvements.

2.4. Where a complaint has been deemed not a corporate complaint the Complaints team will provide assistance to ensure the complaint is directed to the right person/organisation.

2.5. Complaints received in relation to individual schools need to be made directly to the school governing body and are therefore not included within this report.

2.6. The council monitors it's complaints and compliments at a corporate level through the measures: -

- C02 - % of complaints responded to within statutory timescales
- C03 – Total number of compliments received

3 Complaints Process

- 3.1. The Powys County Council's Corporate Complaints Policy is based on the model Concerns and Complainants Policy issued by the Ombudsman's Office.
- 3.2. Details of what is and isn't a complaint is included within Corporate Complaints Policy. All complaints must be investigated and responded to within 20 working days of acknowledgement of the complaint. The Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure is a two stage process, if it is deemed necessary and in agreement with the Customer Services Manager and Head of Service complaints can be escalated direct to a stage 2.
- 3.3. All complaints received at Stage 1 are registered by the Customer Services complaints team and forwarded to the Investigation Officer or a Link Officer for allocation within the service area. If the complainant is unhappy with the response issued at stage 1 they may escalate the complaint to a stage 2 for further investigation.
- 3.4. All complaints received at Stage 2 are registered by the Customer Services complaints team and forwarded to a Head of Service, Senior Officer or Professional Lead to arrange investigation. In some cases, they may require an independent Senior Officer to investigate. If the complainant is not happy following a stage 2 response, then they have the right to complain to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The Ombudsman's office aims to complete all investigations within 12 months.
- 3.5. All complaints, compliments, comments received (stage one and two) are recorded on the Customer Relationship Management System (CRM).
- 3.6. If there is any likely delay in a response the Investigating Officer is expected to discuss the extension with the complainant and the reason why the timescale will not be met.

4 Comments & Compliments Process

- 4.1 Residents are able to make comments about service delivery that fall outside of a corporate complaint, these comments are logged on the CRM system and sent to the most appropriate person within the Service Area, the person making the comment may not wish to receive a response but may want to make the service area aware of a potential issue.
- 4.2. Compliments received are logged onto the CRM and sent to the Service Area.

5 Complaints Statistics

- 5.1. Performance information in relation to Corporate complaints, comments and compliments is available within the Business Intelligence dashboard, available to Heads of Service.

5.2 Table 1, illustrates the number of School Service complaints received during the period 1st June, 2018 - 31st May, 2019.

Table 1

Stage	June 18 – May 19
Stage 1	16 + 2 in progress
Stage 2	10
Ombudsman	It is unknown how many complaints go to the ombudsman, it is up to the complainant whether they which to use this route if they are not happy with the stage 2 response.
Total	28

5.3. Analysis of the reasons for complaints is shown in table 2. Whilst complainants have unique and different circumstances for registering their complaint; these have been grouped into 'best fit' generic headings for reporting purposes.

Table 2

Complaint	Total
Additional Learning Needs	7
Admissions and Transport	6
Lack of action	4
School complaints process	1
Data Breach	1
Inaccuracies in document	1
Unlawful suspension	1
Discrimination	1
Welsh medium provision	1
Total	*23

***5 of these complaints made are only noted once, as they went through a stage 1 and stage 2 process.**

5.4. Table 3 illustrates the number of complaints that were upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

Table 3

Outcome	Stage 1	Stage 2
Upheld	3	0
Not Upheld	9	5
Partially Upheld	4	5

- 5.5. Wherever possible, lessons should be learned and improvements made to service delivery when a complaint is upheld. It is up to the Service to have in place a mechanism to ensure that this completed.
- 5.6. There were 6 stage 1 complaints; and 1 stage 2 complaint that were not responded to within the 20 working days' response time.

6 Compliments and Comments Statistics

- 6.1 There were 4 comments and no compliments received for the School Service.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 There were a total of 28 complaints received for the Schools Service (5 of which escalated from a stage 1).
- 7.2 The percentage of complaints responded to within timescale was 73%.
- 7.3 It is worth noting that a high proportion of complaints, 88% were either not upheld or partially upheld.
- 7.4 It is considered that there may be a likely increase linked to the publicity surrounding the Estyn Inspection, as has been noted in the areas of Children's and Adults following recent inspections.
- 7.5 Regular performance monitoring needs to be undertaken within the service to ensure that complaints are responded to within statutory timescales and to consider and respond to any themes, lessons learnt and quality assurance.

8 Recommendation

Recommendation:	Reasons for Recommendation:
It is recommended that Scrutiny Members note the contents of this report.	To inform Scrutiny Members of the Corporate complaints process and School Service complaints, compliments and comments activity and themes.

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