

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MON / ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

MEETING:	Governance & Audit Committee
DATE:	28 September 2022
TITLE OF REPORT:	Concerns and Complaints Report 2021-2022
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	Assurance on Policy Compliance
REPORT BY:	Director of Function (Council Business) / Monitoring Officer
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CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

Introduction & Summary

1. This report provides information on issues arising under the Council's [Concerns and Complaints Policy](#) for the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022.
2. This report includes Social Services complaints but only those where the complainant is not a service user. Service user complaints are dealt with under the [Social Services Policy – Representations and Complaints Procedure for Children and Adults](#). These are reported annually to the Social Service Improvement Panel. The Latest report is available at: <https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=608&Year=0&LLL=0>
3. Complaints may provide valuable information about how we are performing, what users think of our services, and how and where we should focus improvements.

During the period 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022, 189 concerns were received and 54 complaints were received and responses sent

The PSOW defines a “concern” as an expression of dissatisfaction that can be resolved ‘there and then’, at the initial point of contact, or very soon thereafter. A complaint is usually more serious in nature, may often not be possible to remediate, and generally requires an investigation into the circumstances before a response or resolution can be achieved.

4. Of the 54 complaints addressed during the period, 12 were upheld in full, 2 were partly upheld and 40 were not upheld. Of these, 11 complaints that had been through the internal process, were escalated to the PSOW. 9 were rejected prior to formal investigation and the other two were resolved. Please also refer to paragraph 9 which provides information about all complaints dealt with the PSOW in 2021/2. (Those having been through the Council’s internal process and those made direct to the PSOW)
5. The number of complaints investigated this year rose by 11, up from 43 in 2020/21 and these are shown in the attached table (**Appendix 1**)
6. The Council also publishes [complaints data](#) monthly

<https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Get-involved/Official-complaints/Council-complaints-statistics.aspx>

7. The overall rate of responses to complaints issued within the specified time limit (20 working days) was 79.6%. When responses are late, services are expected to send a 'holding response' to the complainant to keep them informed of progress and to explain reasons for the delay and to give an estimated response time.

9% (the same as in 2020/21) of the above complaints resulted from escalated concerns but this continues to indicate that Services are dealing effectively with concerns and thereby limiting formal complaints. 1 of the 54 was sent to the Council by the PSOW who refused to deal with the matter until the internal Council process had first been exhausted.

8. Lessons Learnt

The [Concerns and Complaints Policy](#) places an emphasis on learning lessons from complaints and thereby improving services. Previous recommendations endorsed by this Committee have now become embedded as part of business as usual when dealing with complaints.

As mentioned above, during 2021/22, 12 complaints were upheld and 2 complaints were partly upheld. **Appendix 2** explains what lessons have been learnt and any practice which has evolved as a consequence of these findings.

9. Complaints about Services to the PSOW

There is no internal right of appeal against a decision reached in response to a complaint, but the [Concerns and Complaints Policy](#) includes the option of escalating a complaint to the PSOW when the complainant remains dissatisfied with the Council's response.

There were 29 complaints relevant to this process, within the timescale of the report, lodged with the PSOW (these include those dealt with under the Social Services complaints process and 2 complaints carried forward from 2020/21). 13 of the 29 were escalated following formal responses under the Council's Complaints Procedure, 5 were escalated following responses under the Social Services Procedure, 2 matters related to reviews of previous decisions and the remaining 9 were complaints made direct to the PSOW. Of the 29 cases referred to the PSOW, 3 resulted in early settlements, which then closed the matters and the remaining 26 were not taken into investigation.

10. Language Related Complaints

No formal complaint under this process was received during the year.

Welsh language complaints together with any other issues relating to the Welsh Language are dealt with by the Policy and Welsh Language Manager and are reported to the Partnership & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee in the annual [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report](#).

In addition, the public have the right to complain direct to the Welsh Language Commissioner but these complaints are not sent back to the Council to be investigated and are not therefore included in this report. Any such complaints are noted in the Welsh Language Standards Annual Report which is published on the Council's Website by the 30th June every year:- <https://www.anglesey.gov.wales/en/Council/Language/Welsh-Language-Policy-and-Welsh-Language-Standards.aspx>

11. Decision/Recommendations:

The Committee accept that this report provides reasonable assurance that the Council handles its complaints effectively and makes no recommendations in relation to the Council's ability to handle complaints effectively and in accordance with its Corporate Concerns & Complaints Policy.

Appendix 1

Summary of Concerns, Complaints and Compliments by Service for 2021 – 2022

Service	Number of concerns	Number of complaints	Number upheld	Number Partly	Number of Complaints rejected	Number late (x days)	Compliments
Community							
Social Services (not a service user)	-	2	-	-	2	-	-
Council Business							
Legal	-	1	-	-	1	-	9
Highways, Waste & Property							
Highways	10	7	-	-	7		27
*Property/ Resources/Health & Safety	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Waste	29	4	1	-	3	-	21
Housing							
Housing	53	8	2	1	5	-	26
*Housing / Benefits	-	2	1	-	1	1 (7 days)	
*Housing/ Social Services	-	1	-	-	1	-	
Learning							
Learning (excludes schools)	4	-	-	-	-	-	33
Regulation & Economic							
Economic Development	11	-	-	-	-	-	31
Leisure	37	1	1	-	-	-	41
Planning	1	14	3	-	11	3 (1, 7 & 19 days)	156
Public Protection	-	1	-	-	1	-	38
Resources							
Resources	43	12	4	-	8	7 (1 day x 3/2 days/5 days/17 days & 36 days)	34
Corporate Transformation							
Cyswllt Mon	1	-	-	-	-	-	13
Totals	189	54	12	2	40	11	429

* Relates to more than 1 service

Upheld & Partly Upheld Complaints Reporting Form

Appendix 2

The Concerns and Complaints Policy places emphasis on learning from mistakes and putting measures in place so that the same mistakes are not repeated. An Annual Complaints Report is provided to the Council's Audit & Governance Committee in September each year. The lessons learned from upheld or partly upheld complaints are reported in a table as an attachment to that report. The table states the name of the service, the error identified and any remedial steps taken.

It is therefore essential that the information you provide at the end of each complaints investigation process clearly notes your findings and what action you have taken / intend to take, and by when, to ensure that there is no repetition of the identified error. The Committee has indicated that it may call Heads of Service to confirm that remedial actions have been taken within identified timescales.

In order to facilitate the writing of future reports you will be sent this form for completion every time you uphold or partly uphold a complaint. The information you provide will be shared with the Committee, in a public meeting.

Guidance for Services on how to complete the form		
Category description	Details / examples	Examples of action taken
Simple Error / no further action required	Genuine oversight / one off error that's been rectified/ issues experienced whilst a new system is embedded / times of high demand	Staff member spoken to and reminded of need to take care / data kept of times when demand is high
Customer Care Issue	Lack of response to correspondence / not phoning people back as promised	Clear instructions provided / customer care issues discussed at every Team meeting (minutes taken) / Services introduce and monitor some key performance indicators
Training or Supervision required	Behaviour issues or errors in interpreting instructions	Member of staff sent on training course/ supervision by more experienced member of staff
Change in policy or process	Errors in process / policy found as a result of a complaint investigation leading to changes being introduced	New forms introduced / different evidence required/ changes to routes (i.e. bin collections)

Upheld & Partly Upheld Complaints Reporting Form

Appendix 2

Summary of Lessons Learnt 2020/2021					
No	Complaint Reference	Service	Error(s) identified	Remedial Action – please note category of fault (see above) and specify the action taken or intended to be taken and by when	Action completed
Across Services					
1.	F580 (Partly upheld)	Property, Procurement & Health & Safety	School matter - staff member injured twice by the bins - lack of action by the Council	Issues resolved by date of complaint response.	YES March 2022
Housing					
2.	F543	Housing Repairs	Lack of communication and duration to complete works	Customer Care Issue – Clear instructions have been re-issued to staff regarding good communication with the tenants. Also been reminded to refer to the Housing Repairs Policy for guidance on duration to complete works.	YES September 2021
3.	F547	Housing / Rechargeable Repairs	Error in Process	Change in Policy or Process - Any notices to quit or transfer inspections are now undertaken by the relevant Housing Management Officer and Technical Inspector on site / at the property. This will result in outgoing tenants having a discussion with both Housing staff in respect of any required repairs prior to the end of their tenancy. The tenant can provide feedback and either commit to them undertaking required repairs themselves or have continued discussions in respect of the amount the re-charges will cost them upon their departure.	YES December 2021
4.	F576	Housing Repairs	Duration Take to Complete Repairs on defective Kitchen following leak	Customer Care Issue – All Staff within the Housing Maintenance Unit have been reminded of the IOACC's Customer Service Charter in relation to responding to service	YES March 2022

Upheld & Partly Upheld Complaints Reporting Form

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				users, and have been reminded to follow the guidance in the Housing Repairs Policy on duration to complete works	
5.	F567 (Partly Upheld)	Housing Repairs	Lack of Communication and duration to complete works	Customer Care Issue – Covid-19 had delayed a number of repairs due to the lack of the availability of materials. Staff have been given clear instructions to contact any tenant that have works that are to be delayed or cancelled for any reason. Customer Care Issue – Housing Repairs Operatives have been reminded to make sure that they clear up following their work and make sure the property is clean and tidy around the work areas following the completion of the works	YES January 2022 YES January 2022
Regulation and Economic Development					
6.	F542	Leisure	Simple Error - Genuine oversight when planning a “family trail”. It has been thought that all parties were in agreement regarding the route however this was not the case.	Immediate action was taken to change the route of the trail and a full apology was given	YES August 2021
Planning					
7.	F531	Planning	Upheld – Genuine error Incorrect procedures applied with Planning application being dealt with under delegated powers rather than via Planning Committee (HHP/2022/278) with officers interpreting application form as completed by applicant/agent with relevant box requesting confirmation as to any known relationship to an officer or member of the Council being ticked negatively. The	. For information a report was prepared and submitted to Planning and Orders Committee explaining circumstances surrounding application.	YES July 2021

Upheld & Partly Upheld Complaints Reporting Form

Appendix 2

			dealing officer/s would not have known of any familial relationship with an elected member.		
8.	F544	Planning	Upheld – Customer Care issue and review of statutory guidance. Lack of response to numerous e-mailed correspondence and request for information and clarity concerning delay in releasing completion certificate due to possible material change of use to property which came to light during completion inspection.	Apology sent in regards to delays in responding and completion certificate issued promptly following discussions with legal (difference of opinion with regards to material change of use currently being applied throughout out Wales). Staff reminded of need to apply the Customer Charter at all times.	YES May 2022
9.	F571	Planning	Partly upheld – Customer Care Issue Unsatisfactory response as well as lack of response to communication in relation to enforcement investigation.	Apology sent in respect of lack of response, however found that officers dealt and investigated appropriately in accordance of evidence of breaches to hand with further request to complainant to share any further available evidence. Staff reminded of need to apply the Customer Charter at all times.	YES May 2022
Resources					
10.	F535	Revenue	Delay in removing Premium upon request of customer. Time of high demand due to Covid-19	Customer Service discussed at Team meeting- Agency staff brought in to support team due to high workload.	YES July 2021
11.	F559	Benefits	Errors in process and delay in response due to Covid-19	Reminded all staff of the need to apply run-ins to benefit claims. Workload looked at and checks in place	YES January 2022
12.	F562	Revenue	One off error that has been rectified	Clear instructions provided.	YES February 2022

Upheld & Partly Upheld Complaints Reporting Form

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13.	F566	Revenue	Delay in response and failing to advise customer to apply for CTR at earliest possible convenience.	Although account was actioned correctly, there was a delay in response due to high workload and the support to the customer could have been better. A good customer service example shared with staff at team meeting	YES January 2022
Waste					
14.	F570	Highways, Waste and Property – Waste Management	Simple error – a problem identified during the introduction of a new service as part of a new waste collection contract – highlighted a need to change process for collecting waste and recycling from specific location.	Specific location was hard to reach, due to nature of streets, roads and housing. Liaised with waste collection contractor to change collection times and smaller collection vehicle. The contractor allocated a more experienced driver to the route and no problems have been reported since. However there is no certainty that further issues may not arise due to the layout of the properties and how residents tend to park in the area.	YES January 2022