



# Doncaster Council

6<sup>th</sup> December 2018

To the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2017/18

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Jane Nightingale	N/A	No

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise complaints and compliment information for 2017/2018. This includes the Council's corporate complaints procedure that ensures a channel for Doncaster citizens to express dissatisfaction and for the Council to respond and improve where required; the statutory Adult Social Care Complaint Procedure; and the statutory Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure. Also included is the recent Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGCSO) Annual Letter to the Council included at **Appendix 1**. **Appendix 2** details the Council's annual report and **Appendix 3** details the Doncaster Children's Services Trust annual report. In future years, there will also be an annual report from other key partners such as St Leger Homes.
2. Previously, separate complaint and compliment annual reports have been produced for both Adult and Children's Social Care, providing information on the number of complaint and compliments received and the lessons learned from them. As it is not a statutory requirement to produce an annual report for other council complaints, there has been no annual report. However, given complaints and compliments are the most valuable form of customer feedback the Council receives, this annual report will now include all complaints. The purpose of this is to raise awareness across the authority around the types and volumes of complaints and compliments received and to identify trends, communicate lessons learned and service improvements. The content of this one report will improve as we collect more information in preparation and increase the emphasis on service improvement.

3. It is important that lessons are learned from complaints and that improvements are made to services to avoid the same issues being repeated for other service users. Work will continue to refine and improve how we do this. These reports will also be produced earlier after the end of the financial year. The LGSCO have also made a commitment to provide more detailed information with regard to service improvement in their annual letter also attached.
4. The key improvements resulting from the feedback in 17/18 are included in detail and include:
  - Corporate
    - Additional litter bins and patrols introduced to an area where persistent littering takes place; and
    - Introduction of regular quality monitoring for Customer Service staff.
  - Adult Social Care:
    - Intensive work with the Occupational Therapist Team with a focus on waiting times, managing customer expectations and reducing complaints;
    - Knowledge gap identified around direct payments, additional training provided for social workers;
    - Training has been provided by the Local Government Ombudsman on effective complaint handling to all Adult Social Care managers; and
    - An improved procedure for the Blue Badge Review of Decision Panel.
  - Doncaster Children's Services Trust:
    - Improvements made to the Child Protection Chair process;
    - Supervising social workers to be the sole point of contact for foster carers, rather than the young person's social worker, to ensure there are clear lines of communication for issues directly relating to foster carers; and
    - Improved procedure for practitioners on how to handle cases that are open to the Trust due to private legal proceedings.

## **EXEMPT REPORT**

5. N/A

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

6. This report recommends that the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee:
  - Consider and comment on both the Doncaster Council and Doncaster Children's Services Trust annual complaints and compliment reports for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.
  - Note the intention to consolidate the corporate and adult social care complaint procedures.
  - Note the intention to improve the monitoring of how complaints inform service improvement.

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?**

7. Insight from complaints plays a key role in how we deliver the right outcome to our citizens and in continually improving our service delivery. As well as putting things right for the individual service user, the Council learns from complaints in

order to improve services for the future.

## BACKGROUND

8. The aim of complaint procedures is to resolve any dissatisfaction promptly, effectively and transparently and to inform service improvements to prevent service users experiencing the same issues in the future. The Council operates both a Corporate and Adult Social Care Complaint policy and procedure, which is managed by two Customer Experience Officers within Customer Services working with the relevant officers across the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring the complaint and compliment processes are followed and are available to support customers and staff to ensure that making a complaint is as easy as possible for all concerned.
9. Each year the LGSCO provides feedback to each Local Authority about the complaints it has received about them in the past year. The letter relating to 2017/2018 is included in **Appendix 1**. No specific areas of concern have been highlighted. There has been an increase in the number of investigations that the LGSCO have completed. In 2016/17, this was 17 compared to 25 in 2017/18. The upheld rate has also slightly increased from 47% to 52%. Following recommendations from the LGSCO in 2017/18, we have paid £6400 in compensation compared to £2195 paid in 2016/17. £5950 of this amount related to Adult Social Care complaints.
10. Council complaints and compliments are recorded and managed through the Council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. All members of staff can record complaints and compliments through the corporate intranet using the online forms. Customers can log complaints and compliments on our website or can request them to be recorded through their preferred access channel.
11. The CRM system holds records of all complaints and compliments and is used to manage the status and timescales of complaint handling within the organisation. It also enables us to identify and analyse trends and lessons learned to help us to improve our customer's experience.

## 12. Summary of Complaints and Compliment Information

### How complaints were received in 2017/18

Access Channel	Corporate	Adult Social Care	Doncaster Children Services Trust
Website	70%	34%	5%
Telephone	25%	8%	40%
Email	4%	34%	29%
Face to Face	1%	0%	12%
Letter / Form	0%	21%	14%
Children's Social Care App	N/A	N/A	1%

### Number of complaints received and outcomes of complaint investigations.

Areas	No. of Stage 1 Complaints Received	Upheld/Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
Corporate Complaints	1044	64%	36%
Adult Social Care	82	43%	57%
Doncaster Children Services Trust	229	44%	56%

### Main complaint themes

Corporate:

- Service failure;
- Staff attitude; and
- Information provided.

Adult Social Care:

- Time taken to undertake/complete assessment;
- Poor communication; and
- Lack of action/quality of service by worker or team.

Doncaster Children's Services Trust:

- Actions of workers
- Poor communication
- Decision making

### Compliments

Directorate	No of Compliments Received	Top Area
Adults Health & Wellbeing	46	Homecare (STEPS)
LOCYPS	1	Pre-School Inclusion
Corporate Resources	53	Customer Services
Regeneration & Environment	194	Waste & Recycling
DCST	295	Area Child Protection Teams

A more detailed report is included at **Appendix 2**.

13. Every local authority with a responsibility for children's social care services is required to produce an annual report outlining the complaint activity for the service. The statutory complaints function transferred from Doncaster Council to Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST) in 2015. DCST are responsible for producing the children's social care annual report as attached at **Appendix 3**.
14. The key priorities for the Customer Experience Team in 2018/19 will be to continue to provide an expert service in complaint handling, promoting the sharing of good practice as well as poor practice so that lessons can be learned. Across the Council, the focus will be on reducing complaints through service improvements that in turn should reduce the number of complaints being upheld or partially upheld.

### OPTIONS CONSIDERED

15. There are no options to consider in this particular report to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee. The main objective is to communicate the

information and inform the committee of the main improvements made as a result and the intention to consolidate the information and procedures within the authority.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

16. Not applicable.

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

17.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p><b>Doncaster Working:</b> Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better access to good fulfilling work</li> <li>• Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish</li> <li>• Inward Investment</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Living:</b> Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster</li> <li>• More people can live in a good quality, affordable home</li> <li>• Healthy and Vibrant Communities through Physical Activity and Sport</li> <li>• Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean</li> <li>• Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Doncaster Learning:</b> Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school</li> <li>• Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better</li> <li>• Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work</li> </ul>	

	<p><b>Doncaster Caring:</b> Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children have the best start in life</li> <li>• Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust</li> <li>• Older people can live well and independently in their own homes</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Connected Council:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A modern, efficient and flexible workforce</li> <li>• Modern, accessible customer interactions</li> <li>• Operating within our resources and delivering value for money</li> <li>• A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents</li> <li>• Building community resilience and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths</li> <li>• Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance</li> </ul>	<p>Complaints and compliments both provide valuable customer feedback to put any failure right, implement the resulting improvement and to celebrate an outstanding quality of service. This applies to all services involved in delivering all out priorities.</p>

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

18. If we fail to learn lessons and effectively analyze the information we receive through our complaints to inform improved service delivery, the following could occur:
- Doncaster residents may not receive the standard of service delivery they expect and deserve; and
  - An increased risk of maladministration.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SRF Date 25/9/18]**

19. The Council has a number of legal duties in relation to complaints, particularly in relation to Local Government Ombudsman findings. The Monitoring Officer has detailed duties in relation to findings of maladministration. The Council also has a specific duty set out in law to publish an annual report of complaints made in relation to Children's Services. Complaints are increasingly seen as a valuable tool to be used by organizations' to better understand their services and to ensure that lessons can be learnt from customer complaints and feedback and services improved.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials AB Date 17/09/2018]**

20. There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. If service improvements are required, these should be addressed by each service within existing budget levels.

### **HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials KG Date 24.09.18]**

21. There are no specific HR issues raised in this report. However, the report raises staff attitude and poor communication as one of the primary complaints, it is hoped that the introduction of the skills framework will assist in improving employee skills in these areas by highlighting needs for employee development where necessary.

### **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PA Date 25/09/18]**

22. There are no technology implications in relation to this report.

### **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials RS Date 14/08/18]**

23. Good governance is important for healthy organisations and for healthy populations. Effective systems to respond to complaints and compliments demonstrate not only a responsive learning culture but also allows specific health issues to be addressed.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials DA Date 31/08/18]**

24. Decision makers must consider the Council's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty at s149 of the Equality Act 2010. The duty requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the act, and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those that do not share that protected characteristic. There are no specific equality implications arising from this report. However, any activities arising from the management of complaints and compliments will need to be the subject of separate 'due regard' assessments.

### **CONSULTATION**

25. This report has been shared with officers to ensure the required action is taken.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

26. **Appendix 1:** Local Government Ombudsman Annual Letter.  
**Appendix 2:** Doncaster Council's Annual Complaint and Compliment Report.  
**Appendix 3:** Children's Social Care Annual Report.

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