



# Doncaster Council

## Report

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Date: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020

To the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2019/20

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

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise complaints and compliment information relating to 2019/20 for Doncaster Council and partners. This includes the Council, Doncaster Children's Services Trust (DCST), St Leger Homes of Doncaster (SLHD) and Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust (DCLT). It also seeks to identify the key areas that are the subject of complaints and what measures have been taken to improve as a result of that feedback where required. It also provides a view of improvement from the Council's Customer Service Team who listen to thousands of customers direct every week and reports the current position with regard to the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy introduced last year. **Appendix 1** now includes a consolidated report and **Appendix 2** includes a copy of the Local Government & Social care Ombudsman (LGSCO) Annual Letter to Doncaster Council published in July relating to performance in 19/20.
2. Overall analysis evidences that the number of complaints have reduced, the number of investigations by the LGSCO have reduced and we have learned significantly throughout the year as detailed in the annual report. The key improvements resulting from the feedback in 19/20 are:
  - Doncaster Council
    - Social Care Assessments - Increased communication with customers, clearer explanations of timescales and priority statuses. An internal complaint prevention group has been established.

- Safeguarding communication concerns - Increased contact with individuals who raise safeguarding concerns. Ensured that learning needs of providers are proactively identified by DMBC to prevent similar situations occurring in the future.
- Reporting missed waste collections online - Improvements made to the website to make it easier to report missed waste collections.
- School transport change concerns from parents - The new providers received training on how to manage children with additional needs and were given improved instructions relating to pick up and drop off times.

#### Doncaster Children's Services Trust

- Complainants have felt that reports were biased against them or information within them was inaccurate - Guidance was given to complainants on how to address the issue of incorrect third party information when this had been provided by another professional/agency.
- The individual style of how social workers practice has resulted in some complaints. This has been evident when the complainant has compared how previous social workers have been with the family. This has been fed back to the social workers so they can be mindful of this in future.

#### St Leger Homes of Doncaster

- Boilers leaking causing damage to property walls – process changed for fitting condensate pumps.
- Reviewed and amended parts of bereavement process, taken on board all feedback from tenants and delivered training to all staff on the new process.

#### Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust

- Numerous complaints submitted relating to cleanliness issues at the Dome - improved cleaning schedules.
- Complaints around high temperatures in the gym changing rooms at the Dome - Installation of improved air-conditioning and airflow system to improve the environment in that space.

## **EXEMPT REPORT**

3. N/A

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4. This report recommends:

- Consideration and comment on the complaints and compliment report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020.

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

5. 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, we learn from complaints in order to improve services for the future.

## BACKGROUND

6. 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, DCST, SLHD and DCLT all have complaint policies and procedures. They also have officers who 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. These officers also ensure we respond to enquiries and investigations from the local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).
7. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) publish an annual review letter every year, which details the complaints that they have received for each authority. During 2019/20 across DMBC, SLHD and DCST the LGSCO received 61 applications, the majority of which were either premature as the internal complaints procedure had not been completed or cases where the LGSCO decided not to investigate the matter further. The LGSCO carried out detailed investigations on nine applications, seven were upheld in the customers favour and two were not upheld. When comparing the number of decisions following investigations by the LGSCO to last year's statistics, the number of investigations have reduced by 50%. Throughout the year we have been ensuring that, any Stage 1 or Stage 2 investigations that were carried out within the internal complaint procedure had addressed all the customers concerns before the response was sent to the customer. This ensures that if a customer chooses to seek independent advice, we have done all we can to improve. In 100% of cases the LGSCO were satisfied that either DMBC, DCST or SLHD had successfully implemented their recommendations when a complaint was upheld.
8. **Summary of Complaints and Compliment Information**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Volume of Complaints Received in 2019/20</b>
Doncaster Council	620
Doncaster Children's Services Trust	134
St Leger Homes of Doncaster	832
Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust	966
<b>Total</b>	<b>2552</b>

## How complaints were received in 2019/20

Access Channel	DMBC	DCST	DCLT	SLH
Website / Online	79.0%	6.0%	47%	3.0%
Telephone	18.0%	36.0%	23%	55.0%
Email / Letter	2.0%	39.0%	24%	34.0%
Face to Face	1.0%	3.0%	1%	8.0%
Other / 3rd Party Enquiry	0.0%	16.0%	5%	0.0%

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

Areas	No. of Stage 1 Complaints Received	Upheld/Partly Upheld	Not Upheld
DMBC	620	60%	40%
DCST	134	40%	60%
SLHD	832	28%	72%

\*DCLT does not capture this information.

## Compliments

Areas	No of Compliments Received	Top Area
DMBC	346	Waste & Recycling
DCST	243	Placements
SLHD	203	Property Services
DCLT	57	The Dome

9. The key priorities for the staff who co-ordinate this feedback 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. There will also be a focus on reducing complaints through service improvements, which in turn should reduce the number of complaints being upheld or partially upheld.

## OPTIONS CONSIDERED

10. There are no options to consider in this particular report. The main objective is to communicate the 2019/2020 complaint and compliment information for Doncaster Council and its partners.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

11.N/A

## IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

12.

	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

13. If we fail to learn lessons and effectively analyse 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 [HMP 17/07/2020 ]

14. 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 organisations to better understand their services and to ensure that lessons can be learnt from customer complaints, feedback, and services improved.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CC Date 17/07/2020 ]**

15. 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 17/07/2020 ]**

16. There are no specific HR issues raised in this report.

## **TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials PW Date 17/07/2020 ]**

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

## **HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials SH 20/7/2020]**

18. 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 10/07/20]**

19. 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**

20. This report has been considered by the Chief Executive, Directors and the Executive Board prior to the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

21. **Appendix 1** – Annual Complaints & Compliments Report  
**Appendix 2** – Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

(LGSCO)	Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
(DCST)	Doncaster Children's Services Trust
(SLHD)	St Leger Homes of Doncaster
(DCLT)	Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust

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