



# City of Doncaster Council

## Report

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Date: 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023

To the Chair and Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

Report Title: Annual Complaint and Compliment Report 22/23

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 2022/23 for Doncaster Council and partners. This includes the Council, 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 the current position with regard to the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy. **Appendix 1** includes the full Complaint and Compliment 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 22/23.
2. Across all the organisations in 2022/23, we saw a decrease in the number of complaints received by a cumulative 459, resulting in 2,398 complaints being received compared to 2,857 in the previous year. The key improvements resulting from the feedback in 22/23 are:

### Doncaster Council

- In AHWB: Adult Social Care Duty Teams, concerns were raised around inconsistency of workers in the teams as a result there has been implementation of practice guidance across all teams to ensure that there is a consistent handover process, which includes the communication within the Mosaic system and the creation of a duty email inbox for each team to support managers when covering another team
- Following a recent upheld decision and recommendation by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, the planning team spoke to

members of staff in relation to decision making processes caused by deviations from approved plans. The planning team have been instructed to document all relevant information when carrying out site inspections particularly any on site discussions with the builder which may show deviations from the submitted plan.

- Enforcement Officers who issue Fixed Penalty Notices to members of the public have received training on how to approach and address the public, officers also now ask people how they wish to be addressed.
- To improve the service to families moving into area children who are classed as Children Missing Education are identified immediately and monitored through a weekly cross service meeting involving Special Educational Needs (SEN), Virtual School and Education Welfare. SEN cases are reported to the responsible Head of Service with agreed actions to ensure the child/young person is receiving full time educational provision that can meet needs. These processes must take place within the statutory timescale.

### **Doncaster Children's Services Trust**

- A young person was unhappy about how their change in social worker had been handled including a worker leaving and informing them via email. The opportunity was taken to remind all social workers, working with children in care, to ensure they spoke to their children directly before leaving.
- Lessons have been learnt about the level of support needed by young people in care/care leavers who are about to become parents themselves, and this has informed service delivery. The opportunity has also been taken to address the assumption of some, that the unborn child of these parents is automatically at risk, or that these parents would not be able to care for their own child when the child is born. Whilst the availability of other services for expectant parents is outside the control of children's social care, understanding and responding to the anxieties of these young people is within children's social care's control and having an agreed clear and timely plan in place provides much needed reassurance to all parties.
- Complaints received where the main presenting theme is 'actions of worker', 'poor communication' and 'decision making' often relate, in part, to information that has been included in an assessment that has been undertaken by a social worker. To inform the development of assessment training for children's social workers feedback was shared from complaints to ensure the opportunity was taken to culturally reinforce lessons learnt.

### **St Leger Homes of Doncaster**

- SLHD has continued with the changes in the delivery of the repairs service in February 2023, by combining the scheduled repairs teams with the responsive repair teams. This improves the availability of trade resources, which means they can be more responsive to demand. This also improves communication as customers now receive an appointment at the first point of contact, as well as a confirmation text and text reminder.
- To further improve how SLHD engage and deal with customers it launched an in-house customer excellence training programme in February 2023 and all employees will attend this training. The training content was informed by tenant discovery sessions held with tenant representatives.
- SLHD have commenced their Journey to Excellence programme. The overall aim of the project is to improve the customer journey for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and promote the prevention agenda. Working with customers to help them remain in their own homes by assisting with tenancy management and helping them to ensure their income is maximised. As a result of this, at the end of 22/23 SLHD saw the lowest number of households in B&B accommodation, reducing to 16. SLHD will continue to work on this journey to excellence.

### **Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust**

- DCLT have seen a decline in membership complaints since transferring over to in-house membership collections from a third-party provider in July 2022, meaning that all customer queries either at site or through the Contact Centre are dealt with more promptly and more accurate information is now available.
- DCLT continues to receive complaints with regards to swimming lesson cancellations, despite attempts to resolve this there are still shortages with recruitment of swimming teachers. DCLT have completed recruitment drives, have substantially increased hourly rates and have worked with swimming clubs to try and bring more teachers into the business. The number of skilled teachers continues to be a national problem in this sector.
- DCLT has received complaints with regards to the volume of youth fitness members they have in the gyms. It is recognised that despite the complaints they receive, it is essential that they continue to offer a youth package. Approximately a third of children aged 2-15 are overweight or obese and DCLT support the UK Chief Medical Officer's recommendation of all young people engaging in an hour of daily physical activity. DCLT are aware of the popularity of these memberships and are acting where necessary to improve the experience for all and they expect their teams to be challenging any inappropriate actions. Updates have been made to their member etiquette requirements that all members must follow, and staff must monitor. This etiquette is displayed on banners around the gym and on posters throughout the gym area.

### **EXEMPT REPORT**

3. N/A

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

This report recommends consideration and comment on the complaints and compliment report for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

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

4. 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**

5. 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, 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.
6. The LGSCO carried out detailed investigations on 19 applications, 10 were upheld in the customers favour, 7 were not upheld and 2 are still being investigated. Of the 10 cases that have been upheld, in 100% of cases the LGSCO were satisfied that CDC and SLHD had successfully implemented their recommendations when a complaint was upheld.
7. In July we received the LGSCO's Annual Letter outlining our performance in 22/23, in which the LGSCO have raised a number of concerns about how the council responded to some of their enquiries. We have been in contact with the LGSCO to gain further understanding about the comments they have raised, to ensure that we learn from the LGSCO and introduce service improvements to prevent such occurrences happening in the future. We are also arranging training courses with the LGSCO for officers who investigate and respond to complaints across the council.

## **8. Summary of Complaint and Compliment Information**

## Number of Complaints received and outcomes

	Stage 1 Complaints			Percentage of Stage 1 complaints Upheld / Partially Upheld			Escalated / Stage 2 Complaints		
	20/21	21/22	22/23	20/21	21/22	22/23	20/21	21/22	22/23
<b>CDC</b>	460	815	736	60%	56%	65%	22	38	51
<b>SLHD</b>	845	1183	1302	28%	38%	26%	25	33	26
<b>DCST</b>	151	169	116	34%	43%	32%	1	3	1
<b>DCLT</b>	321	690	244	n/a	n/a	80%	87	n/a	148

## Breakdown by CDC Directorates

	Stage 1 Complaints		
	20/21	21/22	22/23
<b>Corporate Resources</b>	76	133	149
<b>Economy and Environment</b>	298	546	450
<b>Adults Health and Wellbeing</b>	54	85	72
<b>Children, Young People and Families</b>	32	51	64
<b>Public Health</b>	n/a	n/a	1

## Number of Compliments received

Organisation	Compliments 2020/21	Compliments 2021/22	Compliments 2022/23
CDC	423	418	403
SLHD	107	124	223
DCST	265	211	74
DCLT	28	43	27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>823</b>	<b>796</b>	<b>727</b>

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 report. The main objective is to communicate the 2022/2023 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.

Great 8 Priority	Positive Overall	Mix of Positive & Negative	Trade-offs to consider – Negative overall	Neutral or No implications
 <b>Tackling Climate Change</b>	✓			
The increase in digital channels contributes to a reduced need for residents to travel to Council offices.				
 <b>Developing the skills to thrive in life and in work</b>				✓
 <b>Making Doncaster the best place to do business and create good jobs</b>				✓

 <b>Building opportunities for healthier, happier and longer lives for all</b>	✓			
<p>Complaints and compliments provide an opportunity for people in Doncaster to highlight their good and bad experiences with an aim to improve their own and others experience. Varying channels and opportunities for customers to make complaints and give compliments increases the opportunity to hear a range of experiences.</p>				
 <b>Creating safer, stronger, greener and cleaner communities where everyone belongs</b>	✓			
<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 everything we do and all services involved in delivering all our priorities.</p>				
 <b>Nurturing a child and family-friendly borough</b>	✓			
<p>Customer feedback and service improvements introduced as a direct result of this feedback, contributes to improving how services related to nurturing a child and family-friendly borough can be accessed.</p>				
 <b>Building Transport and digital connections fit for the future</b>	✓			
<p>This strategy further contributes to the availability of evolving modern digital Council services for those who wish to and can use them.</p>				
 <b>Promoting the borough and its cultural, sporting, and heritage opportunities</b>				✓
<b>Fair &amp; Inclusive</b>	✓			

It is essential that Complaint processes and procedures ensure that the experience of customers is fair and inclusive.

### **Legal Implications [Officer Initials: SRF | Date: 21.06.23 ]**

13. 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 under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government Act 1974. 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: AG | Date: 22.06.23]**

14. 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: 21.06.23]**

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

### **Technology Implications [Officer Initials: PW | Date: 22.06.23 ]**

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

### **Health Implications [Officer Initials RL | Date: 21.06.23]**

17. 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.

## **RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS**

18. 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.



## **CONSULTATION**

19. This report will be considered by the Chief Executive, Directors, the Executive Board and the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

20. **Appendix 1:** Annual Complaint & Compliment Report 2022/2023  
**Appendix 2:** Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman Annual Letter

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

21. AHWB: Adults Health and Well Being Directorate  
CALDT: Community Adult Learning Disability Team  
CDC: City of Doncaster Council  
CYPF: Children, Young People and Families  
DCLT: Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust  
DCST: Doncaster Children's Services Trust  
EHCP: Education, Health and Care Plan  
LGSCO: Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman  
NRT: Neighborhood Response Team  
OT: Occupational Therapy  
SEND: Special Education Needs and Disabilities  
SLHD: St Leger Homes of Doncaster

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