

JOINT CORPORATE AND SOCIAL CARE FEEDBACK ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support and the Head of Social Care Commissioning

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that feedback made to Devon County Council during 2012/13 be noted. This includes complaints, compliments and representations made by Members of Parliament across all services provided by the Council.

1. KEY MESSAGES

- 1.1 The corporate Customer Relations Team coordinates all complaints, compliments and MP letters received by DCC (apart from social care) and undertakes the Local Government Link officer role for all services.
- 1.2 The social care Customer Relations Team coordinates all complaints, compliments and MP letters in respect of adult and children's social care services.
- 1.3 Both teams operate a clear monitoring system for chasing responses to complaints in an attempt to ensure the Council can evidence its responsiveness. The Council's overall performance in terms of responding to complaints at stage 1 is 79%.
- 1.4 There is one complaint management system (iCasework) which is used for all feedback into the Council. The Customer Service Centre advisers also have access to this system in order to input complaints at the point of receipt.
- 1.5 Basic statistics for feedback received during 2012/2013 are: (for corporate feedback the statistics only cover 3 quarters, see 5.2)
 - Number of corporate complaints: 1327
 - Number of social care Adult Services complaints: 230
 - Number of social care Children's Services complaints: 211
 - Number of corporate compliments: 969
 - Number of social care Adult Services compliments: 721
 - Number of social care Children's Services compliments: 62
 - Number of corporate MP letters 330
 - Number of social care MP letters 219
- 1.6 During 2012/13 the Customer Relations Managers worked with corporate communications on a new compliments campaign called "**With Compliments**" which is proving a success and resulting in more compliments being captured, as well as giving the ability to recognise staff commitment.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Until quarter 3 of 2012/2013 each Customer Relations Manager reported separately to interested parties. However in the spirit of a One Council approach all customer feedback across the Council is now jointly reported on. Therefore this report is the first annual feedback report covering both corporate and social care services.

3. STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS

- 3.1 The following table (Table 1) shows the number of complaints received by services broken down by quarter. This shows Highways, School Transport, Child Protection, Adult Care Management and Capital Development & Waste as being the service areas that receive the most complaints. These do not give any surprises as these services are arguably the most public facing within the Council.
- 3.2 For the year 2012/2013 there is only information available for quarters 2, 3 and 4 for corporate services. The team have been in existence since 1 April 2012 and new processes and data capture were being implemented during the first quarter and therefore the Customer Relations Manager is not entirely confident as to the integrity of the reporting data for quarter 1.

Table 1

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total year to date 2012/13
CORPORATE					
Adult and Comm Learning		5	12	10	27
Blue Badge Misuse		26	24	41	91
Business Strategy & Support		20	21	38	79
Cap Dev and Waste		50	27	38	115
Children's non social care		0	1	0	1
Economy and Enterprise		0	1	1	2
Education and Schools		24	14	9	47
Finance		0	1	1	2
Health and Wellbeing		0	3	0	3
Highways		152	191	220	563
Human Resources		1	2	1	4
Legal Services		1	2	2	5
Libraries		43	22	26	91
Passenger Transport		3	6	37	46
Planning & Environment		10	10	7	27
Registration		7	5	9	21
School Transport		70	62	61	193
Trading Standards		2	5	3	10
TOTAL		414	409	504	1327
ADULT SOCIAL CARE					
Care Management Services	38	37	40	34	149
Independent Providers	11	8	9	10	38
In House Provision	11	6	8	5	30
Adult Protection	1	2	4	1	8
Commissioning	1	1	0	3	5
TOTAL	62	54	61	53	230
CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE					
Child Protection	29	50	50	39	168
In House Provision	8	4	6	8	26
Care Management	3	4	6	4	17
TOTAL	40	58	62	51	211

3.3 Stage 1 Acknowledgements

- 3.3.1 All complaints that are received by Devon County Council should be forwarded to the relevant Customer Relations team to acknowledge and manage. The Council's aim is to acknowledge all stage 1 complaints within three working days. During 2012/13 it is pleasing to report that **97%** of complaints were acknowledged within time by the Customer Relations teams, which is a very respectable performance level.

3.4 Stage 1 Responses

- 3.4.1 At stage 1 of the Corporate and Children's social care complaint procedure Devon County Council aims to respond to complaints within twenty working days. Adult services do not have a stated timescale but timescales are agreed in advance on a case by case basis.
- 3.4.2 For the year 2012/13 **79%** of stage 1 complaints received by the Council were responded to within timescale which is considered below an acceptable level. Unfortunately the overall performance of the Council has mainly been affected by Children's social care having a poor performance of **66%** and both Adult social care and Highways struggling at **74%** responded to within timescale.
- 3.4.3 Conversely those services achieving a response rate of over 95% should be congratulated: Capital Development & Waste, Education, Passenger Transport, Trading Standards, Libraries and Home to School transport.
- 3.4.4 Both Customer Relations teams actively monitor the progress of services and provide reminders as to what is due and who is responsible for the response. The Customer Relations teams send reminders to officers 5 days prior to a complaint becoming due and provide regular statistical updates to managers on all current complaints, MP letters and other representations.

3.5 Stage 1 Outcomes

- 3.5.1 The outcome of complaints is important for the Council as this demonstrates when a complaint was justified, ie the Council was at fault. In these circumstances it is important to ensure that the Council puts right what it has failed to do and implements any learning. The percentage of stage 1 complaints during 2012/13 that were upheld or partially upheld was 46%. It is important to remember that minor issues such as a delay in responding would be included within these figures where a simple apology is a sufficient remedy.

3.6 Stage 1 Themes

- 3.6.1 The Council's top issues for **Corporate services** for 2012/13 are:

- Highways drainage
- School Transport (eligibility)
- Carriageway defects
- Parking

- 3.6.2 The Council's top issues for **Adult Services** for 2012/13 are:

- Lack of communication between teams
- Independent care provider services
- Quality of recording in reports

- 3.6.3 The Council's top issues for **Children's services** for 2012/13 are:

- Too many changes in assigned social workers and use of agency staff
- MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) and Child Protection processes lacking transparency
- Information sharing and communication issues

3.7 Learning and Mitigating Circumstances

- 3.7.1 Highway drainage issues are understandable, particularly considering the well reported persistent wet weather and associated flooding the County (and the rest of the country) experienced in 2012/13.
- 3.7.2 Complaints received about home to school transport eligibility are generally high. These are in almost all cases not due to failures within the service but the expectations of parents being much higher than the Council's policy allows. There is a formal appeal process for parents to follow whereby each case is looked at by an independent Member panel.

- 3.7.3 It has been well documented that the carriageway structure has suffered over the winter which has resulted in an increase in carriageway defects and capacity issues are hindering the Council's ability to meet the volume of work.
- 3.7.4 Feedback has been given to managers within Adult Social Care Management that it should be reinforced to all staff that it is important not to be complacent regarding recording. There is a continuing need for all recording to be thorough and that key decisions must be recorded. Managers should monitor the standard of recording within their teams on a regular basis.
- 3.7.5 A senior manager to meet with care providers to address the high number of complaints received regarding Independent Care Provider Services.
- 3.7.6 MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub) to review its processes in terms of information provided through referrals and stating when contact is made.

4 STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS

- 4.1 The number of corporate complaints escalated to stage 2 by customers during 2012/13 was 29, however in line with corporate policy 23 were rejected and the customer directed to the Local Government Ombudsman. Of the 6 that were accepted 5 were for the Highway service and 1 for Education and Learning. 75% of those accepted were responded to within timescale.
- 4.2 14 social care complaints were escalated to stage 2 of the children's statutory procedure, 12 were in the area of Child Protection and 2 were for Care Management. 58% of these were responded to within timescale.
- 4.3 The Customer Relations teams undertake stage 2 complaint investigations, except for some children's social care investigations which are carried out by externally commissioned investigators.

4.4 Stage 2 Complaint Learning

- 4.4.1 Corrective action plans, based on the recommendations in stage 2 investigation reports, have been completed for all stage 2 complaints This ensures the Council provides its customers with the appropriate remedy and implements any learning. This learning and the practical improvements that are made as a result of the stage 2 investigations has a positive impact on the Council's customers and the Council's reputation.

4.5 Examples of Learning

- The standard letter issued to property owners informing them of their responsibility to cut back vegetation was reviewed to make it more customer focussed and less brusque.
- The process for handling signing requests by businesses was reviewed to ensure there is communication with the customer at all stages of the process.
- Practice around home visits by social workers was reviewed to limit stress caused to potentially vulnerable families.
- A clear communication was provided to social care staff in terms of the rights of a person that holds parental responsibility for a child and the information they are entitled to receive.
- A commitment has been given by Children's services to consider the Somerset Council document "Child Protection Enquiries – A Guide for Parents" with a view of Devon County Council producing a similar guide.

5 COMPLIMENTS RECEIVED

- 5.1 Capturing compliments is important for the Council, as knowing where we are providing an excellent service enables staff to be recognised and allows us to build on good practice. Table 2 displays the number of compliments received by service during 2012/13.

Table 2

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total year to date

					2012/13
CORPORATE SERVICES					
Adult and Comm Learning		1	0	0	1
Business Strategy and Support		8	10	67	85
Capital Dev and Waste		15	15	5	35
Devon Records Office		0	16	50	66
Education & Schools		4	0	3	7
Highways		88	68	98	254
Libraries		50	25	43	118
Passenger Transport		1	0	22	23
Planning and Environment		2	0	0	2
Registrars		47	30	27	104
Trading Standards		0	0	1	1
TOTAL		216	164	316	696
ADULT SERVICES					
Adult Care Management	91	128	103	115	437
Adult Protection	2	1	2	1	6
Adult Commissioning	5	5	2	4	16
Adult Provision	80	56	53	69	258
Adult External Provider	1	0	2	1	4
TOTAL	179	190	162	190	721
CHILDREN'S SERVICES					
Children's Care Management	2	2	1	3	8
Child Protection	4	4	9	1	18
Children's Commissioning	0	0	0	1	1
Children's Provision	11	7	4	13	35
TOTAL	17	13	14	18	62

5.2 The number of compliments received has increased across most service areas during the year. This is partly due to improved feedback capture, in particular at the Customer Service Centre, within TCS and the Devon Records Office.

5.3 The new compliments campaign "***With Compliments***" has been launched which is managed by Corporate Communications alongside STARS and it is hoped that the upward trend will continue.

6 REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

6.1 Table 3 identifies the volume of letters received from Members of Parliament as well as other comments/enquiries/suggestions by DCC. It is interesting to note that the majority of all MP letters received are concerned with Highway issues, demonstrating how high profile this service is with our customers.

Table 3

Service	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total 2012/13
CORPORATE SERVICES MP LETTERS					
Business Strategy & Support		3	7	6	16
Capital Dev & Waste		7	10	10	27
Children's		0	1	0	1
Coroner		1	0	0	1
Economy & Enterprise		0	2	2	4
Education & Schools		24	15	15	54
Finance		0	0	2	2
Highways		59	58	64	181
Human Resources		0	2	0	2
Legal Services		1	0	0	1
Libraries		1	1	2	4
Passenger Transport		2	2	3	7
Planning & Environment		2	11	9	22
Trading Standards		2	2	4	8
TOTAL		102	111	117	330
SOCIAL CARE SERVICES MP LETTERS					
Care Management	24	19	13	16	71
Adult & Child Protection	11	10	9	10	40
Strategic Commissioning	10	5	5	3	23
In House Provision	4	6	7	5	22
External Providers	0	1	1	0	2
OTHER COMMENTS	49	27	17	34	127
TOTAL	98	68	52	68	219

6.2 MP Letter Responses

6.2.1 The number of representations into the Council from Members of Parliament that were responded to within the 20 working day timescale is 88% for corporate services. Unfortunately response times to MP letters within social care services appear to have struggled at 70% over the year.

6.3 Themes

6.3.1 One third of all MP letters received by the Council during 2012/13 were Highway related and the top themes are:

- Drainage (mainly January)
- Road Safety (predominantly speed of traffic)
- Parking
- Carriageway Defects

6.3.2 The top issues that MPs are hearing about in terms of social care services are:

- Adult Complex Care Management
- Child Protection
- Children with additional needs
- Adoption and Fostering

7 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

7.1 The Council's performance indicators in respect of feedback monitoring are as listed in table 6.

Table 6

TARGET	TIMESCALE
Stage 1 complaint acknowledgement	Within 3 working days
Stage 1 complaint response for corporate and children's social care	Within 20 working days
Adult social care complaint response	Within the individually agreed timescale
Stage 2 request acknowledgement	Within 3 working days
Stage 2 corporate investigation report	Within 25 working days
Stage 2 children's investigation report	Within 65 working days
MP letter response target	Within 20 working days
Compliment acknowledgement target	Within 3 working days

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

8.1 If Members or CLT have a specific interest in any particular area of customer feedback and would like additional information, please contact the Customer Relations Managers who will be happy to assist:

Alison Layton-Hill - Customer Relations Manager
alison.layton-hill@devon.gov.uk
 Tel: 01392 383140

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9. CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 This Report has no specific financial, equality, sustainability, carbon impact, legal implications, risk management or public health issues that are not already covered by or subsumed within the detailed policies or actions referred to therein.

ROB PARKHOUSE
 TIM GOLBY

Electoral Divisions: All

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<u>Background Paper</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>File Reference</u>
Nil		