

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK MONITORING REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 2015/2016

Report of the Head of Business Strategy and Support

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Members note the levels of customer feedback received regarding all service areas of Devon County Council and the Council's performance in responding to this feedback.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This report provides a quarterly update on the volumes and themes for all types of customer feedback (Compliments, Comments and Complaints), Letters from Members of Parliament and Complaints being dealt with by the Local Government Ombudsman about Devon County Council. In addition it provides information in regard to the Council's performance in responding to and learning from the outcomes of complaints.

3. Key Messages

- 3.1 Overall Customer Feedback statistics for Quarter 1 2015-2016 (1st April – 30th June 2015):

- Number of non statutory complaints (corporate) complaints 431
- Number of statutory social care Adult Services Complaints 63
- Number of statutory social care Children's Services complaints 124
- Total complaints received in Q1 618**

- Number of non social care (corporate) compliments 222
- Number of social care Adult Services compliments 109
- Number of social care Children's Services compliments 18
- Total compliments received in Q1 349**

- Number of non social care (corporate) MP letters 160
- Number of social care adult services MP letters 14
- Number of social care children's MP Letters 7
- Total MP Letters received in Q1 181**

- Number of other non social care representations 129
- Number of social care adult representations 18
- Number of social care children's services representations 35
- Total Representations received in Q1 182**

- Number of Councillor Enquiries (non social care) 4
- Number of Councillor enquiries (social Care) 7
- Total Councillor enquiries received in Q1 11**

- **Total number of individual items of feedback in Q1 15-16 1341**

- 3.2 There have been 116 more complaints received across the Council in quarter 1 than in quarter 4 (618 compared to 502). Complaints increased across all areas in Children's Social Care (from 73 to 124), in Adult Social Care (from 45 to 63) and in non social care areas (from 384 to 431)

- 3.3 The total number of compliments has fallen in this quarter by 171 (from 520 to 349). Again there has been a decrease in compliments received across all three areas.

- 3.4 The number of MP Letters received in quarter 1 has significantly decreased only 181 were received in this quarter as opposed to 340 in the previous quarter. The most significant decrease is in the non statutory areas (160 in this quarter compared to 290 in the previous quarter).
- 3.5 In addition there were 182 other representations to the Council in quarter 1 and 11 enquiries from Councillors. Overall 1341 individual items of feedback were logged and handled by the Customer Relations Team in the quarter.
- 3.6 During Quarter 1 424 stage 1 complaints were responded to of which 86% were responded to within the within timescales (364 within time and 61 outside of time). This reflects a 20% improvement on the previous Quarter.

4. Stage One Complaints

4.1 Stage 1 Acknowledgements

- 4.1.1 All complaints that are received by Devon County Council should be forwarded immediately to the Customer Relations Team to acknowledge and manage.
- 4.1.2 The Council's aim is to acknowledge all stage 1 complaints within three working days of receipt by the Authority. This is in line with the statutory timescale within the Social Care Complaint Regulations and provides for a consistency of performance across all service areas.
- 4.1.3 In quarter 1 81% of complaints received were acknowledged within time by the Customer Relations team, which is fairly static when compared to quarter 4 (82% in time). This is still below the target of 95% within three working days, but performance is still affected by vacancies within the team being recently recruited to and new staff still being trained.
- 4.1.4 It is not possible to achieve a 100% acknowledgement rate, as some complainants write direct to services and the three days have elapsed before the complaint reaches the Customer Relations Team.

4.2 Complaints received during Quarter 1

- 4.2.1 **Table 1** on the next page provides a breakdown of all complaints received and looked into across all areas of the Council in quarter 1. It does not include those that were NFA for various legitimate reasons.
- 4.2.2 The areas with the most significant increase in stage 1 complaints received in this quarter compared to the previous quarters are:
- All areas of Children's Social Care apart from Looked after Children (Fostering & Adoption) 102 complaints received this quarter compared to 69 last quarter
 - Adult & Community Learning with 11 complaints in this quarter compared to 2 in the previous quarter
 - Waste Management with 55 complaints in this quarter compared to 27 in the previous quarter.
- 4.2.3 The areas with a continuing trend of fewer complaints are Libraries and Highways. Libraries received 15 complaints in quarter 1 compared to 26 in quarter 4, 41 in quarter 3 and 82 in quarter 2. Highways received 228 complaints in quarter 1 compared to 250 in quarter 4 and 268 in each of quarters 3 & 2.
- 4.2.4 The further fall in the number of complaints regarding highways is unexpected as complaints about the implementation of the tough choices grass cutting and weeding policy has resulted in a high volume of complaints and a degree of anger and frustration amongst the public. There were 42 complaints about this topic in the quarter, as well as a further 9 Representations and 4 MP Letters.

Table 1 – complaints received across the Council by Head of Service Direct Report

Service Area	Team	Q1 15-16	Q2 15-16	Q3 15-16	Q4 15-16	Total 15-16
Children's Social Care Head of Service Fiona Fitzpatrick	Children's Social Work (North/Mid & ICS)	51				
	Children's Social Work (Exeter/South)	40				
	Looked After Children	1				
	Early Help Provision	1				
	Commissioning	0				
	Safeguarding Children	4				
	MASH and Early Help & Access	7				
	Total Children's Social Care	104				
Adult Social Care Head of Service Sally Slade	Older People's/Disability Services North & East	23				
	Older People's/Disability Services South	13				
	Provision - Adult Social Care	3				
	Safeguarding Adults	3				
	Learning Disabilities	4				
	Adult Mental Health	0				
	Total Adult Social Care	46				
Social Care Commissioning (Adults) Head of Service Tim Golby	Quality Assurance	0				
	Strategic Planning and Commissioning	1				
	Change Delivery	0				
	Total Social Care Commissioning	1				
Education & Learning Head of Service Sue Clarke	Strategic Commissioning (Education)	6				
	School Transport	2				
	Contract Performance (Education)	0				
	School Admissions	3				
	Early Years and Childcare	1				
	School Improvement	1				
	Total Education and Learning	13				
Highways, Capital Development and Waste Head of Service David Whitton	Capital Development	0				
	Highways	228				
	Bridges and Structures	0				
	Waste	55				
	Built Environments	0				
	Total Highways, Capital Development and Waste	283				
Planning, Transportation and Environment Head of Service Dave Black	Transportation Planning and Road Safety	1				
	Development Management	3				
	Chief Planner	2				
	Environment	0				
	Total Planning, Transportation and Environment	6				
Economy & Enterprise Head of Service Kerrie Denton	Employment and Skills	0				
	Business Support and Innovation	0				
	Strategic Development & Infrastructure	0				
	Economic Analysis, Funding and Partnerships	0				
	Total Economy and Enterprise	0				
Services for Communities Head of Service John Smith	Adult & Community Learning	11				
	Trading Standards	2				
	Active Devon	0				
	Communities	1				
	Human Resources	0				
	Libraries, Culture and Heritage	15				
	Transport Coordination Services (TCS)	14				
	Total Services for Communities	43				
Business Strategy & Support Head of Service Rob Parkhouse	Business Infrastructures	20				
	Corporate Assets	1				
	IT Strategic Commissioning	1				
	Strategic Procurement	0				
	Total Business Strategy & Support	22				
County Solicitors Head of Service Jan Shadbolt	Legal Services	0				
	Registration	2				
	Communications & Media	0				
	Total County Solicitors	2				
County Treasurers Head of Service Mary Davis	People Finance	0				
	Place Finance	0				
	Corporate Finance	0				
	Investment & Treasury -	0				
	Devon Audit Partnership	0				
	Systems and Change	1				
	Strategy & Compliance	0				
	Total County Treasurers	1				
All Services Totals	All Services Totals	521				

4.3 Stage 1 Responses

4.3.1 At Stage 1 of the Corporate and Children’s Social Care complaint procedures, Devon County Council aims to respond to complaints within 20 working days. Adult Social Care Statutory regulations do not prescribe a set timescale for responses, rather that the complainant and council agree a timescale for responses on a case by case basis. However, for the purposes of this report, where Stage 1 is referred to this does include Adult Social Care complaints.

4.3.2 In quarter 1 424 stage 1 complaints were responded to of which 364 (86%) responses were within defined timescales. This is 20% improvement on the performance in quarter 4.

4.3.3 **Table 2** provides a breakdown in responses within and outside defined timescales by Head of Service direct report areas.

Table 2 – Stage 1 complaint responses – timescales by Head of Service direct reports

Complaint Response times - all Services	Quarter 1 15-16				Quarter 2 15-16				Quarter 3 15-16				Quarter 4 15-16				Total YTD 15-16				
	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Total responded to	% within timescale	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Total responded to	% within timescale	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Total responded to	% within timescale	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Total responded to	% within timescale	Within timescale	Outside timescale	Total responded to	% within timescale	
Service Area																					
Children's Social Care	44	13	57	77%																	
Adult Social Care	21	3	24	88%																	
Social Care Commissioning	1	0	1	100%																	
Education and Learning	8	2	10	80%																	
Highways, Capital Development and Waste	229	31	259	88%																	
Planning, Transportation and Environment	5	0	5	100%																	
Economy and Enterprise	0	0	0	n/a																	
Services for Communities	38	8	46	83%																	
Business Strategy and Support	14	2	16	88%																	
Legal Services	1	1	2	50%																	
Finance	3	1	4	75%																	

4.3.4 The Customer Relations Team monitors the progress of services and provides regular reminders to all staff and managers with open complaints. In addition complaint status reports are now provided to all services on a fortnightly basis and the Customer Relations Team remain committed to working with services to further improve compliance rates.

4.4 Stage 1 Outcomes

4.4.1 The outcomes of complaints are important for the Council as they serve to inform services regarding the justification of customer concerns, i.e. whether the Council is at fault and could do things better / different. In these circumstances it is important to ensure that the Council does whatever it can to rectify what has gone wrong, apply appropriate redress and implement measures to instigate improvements and disseminate learning.

4.4.2 The percentage of stage 1 complaints responded to in Quarter 1 that were either upheld or partially upheld was 41% compared to 63% in quarter 4.

- Within People Services 39% of complaints responded to in Q1 were either fully or partially upheld – this equates to 46 complaints
- Within Place Services 41% of complaints responded to in Q1 were either fully or partially upheld – this equates to 136 complaints
- Within Corporate Services 67% of complaints responded to in Q1 were either fully or partially upheld – this equates to 12 complaints

Across the Council 194 complaints responded to in quarter 1 were either fully or partially upheld.

4.5 Themes & Root Causes of Complaints at Stage 1

4.5.1 There are many different reasons why our customers make complaints and in many cases a customer raises more than one issue within a complaint.

4.5.2 All complaints and the individual complaint issues within each complaint are logged onto the Council's Complaints Management System, iCasework.

4.5.3 The details below in **Table 3** reflect the most common complaint issues in quarter 1. The majority of these have made up the top three most commonly complained about issues over the last year also.

Table 3 – Complaint Themes / root causes

Service	Themes / Root Causes (top 3 per service)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children's Social Care (stat & non stat)	Poor communication (to customer)	43				
	Attitude/rudeness/inappropriate comments	36				
	Inappropriate action or service	33				
	Total	112				
Adult Social Care	Poor communication (to customer)	15				
	Inappropriate action or service	13				
	Attitude/rudeness/inappropriate comments	10				
	Total	38				
Social Care Commissioning	Failure or delay in referring issue	1				
	Prices/Charges objection	1				
	Inappropriate action or service	1				
	Total	3				
Education and Learning	Poor communication (to customer)	3				
	Quality of service provided	3				
	cancellation / withdrawal / refusal of a service/eligibility issue	2				
	Total	8				
Highways, Capital Development and Waste	Attitude/Rudeness/Inappropriate	53				
	Inappropriate action or service	46				
	Poor Communication (to Customer)	19				
	Total	118				
Planning, Transportation and Environment	Inappropriate action or service	6				
	Poor Communication (with Customer)	2				
	cancellation / withdrawal / refusal of a service/eligibility issue	1				
	Total	9				
Economy and Enterprise	n/a					
	Total					
Services for Communities	Quality of service provided	18				
	cancellation / withdrawal / refusal of a service/eligibility issue	4				
	Attitude/Rudeness/Inappropriate Comments	3				
	Total	25				
Business Strategy and Support	Quality of service provided	11				
	Dispute over records / information provided	3				
	Inappropriate action or service	2				
	Total	16				
Legal Services	Quality of service provided	2				
	Total	2				
Finance	Quality of service provided	1				
	cancellation / withdrawal / refusal of a service/eligibility issue	1				
	Attitude/Rudeness/Inappropriate Comments	1				
	Total	3				
Total all areas	Quality of service provided	35				
	Attitude/Rudeness/Inappropriate Comments	103				
	Inappropriate action or service	101				
	Poor Communication (to Customer)	82				
	cancellation / withdrawal / refusal of a service/eligibility issue	8				
	other	5				
	All Services TOTAL	334				

5 Stage 2 Complaints

5.1 Complaints Received

5.1.1 At Stage 2 within Children's Social Care investigations are undertaken by externally commissioned investigating officers and externally appointed Independent Persons in line with the requirements of the Statutory Complaints Regulations.

All other Non Statutory Stage 2 investigations are undertaken by senior staff within the Customer Relations Team.

5.1.2 There were 40 complaints escalated to stage 2 of the Non Statutory Complaint procedure during quarter 1. Of these, 5 were rejected as policy, procedure and legislation had been appropriately applied and as such there was nothing further to be gained from any further investigation. The remaining 35 went forward for further investigation.

5.1.3 There were no social care complaints escalated to stage 2 in quarter 1 those shown in the Children's Social Care section of **Table 4** below are non statutory complaints.

Table 4 – Stage 2 Complaints

Stage 2 Complaints recived in quarter by service area		Q1 15-16	Q2 15-16	Q3 15-16	Q4 15-16	Total 15-16
Service Area	Team					
	Children's Social Work (Exeter/South)	1				
	Safeguarding Children	2				
	Total Children's Social Care (Stat & Non Stat)	3				
	School Improvement	1				
	Total Education and Learning	1				
	Highways	28				
	Total Highways, Capital Development and Waste	28				
	Development Management Highways	1				
	Chief Planner	3				
	Total Planning, Transportation and Environment	4				
	Transport Coordination Services (TCS)	1				
	Total Services for Communities	1				
	Customer Relations Team	1				
	Total Business Strategy & Support	1				
	Registration	2				
	Total County Solicitors	2				
All Services Totals	All Services Totals	40				

5.2 Stage 2 Complaint Responses

5.2.1 34 Non Statutory Stage 2 complaints were responded to within quarter 1 of which 28 (82%) were within the 25 working day timescale.

5.2.2 2 Statutory Children's Social Care Stage 2 complaints were responded to within the quarter. Both of these were outside of the required timescales. This was not in any way attributable to the services involved it was due to the complex nature of the complaints.

5.2.3 Non Statutory Stage 2 investigations include a careful audit of the complaint, paying particular attention to balancing customer expectations against the objectives of the County Council. Frequently at Stage 2, particularly in Place Services, stage 2 escalation requests are made when customers do not agree with the response they are provided at stage 1. In some cases this is due to the response not fully outlining the rationale behind decisions made. Sending customers information, to include the strategies and challenges outlined in Tough Choices, is of the utmost help when attempting to further explain to customers the difficult and varied challenges faced in these austere times

5.3 Stage 2 Complaint Outcomes

5.3.1 **Table 5** below provides detail of the outcomes of all Stage 2 complaints responded to within quarter 1 by Head of Service area (Only those service areas that received stage 2 complaints in the quarter are included).

Table 5 – Stage 2 Complaint Outcomes

Stage 2 Complaint Outcomes - responded to in Q1						
Service		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
Children's Social Care (stat & non stat)	No - Not Upheld	1				
	Yes - Upheld	0				
	Partially Upheld	3				
	No finding	0				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	0				
		4				
Education and Learning	No - Not Upheld	1				
	Yes - Upheld	0				
	Partially Upheld	0				
	No finding	0				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	0				
		1				
Highways, Capital Development and Waste	No - Not Upheld	14				
	Yes - Upheld	1				
	Partially Upheld	2				
	No finding	1				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	7				
		25				
Planning, Transportation and Environment	No - Not Upheld	2				
	Yes - Upheld	0				
	Partially Upheld	2				
	No finding	0				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	0				
		4				
Services for Communities	No - Not Upheld	0				
	Yes - Upheld	0				
	Partially Upheld	0				
	No finding	0				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	1				
		1				
Business Strategy and Support	No - Not Upheld	0				
	Yes - Upheld	1				
	Partially Upheld	0				
	No finding	0				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	0				
		1				
Total all areas	No - Not Upheld	18				
	Yes - Upheld	2				
	Partially Upheld	7				
	No finding	1				
	Immediately resolved	0				
	Closed / NFA	8				
	All Services TOTAL	36				

5.3.2 Of these 36 complaints responded to 18 were not upheld (50%), 2 were fully upheld (5.5%), 7 were partially upheld (19.5%), 1 had an outcome of No Finding (3%) and the remaining 8 were closed NFA prior to full investigation (22%). These figures include the 2 Children's Social Care Stage 2 complaints which were both partially upheld, one of the complainants has subsequently referred their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

5.3.3 In cases whereby services are not providing provision in line with their published procedure the Non Statutory Stage 2 investigation process is particularly useful in that it challenges services to realign or reassess their published procedures in line with what can reasonably be delivered. In cases whereby legislative requirements are not fulfilled, the Council is required to uphold the complaint.

5.4 Stage 2 Complaint Learning

5.4.1 Across the council communication features as a key theme in complaints and as such there have been some measures taken in relevant key teams to try to ensure that our communication strategies improve whilst also taking steps to ensure that customer expectations in relation to communications are realistic.

5.4.2 Both of the Children's Social Care Complaints resulted in actions being agreed in relation to ensuring that meetings (of various types) are accurately minuted, that these minutes are electronic rather than hand written notes and are shared with all relevant parties in a timely manner. Thereafter if there are any corrections or amendments to minutes that the revised versions are circulated to all recipients of the original minutes.

5.4.3 AS a result of one of the complaints it has been agreed that practice standards in relation to sourcing child protection documentation is reviewed and that as part of this review the need to obtain information from local authorities previously involved with a family is incorporated into these standards.

6 Compliments Received

6.1.1 Capturing compliments is important for the Council, as they serve to acknowledge provision of excellent service, enable staff to be recognised and the Council to build upon good practice.

6.1.2 In quarter 1 the council received 349 compliments, this is 171 fewer compliments than in quarter 4.

6.1.3 The reduction in compliments is significantly accounted for by the reduction in the Business Strategy & Support area, in turn the reduction in this area is accounted for by a reduction in compliments about the CSC from 202 in Q4 to only 16 this quarter. There have also been reductions in Highways (55 down to 46) and Libraries (25 down to 11).

6.1.4 In addition compliments reduced in both Adult and Children's Social Care, from 123 to 107 and from 31 to 18 respectively.

6.1.5 Notable increases in compliments received in quarter 1 are Registration Services (51), Capital Development & Waste (40) and Education & Schools (5)

6.1.6 **Table 6** on the next page details the number of compliments received by Head of Service direct report areas across the Council

Table 6 Compliments Received by Head of Service Direct Report Areas of Responsibility

Service Area	Team	Q1 15-16	Q2 15-16	Q3 15-16	Q4 15-16	Total 15-16
Children's Social Care (Fiona Fitzpatrick)	Children's Social Work (North/Mid & ICS)	2				
	Children's Social Work (Exeter/South)	10				
	Looked After Children	0				
	Early Help Provision	0				
	Commissioning	0				
	Safeguarding Children	5				
	MASH and Early Help & Access	1				
	Total Children's Social Care	18				
Adult Social Care (Sally Slade)	Older People's/Disability Services North & East	22				
	Older People's/Disability Services South	9				
	Adult Social Care (inc Provision)	76				
	Safeguarding Adults	0				
	Learning Disabilities	0				
	Adult Mental Health	0				
	Total Adult Social Care	107				
Adult Social Care Commissioning (Tim Golby)	Strategy, Policy and Performance	0				
	Strategic Planning and Commissioning	2				
	Change Delivery	0				
	Total Social Care Commissioning	2				
Education & Learning (Sue Clarke)	Strategic Commissioning (Education)	1				
	Contract Performance (Education)	0				
	Admissions	2				
	Early Years and Childcare	0				
	School Improvement	2				
	Total Education and Learning	5				
Highways, Capital Development and Waste	Capital Development	1				
	Highways	46				
	Bridges and Structures	2				
	Waste	39				
	Built Environments	2				
	Total Highways, Capital Development and Waste	90				
Planning, Transportation and Environment	Transportation Planning and Road Safety	5				
	Development Management Highways	0				
	Chief Planner	0				
	Environment	2				
	Total Planning, Transportation and Environment	7				
Economy & Enterprise	Employment and Skills	0				
	Business Support and Innovation	0				
	Strategic Development & Infrastructure	0				
	Economic Analysis, Funding and Partnerships	0				
	Total Economy and Enterprise	0				
Services for Communities	Trading Standards and Adult & Community Learning	10				
	Active Devon	0				
	Communities	0				
	Human Resources	0				
	Libraries, Culture and Heritage	11				
	Transport Coordination Services (TCS)	2				
	Total Services for Communities	23				
Business Strategy & Support	Business Infrastructures	41				
	Corporate Assets	0				
	IT Strategic Commissioning	2				
	Strategic Procurement	0				
	Total Business Strategy & Support	43				
County Solicitors	Legal Services	0				
	Registration	51				
	Communications & Media	1				
	Total County Solicitors	52				
County Treasurer	People Finance	1				
	Place Finance	1				
	Corporate Finance	0				
	Investment & Treasury	0				
	Devon Audit Partnership	0				
	Systems and Change	0				
	Strategy & Compliance	0				
	Total County Treasurers	2				
All Services Totals	All Services Totals	349				

7 Representations from Members of Parliament

7.1 MP Letters Received

7.1.1 In quarter 1 the council received 181 letters from MPs, this is a significant decrease in the volume of communication from MPs in a quarter, the average over the last year being 273 per quarter. This is probably attributable to it being the quarter in which there was a general election.

7.1.2 **Table 7** below provides detail on the enquiries received from Members of Parliament for each service area. Highway issues continue to dominate communication from MPs being the subject of 101 out of 181 MP Letters received in quarter 1.

Table 7 – MP Letters received by Head of Service Direct Report Areas of Responsibility

Service Area	Team	Q1 15-16	Q2 15-16	Q3 15-16	Q4 15-16	Total 15-16
Children's Social Care	Children's Social Work (North/Mid & ICS)	1				
	Children's Social Work (Exeter/South)	5				
	Early Help Provision	1				
	Total Children's Social Care	7				
Adult Social Care	Older People's/Disability Services North & East	6				
	Older People's/Disability Services South	2				
	Adult Social Care Provision	1				
	Learning Disabilities	2				
	Total Adult Social Care	11				
	Strategic Planning and Commissioning	3				
	Total Social Care Commissioning	3				
Education & Learning	Strategic Commissioning (Education)	3				
	School Transport	3				
	Admissions	5				
	Total Education and Learning	11				
Highways, Capital Development and Waste	Capital Development - Rob Richards	2				
	Highways - Meg Booth	104				
	Waste - Wendy Barratt	2				
	Built Environments - Chris Dyer	2				
	Total Highways, Capital Development and Waste	110				
Planning, Transportation and Environment	Transportation Planning and Road Safety - Jamie Hullan	5				
	Development Management Highways- Brian Hensley	2				
	Total Planning, Transportation and Environment	7				
	Strategic Development & Infrastructure	2				
	Economic Analysis, Funding and Partnerships	3				
	Total Economy and Enterprise	5				
Services for Communities	Communities - Simon Kitchen	1				
	Transport Coordination Services (TCS) - Damien Jones	14				
	Total Services for Communities	15				
Business Strategy & Support	Business Infrastructures - Colin Mackenzie	8				
	Corporate Assets - Matthew Jones	1				
	Total Business Strategy & Support	9				
County Solicitors	Legal Services - Simon Clarey	2				
	Total County Solicitors	2				
County Treasurers	Place Finance - Nicky Allen	1				
	Total County Treasurers	1				
All Services Totals	All Services Totals	181				

7.2 MP Letter Responses

7.2.1 The number of letters from MPs that were closed following a response within 20 working days was 60% in Quarter 1.

7.2.2 The service areas with the lowest response rates within 20 working days are: Economy & Enterprise 20% (1 out of 5 responses), Children's Social Care 50% (1 out of 2), Highways 51% (71 out of 138) and Adult Social Care 67% (6 out of 9)

7.3 Letters Received by MP

7.3.1 Table 8 provides details of the volume of communication received from each individual MP.

Table 8 Letters received by Individual MP

	Service Area	Children's Social Care	Adult Social Care	Social Care Commissioning	Education and Learning	Highways, Capital Development and Waste	Planning, Transportation and Environment	Economy and Enterprise	Services for Communities	Business Strategy and Support	Legal Services	Finance	Total
Bradshaw	Q1	3	0	1	3	16	2	0	2	2	1	0	30
	YTD												
Cox	Q1	0	3	0	0	13	1	0	3	0	0	1	21
	YTD												
Harvey	Q1	0	4	2	1	24	0	0	3	2	0	0	36
	YTD												
Heaton-Jones	Q1	1	1	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
	YTD												
Morris	Q1	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	2	0	0	0	18
	YTD												
Parish	Q1	1	2	0	2	11	1	2	3	4	0	0	26
	YTD												
Streeter	Q1	1	0	0	2	4	0	0	1	1	0	0	9
	YTD												
Stride	Q1	0	0	0	2	10	1	1	1	0	1	0	16
	YTD												
Swire	Q1	1	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0	7
	YTD												
Wollaston	Q1	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	YTD												
Out of County	Q1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	YTD												
All MPs	Q1	7	11	3	21	102	5	5	15	9	2	1	181
	YTD												

8 Local Government Ombudsman

8.1.2 In quarter 1, the council received 22 new cases from the Local Government Ombudsman

8.1.3 In quarter 1 the Local Government Ombudsman closed 19 cases.

8.1.4 Tables 9 provides detail of cases received & closed by Council Service Area

Table 9

.Council Service Area	Quarter 1	
	New	Completed
Adults Social Care	5	3
Blue Badges (social Care)	4	4
Children's Social Care	3	2
Education - Admissions	2	1
Education – School Transport		2
Highways	7	3
Capital Development		3
Legal	1	1
TOTAL	22	19

8.1.5 Table 10 provides detail of the final decision from the Ombudsman on each of the 19 cases that have been closed in quarter 1

Table 10 – Local Government Ombudsman Decisions – Quarter 1 15/16

Service (theme)	Outcome
Adults Social Care (3)	Upheld –Maladministration & Injustice – see 8.16
	Upheld – Maladministration & Injustice – see 8.17
	Assessment Stage concluded – moving to full investigation
Blue Badges (4)	Not upheld – no maladministration x 1
	Closed after initial enquiries x 3
Children’s Social Care (2)	Not upheld – no maladministration or injustice x 2
Education–School Transport (2)	Upheld – maladministration & injustice x 1 - see 8.1.8
	Closed after initial enquiries x 1
Education – School Admissions	Not Upheld - No Maladministration
Highways (3)	Closed – premature
	Not upheld – no maladministration or fault x 2
Capital Development (3)	Closed after initial enquiries – no further action x 3
Legal (1)	Closed after initial enquiries

8.1.6 Adults Social Care – Case Ref: 14006487

The Council did not deal properly with the complainant's safeguarding alert about her mother's care. It should apologise to her for this and consider action to improve its practice by reviewing how it dealt with the safeguarding alert and how to ensure it reaches sound decisions at the strategy stage.

8.1.7 Adults Social Care – Case Ref: 14015935

The Council acted correctly during the client’s assessment but the failed to send the client who has a learning disability a letter in Easy Read format. It should apologise and send the letter in easy read format

8.1.8 Education – Case Ref: 14009771

The Council wrongly decided to discontinue school transport after the family were forced to move home. The school transport appeal did not take into account of all relevant information in deciding not to uphold their appeal.

The Council did not take into account the Armed Forces Covenant when assessing this case.

The Ombudsman has issued a published report on this complaint and below is the extract from that report detailing the action that the Council has agreed to take as a result of the failings and the injustice caused to the family

To remedy the family’s complaint to the LGO, Devon County Council has been asked to apologise to the family and has already agreed to put in place measures to raise the profile of the covenant among its staff and review its school transport policy.

The council has also agreed to put in place a home-school transport plan for the child as soon as possible and to pay the family £1,000 to reimburse the costs they incurred as a result of the council’s faults, and a further £1,000 to acknowledge the avoidable stress the faults caused the family

8.1.9 All LGO final decisions by can be viewed on the LGO website.

9. Additional Information

9.1 Complaints from Children and Young People

9.1.1 There has been a drive to encourage feedback to the Council from Children and Young People over the last few months, including the introduction of the MOMO (Mind of my Own) application and a renegotiation of our Advocacy Contract.

9.1.2 In quarter 1 the Council has received 14 complaints from Children and Young People.

- 6 of these were received via our advocacy contract with NYAS
- 4 came direct from a Child or Young Person (they were then offered an advocate if they wanted one) including 1 from a resident at the Atkinson Unit
- 2 came in via MOMO
- 1 was received via the young persons social worker
- 1 was received via the IRO

9.1.3 These figures are really positive as throughout the whole of 2014/15 there were only a total of 4 complaints received from Children and Young People.

9.2 General Information

9.2.1 If there is any aspect of customer feedback that Members feel would be especially useful to be included in the report in future if contact could be made via the Customer Relations Manager all consideration will be given to whether it is possible.

Carol Reece – Customer Relations Manager - carol.reece@devon.gov.uk - Tel: 01392 383624

Rob Parkhouse

[Electoral Divisions: All]

Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

Contact for Enquiries: Carol Reece
Tel No: 01392 383624 Room: 120 County Hall

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