



ADJUDICATION AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

18 May 2017

Subject Heading:	Update on Corporate Complaints
SLT Lead:	Andrew Blake-Herbert
Report Author and contact details:	Carol Ager carol.ager@havering.gov.uk 01708 434389
Policy context:	Corporate Complaint Policy and Procedure 1st April 2015
Financial summary:	There are no financial implications to this report.

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[X]

SUMMARY

This report updates Members of Adjudication and Review on complaint handling performance, across all Council services.

The Corporate Complaint Policy and Procedure was introduced in April 2015. As part of the Policy, it was agreed that turnaround times be increased from 10 days to 15 days. It was further agreed that the percentage of cases responded to within time be increased from 90% to 95%. The purpose of the changes was to enable a full and proper investigation into a complaint, therefore ensuring the council response was right first time, most of the time; to ensure a higher quality response; that the Policy & Procedure was fully complied with and importantly, that Services learned from their complaints.

Statistics are reported to Committee on a quarterly basis. This report attaches written information for Members to consider on complaint statistics for the year 2016/17, indicating numbers received and performance on timeliness and quality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee consider and discuss any further action required on the following:

1. The Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics for Year End (April 2016 – March 2107)
2. The updated results following the Quarter 4 Audit of complaints, showing a comparison between Quarters 1 and 4
3. Decisions made by both the Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen throughout the year.

REPORT DETAIL

The Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure came into effect 1st April 2015. This report summarises the performance being achieved under the Council's complaints handling process and supported by audit results. The audits which are carried out randomly each quarter identify Services levels of quality in Services responses, turnaround times, as well as identifying those areas in need of additional attention.

Corporate Complaints Performance Statistics – Year End 2016/17

The Year End performance statistics for all complaints under the procedure is attached as **Appendix 1**.

Between April 2016 and March 2017, the council received 1951 Stage 1 complaints. 97% of them (1900) were responded to within 15 days.

In addition, throughout the year, 312 requests were received for escalation to Stage 2 of the process, 94% (293) of them dealt with within 20 days.

This equates to an escalation request rate of 16%.

The following table provides an easy view of complaints completed at Stages 1 and 2 for this year, compared against the previous year, 2015/16.

	2016/17	2015/16
Stage 1 percentage to time	97%	89%
Stage 2 percentage to time	94%	89%
Cumulative percentage Stages 1 & 2	97%	89%
Stage 3 percentage to time	100%	100%

Adjudication and Review Committee – 18th May 2017

There was one request to escalate a complaint to Stage 3 of the process. This equates to an escalation request rate of 0.3%

Stage 3 complaints – considered by Member Review Panel

One case has been escalated to Stage 3, and was presented to Member Review Panel in December 2016. This was a Housing complaint relating to work carried out by a council contractor, which the customer alleged had caused a gas leak. The Panel were satisfied the complaint had been handled appropriately and supported the level of financial redress offered. It was determined that further reimbursement need not be offered and the case was not upheld.

Audit of Complaints

The table below shows the breakdown of cases audited during the year. Generally, the aim is to audit approximately ten percent of the total number of complaints received. For some services, this computes to a much higher percentage, as they have broad ranging, diverse service elements, and the dip test seeks to cover all areas.

	No. of complaints	No. of files audited	Percentage of total
Adult Social Care	3	1	33%
Children's Services	35	10	29%
Chief Operating Officer	193	46	24%
Neighbourhoods	1831	167	9%
oneSource	200	30	15%
Totals	2262	254	11%

The comparison of audit results across Quarters 1 to 4 is attached as **Appendix 2**. Audits of cases are carried out randomly.

The audit results are disappointing. Action is planned to address the issues raised by the audit results; this will include re-visiting the training of complaint handlers within services and reinforcing the Complaints Policy & Procedure.

Ombudsmen Decisions

During the year there were 65 decisions by Local Government and Housing Ombudsmen, as follows:

Closed after initial enquiries: No further action	13
Closed after initial enquiries: Out of jurisdiction	14
Not upheld: No maladministration	13
Premature complaint	12
Upheld: No further action	1

Adjudication and Review Committee – 18th May 2017

Upheld: Maladministration, injustice with penalty	5
Upheld: Maladministration, injustice, no penalty	4
Upheld: Maladministration, no injustice	1
Housing Ombudsman: No Maladministration	2

Please see attached **Appendix 3**, detailing Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman decisions received during the year.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no financial, legal, human resource or equality implications or risks from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Corporate Complaints Policy and Procedure is published on the internet and as it has been mentioned previously, may provide background to the information in this report.

Attached are three appendices:

- Appendix 1 – Year End Complaints statistics
- Appendix 2 – Audit comparison between Quarters 1 and 4
- Appendix 3 – Ombudsmen Decisions received