



Corporate Complaints

Six Monthly Report April to Sept 2010

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1. Introduction

The County Council encourages feedback from its customers. By analysing this information, a Local Authority can obtain an indication of areas in which it is performing well and where there may be a need for attention.

When mistakes have been made, it is important that a Local Authority learns from this and makes any changes required to limit the likelihood of these mistakes being repeated. It is important to encourage customers to feel confident about raising concerns and for staff to respond proactively to this with the shared aim of striving towards an improvement in the quality of the service provided.

Given the relatively small number of complaints, a degree of caution needs to be exercised in drawing definitive conclusions. Complaints information is only one part of the customer service standards, however, the data can provide a useful tool to highlight specific concerns, assist in the identification of themes and trends and act as a guide to where remedial action may be required.

Whilst acknowledging that complaints data provides important information about how the public views the service provided, it is equally important to recognise the positive feedback received from commendations.

This report covers the 6 month period 1st April 2010 to 30th September 2010 and is an interim report, following the introduction of the new corporate complaints procedure in April 2010. The next report will be a 12 month review up to 31st March 2011, followed by annual reports thereafter.

Because of the change in procedures and introduction of new working arrangements for the handling of corporate complaints, 2010 – 2011 is to be used as a benchmark for future years.

2. Executive Summary

During the period covered by this report:

- 82 corporate complaints were received
- 22 complaints were received from the Local Government Ombudsman
- 30 corporate complaints were upheld (either partly or totally)
- 2 Ombudsman complaints were settled locally by the County Council
- 8 commendations were recorded

3. Background information

East Midlands Regional Complaints Managers Group (ERCMG)

Leicestershire County Council Corporate Complaints is a member of the East Midlands Regional Complaints Managers Group. The aim of these regional groups, which meet quarterly, is to provide a forum in which peer professionals can discuss and learn about regional and national issues. There are opportunities to develop local best

practice standards, discuss performance and problem solve. The group also discuss proposed changes to legislation and procedures, and prepare consultation responses where necessary.

Public Sector Complaints Network

Leicestershire County Council Corporate Complaints is registered with the Public Sector Complaints Network. This network provides a discussion forum and an information resource with advice and guidance on a range of related topics, including investigation techniques, response writing, as well as links to other sites

Training & Staff Development

Complaints Awareness is to form part of new customer service training, to be rolled out within departments shortly. It is proposed that e-learning packages will be developed and that more in depth training sessions will be available, either as stand alone events or to coincide with team meetings. This training will focus on the new approach to complaint handling and will include problem solving and resolution skills which will aim at empowering staff to take ownership of issues, that can easily be resolved and to promote better understanding of lessons learnt.

The Complaints Manager continues to be available for individual advice to staff around complaints management and resolution.

As well as their scrutiny role, the Local Government Ombudsman also provides general training and support as well as more specific advice on difficult or complex complaints. However, this has to be on a de-personalised basis, so as not to compromise its role, should the complainant contact them regarding their complaint.

It became clear that there was a shortage of trained mediators and in order to address this, two Mediation Skills courses have been held during May and September 2010. To date, 21 members of staff across all departments have been trained and are available to undertake basic mediation.

Publicity & Information

Information on the County Council website and Corporate Information System has been updated to reflect the new working arrangements and procedures. This includes advice and guidance for staff on various aspects of the process, e.g., investigating, responding, dealing with vexatious complainants etc.

Leaflets are being reviewed and will be revised to reflect the new procedures. This will include 'Easy Read' versions.

The Corporate Complaints Service is available for advice and guidance regarding any aspect of complaint handling whether covered by the corporate complaints procedure or other procedures where this is beneficial to the parties involved.

Non-corporate complaints

Complaints relating to services or individuals where other formal procedures or appeals processes exist are not covered by the Corporate Complaints procedure. These include Social Care complaints, complaints connected with Special Educational Needs, complaints about Elected Members, Penalty Charge Notices and School Admissions. A comprehensive list of such complaints is included in the Corporate

Complaints Procedure. Legislation requires separate Adults and Children's Social Care complaints Annual Reports to be produced and published.

Although complaints arising from policy decisions, efficiency reviews and the like are not treated as corporate complaints, requiring an investigation, they are still to be recorded, to provide a measure of public opinion. It is suggested that standardised responses be provided wherever appropriate.

4. The Corporate Complaints Process

From 1st April 2010, the Corporate Complaints procedure has comprised of two stages with the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) being the second stage.

The procedures allow for flexibility with investigation methods and timescales, up to a maximum 60 working days where appropriate, in accordance with the grading of the complaint.

Complaints are graded as 'Red', 'Amber' or 'Green', depending on their seriousness and likelihood of recurrence.

Once agreed, a timescale can be extended up to the 60 working day maximum, provided there is good reason for doing so and the complainant is kept informed. This being the case, there is no acceptable excuse for exceeding the agreed timescale or, indeed, the 60 working days maximum.

The LGO expects all complaints to be resolved within the 60 working days maximum.

Alternative Dispute Resolution

Mediation

The Complaints procedure offers mediation as an alternative means of resolving customer complaints. This can take place as part of the normal investigation process or, if deemed to be appropriate, following the receipt of a response, as an alternative to asking the LGO to investigate. Only trained mediators should undertake mediation on complaints issues.

It was identified during 2009/10 that there was a shortage of trained mediators within the County Council and, to avoid having to appoint external mediators, two mediation skills training courses have been held during 2010/11. As a result, there are now 21 members of staff in service departments who have been trained in basic mediation skills. In the event that mediation is required, the intention is to use a member of staff with experience relevant to the nature of the complaint issues.

Conciliation

This is a less formal approach to resolution and involves a meeting with the complainant and / or their representative, a relevant manager, the complaints manager and, if necessary, could be chaired by a senior officer or manager totally unconnected with the complaint.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)

Following receipt of a response to their complaint, complainants have the right to ask the LGO to investigate the way their complaint has been handled by the County Council. Normally, the LGO will only look at complaints if they have been investigated by the County Council first, although in certain circumstances they may choose to investigate first. However, vexatious or unreasonable complainants can be referred to the LGO at any stage of the procedures and this approach has been used effectively during the period under review, to prevent long-winded or drawn out complaints becoming a drain on resources.

5. Total Complaints Received

This section of the report provides commentary about the data and pattern of complaints for the period under review.

A total of 82 corporate complaints were received during the period covered by this report. As this is the first year of the new procedures and complaint handling arrangements, it is to be used for benchmarking purposes, therefore, there is no comparative data from previous years.

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment & Transport
April to September	4	7	12	7	52

Efforts have been made to increase the profile of complaints within the Local Authority and encourage resolution at the lowest level in the organisation. It is known that a significant number of complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant, at the point of service delivery, for example, at libraries and other customer access points.

However, it is also known that a considerable number of these are not recorded at present. These need to be captured to show a true picture of the level of complaints, to enable the Authority to demonstrate good complaint handling and to ensure that any lessons identified are implemented and shared where appropriate.

Excluding those complaints resolved at source, the Environment and Transport Department have received the majority of corporate complaints. The bulk of the complaints received by the other two large service departments (Adults & Communities and Children & Young People's Service) relate to either Social Care Services or other aspects of their service which provide other means of redress, e.g., School Admissions, SEN.

6. How complaints were received in 2010/11

Corporate complaints received during this period were analysed to find out how people submitted their comments. The results are set out below.

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment & Transport	Total
Letter	2	2	5	0	9	18
Telephone	1	3	5	4	4	17
Email	1	0	2	0	11	14
LCC Web Site	0	2	0	3	28	33
Total received	4	7	12	7	52	82

As can be seen from the table, the website is the preferred means of submitting complaints, accounting for 40% of the total.

7. Further Analysis & Commentary

Response times

As can be seen from the table below, 92% of all complaints completed by the end of September 2010 received responses within the 60 working day maximum laid down by the procedures and expected by the Local Government Ombudsman.

10 days or less	42	58%
11- 15 days	5	7%
16 - 20 days	9	13%
21 - 25 days	3	4%
26 – 35 days	4	6%
36 – 60 days	3	4%
Over 60 days *	6	8%

Note:

* Over 60 Days

Environment & Transport = 5 (64 to 95 days)

Corporate Resources = 1 (68 days)

Whilst it is good practice to deal with complaints in a timely manner, not all complaints received are so simple that they can be resolved within 10 working days. However, as can be seen, over half of all complaints were resolved in 10 working days or less, 78% of all complaints were resolved within 20 working days and 82% within 25 working days.

Issues raised in complaints

Individual complaints have been mapped against a number of high level issues. Often each individual complaint may contain a variety of issues. This is illustrated in the table below.

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment & Transport	Total
Communication	1	4	3	6	14	28
Staff Conduct	2	1	6	3	10	22
Practice & procedure	2	3	4	1	5	15
Service Denial						
Service Delivery	1	2	3	2	23	31
Punctuality		1			2	3
Task failure		1			5	6
Confidentiality				1		1
Resources					1	1
Plans / Assessment			3		1	4
Other					2	2

The table above shows that the top 3 issues that service users raise concerns about are service delivery, communication and staff conduct. In the period under review, service delivery was the issue most frequently complained about, occurring in 31 of the 82 complaints received (38%). Communication issues were raised in 34% of all complaints and staff conduct issues were raised in 27% of all complaints.

Issues upheld in complaints

In the period under review, 9 complaints were partially upheld (11% of the total received) and 21 were totally upheld (26% of the total received). The table below shows a breakdown by department.

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment & Transport
Partly Upheld	1	1	2	2	3
Totally Upheld		1	1	3	16
% of complaints received by Dept	25%	29%	25%	71%	37%

For these 30 complaints, the issues upheld are shown in the table below. Percentage figures show the number of issues upheld compared to the total number of the same issues raised for each service, e.g., for Environment & Transport there were 10 occasions when staff conduct was complained about but only 3 cases where this was upheld (30%).

	Adults & Communities		Chief Executive's		Children & Young People's Service		Corporate Resources		Environment & Transport		Total	
Communication	1	100%	2	50%	1	33%	2	33%	1	7%	7	25%
Staff Conduct							2	67%	3	30%	5	23%
Practice & procedure					2	50%	1	100%	2	40%	5	33%
Service Denial												
Service Delivery			1	50%	1	33%			2	9%	4	13%
Punctuality									1	50%	1	33%
Task failure									2	40%	2	33%
Confidentiality												
Resources												
Plans / Assessment												
Other												

Although staff conduct was complained about on 22 occasions in total, reassuringly, this issue was only upheld on 5 occasions. Similarly, communication issues were raised in 28 complaints but only upheld in 7. Communication issues were upheld most often and, interestingly, feature in each department.

Ombudsman complaints

Ordinarily, the Local Government Ombudsman expects complainants to have given the County Council the chance to investigate their concerns before considering their complaint. In the period covered by this report, the Ombudsman received 3 premature complaints which she referred to the County Council to be dealt with under the Corporate Complaints Procedure. When investigating a complaint and the way in which it has been handled, the Ombudsman is looking to see whether there has been maladministration leading to injustice.

It is rare for a complaint to be pursued to a formal investigation and a finding made which upholds the complaint. The majority of complaints made to the Ombudsman are rejected and any preliminary investigation discontinued once the County Council has provided information to explain what it has done. Occasionally there are still outstanding issues when a complaint is subject to a preliminary investigation by the Ombudsman. This might be a failure to put something right, a failure to take action in a timely manner or something as simple as a failure to apologise for not having done something in a proper manner. It is the County Council's practice to offer to resolve such issues at an early stage, and this is recorded by the Ombudsman as a "local settlement".

The table below shows the number of complaints made via the Ombudsman for the period under review, the number of local settlements and the number still to be decided.

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment and Transport
Complaints made	3	1	17	0	5
Local Settlements	0	0	0	0	2
Complaints outstanding	2	1	1	0	0

The majority of Children and Young People's Service complaints relate to school admissions and include the conduct of admission appeals which are administered by the Chief Executive's Department. The response to the Ombudsman is therefore given on a joint basis. There have only been two complaints referred to the Ombudsman during the period under review when local settlements have been agreed.

Referral to the Ombudsman has proved most effective in curtailing difficult or unreasonable complainants who would otherwise tie up considerable resources in pursuit of their complaint. This is a useful feature of the new procedures and contributes towards the effective use of resources.

The Ombudsman requests that information in response to complaints is submitted to her within 28 days. In the majority of cases for the period under review, the timescale for the submission of information to the Ombudsman was met. The average response time last year was 17.8 days which helps to maintain the County Council's reputation which is reflected in the tone of their annual report. The Ombudsman also commented positively in the 2009/10 report about the review of the Corporate Complaints Procedure.

8. Review of working arrangements

The new procedures were introduced in April 2010. The main emphasis of the new procedures is on the general handling of complaints, more than the actual investigation process. Other than the need to capture all complaints, the introduction of revised timescales and the drive for more consistency in approach, complaint investigation is practically unchanged.

To enable effective recording, monitoring and analysis of complaints, an MS Access database has been developed, as an interim measure, by the Corporate Complaints Manager. It is intended to share this information with Departmental Complaints Leads but, before this can happen, there are a number of technical issues to be resolved. The Corporate Complaints Manager is currently liaising with ICT Services to resolve these and to provide a solution for sharing the data. Similarly, it is the intention that complaint correspondence, currently electronically filed in a central location, be made accessible to Departmental Complaints Leads.

Until the ICT implications of these are resolved, Corporate Complaints are maintaining the database and electronic files for complaint correspondence.

The level of corporate complaints received in four out of the five service departments has been low, compared to those received by the Environment & Transport department. However, a large number of complaints received by the other main customer facing departments (Adults & Communities and Children & Young People's Service) relate to social care issues or other functions for which alternative forms of redress are available, e.g., Special Educational Needs. Despite this, it is believed that there are significant numbers of complaints that are being dealt with but are not being captured and greater effort is needed, to ensure that this trend is reversed.

The Corporate Complaints Manager continues to work with Departmental Complaints Leads to develop and refine the arrangements for complaint handling within departments, to ensure compliance with the agreed procedures and to avoid criticism by the Local Government Ombudsman, in the cases where complaints are referred to them for investigation.

It was always expected that there would be issues arising from the definition of complaints and the various channels by which complaints are received in the five departments. The expectation is that these will be ironed out over time and any resulting amendments to the procedures will be incorporated at the annual review.

Where problems have arisen with arrangements, meetings have taken place with managers and staff to discuss complaint handling, in an attempt to understand the issues that are peculiar to specific departments and some measures have already been agreed. Also, a good deal of discussion has taken place around the definition of complaints, to ensure that issues are dealt with in the most appropriate manner.

As an example of this, for certain complaints relating to services provided by Environment & Transport, this has resulted in first time reports of problems being forwarded by the Corporate Complaints service to Customer Services for attention, rather than treating them as complaints. Also, Environment & Transport are currently reviewing complaint handling within their department, following some specific issues that have arisen.

The results of discussions and meetings with Departmental Complaints Leads and other staff will be incorporated into the annual review of the procedures. Departments are aware that the Corporate Complaints service is available for assistance with administrative aspects of complaint handling, as and when the need arises.

If we are to maintain the credibility and effectiveness of our complaints procedures, it is crucial that complainants are kept informed of the progress of their complaint. This includes appropriate levels of early communication, timely and informative acknowledgements, adherence to agreed timescales and full responses. Any breakdown in this process merely adds to the complainant's frustration and can lead to complaints about the complaint handling process.

This is equally important for complaints submitted via the Ombudsman, as any delay in the provision of information or other problem with the handling of the complaint may lead to criticism and could affect the County Council's reputation with the Ombudsman.

9. Equality & Diversity

Below is a table showing the breakdown by ethnicity for complaints received.

White British	27
White – Any other Background	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	
Mixed – White and Black African	
Mixed – White and Asian	
Mixed – Any other Mixed Background	
Asian/British Asian – Indian	
Asian/British Asian- Pakistani	
Asian/British Asian- Bangladeshi	
Asian/British Asian	
Black-Black/British	
Black/Black British – Caribbean	
Black/Black British – African	
Black/Black British - Any other Background	
Chinese	1
Not declared	53
TOTAL	82

As 65% of complainants did not declare their ethnicity, the data above is not definitive. However, it is not considered best practice to pursue the collection of Equality & Diversity information at the time a complaint is being submitted.

Gender

In the period under review, 51% of complaints were received from males.

Disability

Of the 82 complaints submitted, only 3 complainants declared that they were registered disabled.

Additional sources of Equality & Diversity information

Following the conclusion of a complaint investigation, where appropriate, a Lessons Learnt form is sent to the responsible Manager, requesting evidence showing how and when recommendations were implemented. The form also asks managers to identify any equality issues that have arisen as a result of the enquiries.

At the same time, a Customer Feedback Form is sent, along with a closing letter, to the complainant asking for feedback regarding the complaints process. This form also requests Equality and Diversity information. The form is being updated to request information on all six strands of Equality and Diversity.

10. Learning from Complaints

There is now great emphasis on capturing lessons learnt from complaints. It was recognised that systems needed to be reviewed to ensure that a formal mechanism is in place to ensure lessons learnt and customer feedback are formally captured. The Complaints Database is used to record and track the progress of complaints, as well as identify and monitor the implementation of lessons learnt.

At the end of an investigation, every complaint is reviewed to determine whether there are lessons to be learnt. If so, the Investigating Officer completes a 'Lessons Learnt' form that is forwarded to Complaints Manager to enable monitoring of the implementation of the lessons. This outlines the necessary changes to prevent recurrence of the cause(s) of the original complaint and how this action will be facilitated. Documentary evidence of implementation is also requested.

To capture customer feedback, regarding the way their complaint was handled, satisfaction surveys are sent out to complainants, approximately four weeks after the response is sent to them. This survey attempts to focus the complainant's attention on the handling of their complaint, however, it is not unusual for their view to be adversely affected by the fact that they did not receive the response they wanted.

This is a common problem amongst complaints managers and the survey form is being reviewed, to increase its effectiveness, using best practice available. Although the response is anonymous, we currently include a complaint reference number on the survey forms, to help identify those responses skewed by this factor.

Breakdown of Lessons Learnt

The following are examples of lessons learnt from complaints during the period under review with the department to which the complaint related shown in brackets. Quite often, communication features highly, even in some lessons that are principally about service delivery or practice and procedure. This is clearly a big issue and consideration should be given to providing more training in this area in particular.

- I understand from your conversation with our complaints department that you were cut off at this point as the call did not successfully transfer – again I apologise for this and I have raised this matter with our ICT department to investigate. (Corporate Resources)
- I can confirm I have listened to both of the calls you made into the Customer Service Centre on 19th August and that I have noted several areas for development in the call handling skills of the CSA and this has been taken forward. (Corporate Resources)
- The company have spoken to the interviewer and agree that her behaviour was unacceptable. The company will be working with the interviewer to ensure this doesn't happen again and also to ensure the interviewer is able to conduct interviews properly. We have been assured by the company that she will not be working on this project again. (Corporate Resources)

- The investigation has revealed some flaws in the way messages are taken and left for staff when they are out. It appears that at least one of the messages you left was filed before it had been responded to. (CYPS)
- Following your letter, Leicestershire Adult Learning Service are issuing these notices in a layered fashion with a plain English introduction. Details of local contacts have also been included, to enable replies and further explanation if requested. (CYPS)
- Adhere to agreed timescales or keep people informed in advance of delays (Chief Executive's)
- Ensure that telephone enquiries and other requests for information are always followed up (E & T)
- The invitation should have been issued by the Committee Support & Administration Manager and would have contained information about the purpose of the forum, frequency of meeting etc. Appropriate advice has now been provided to both individuals concerned. (CYPS)

These identified lessons will be worked through with the relevant departments, to ensure that they are implemented to maximum effect and that evidence of this is provided.

A full list of lessons learnt and action taken to implement the lessons will be included in the Annual Report for 2010/11.

11. Commendations

Although technically not part of the complaints process, it is intended to provide information regarding commendations within the report, in order to 'balance' the feedback from complaints. The number of commendations, received during the period under review, is shown in the table below:

	Adults & Communities	Chief Executive's	Children & Young People's Service	Corporate Resources	Environment & Transport
Commendations	3	0	0	3	2

It is clear that these numbers do not truly reflect the total number of commendations received. Greater effort is needed, to ensure that all such positive feedback is recorded, to provide a more balanced view of customer opinion.

Some examples of compliments and commendations include:



The advice provided by Mat along with Sgt. Ward assisted in a swift conclusion to what we appreciate can be a very sensitive matter. Mat is clearly a

dedicated (response from Mat to our initial email enquiries was received at 22:25pm on Wednesday evening!) and talented individual and it is important that his efforts are recognised. (Corporate Resources)



I would add that whenever I have needed to contact your Pensions Department with any kind of query, whoever has answered the phone has been extremely helpful and polite. I cannot speak highly enough of your staff and felt I should express my thanks. (Corporate Resources)



I visited the library today wanting to scan and e mail a document. I needed help with the procedure. Your site says that staff are "friendly & helpful" - as far as this location is concerned, that phrase is an understatement! I dealt with 2/3 people all of whom amazed me with their assistance & supportive attitude. (A & C)



I would like to tell you how impressed I am with the staff at Rothley Library. I have just started a PGCE and was desperate to find some of the books on my book list. At Rothley library, they looked at the list but were unable to help. Later that afternoon I got a phone call from the library to say that one of the books was available at Sileby and that one of them was going to be working there the next day "would I like them to put it to one side tomorrow for me". I was impressed on two counts: firstly that they remembered the books I was interested in, and secondly because they had not taken my name, but had the initiative to work out that my daughter had taken out a book that afternoon and must have got my details that way. I was even more impressed, when a couple of days later I received another call from Rothley Library asking was the Tulip Touch also on the list as someone had just returned it? It was (!) and I am so grateful for their help. Their attitude, helpfulness and professionalism is amazing. I just wanted to tell you that you have two members of staff there who are a credit to Leicestershire Libraries. (A & C)



I visited the site today (13/04/2010) to dispose of some waste paper for recycling. As I was emptying some boxes of paper into the receptacle, I felt my wedding ring get caught on the edge of a magazine and fall into the container. I looked for my ring but unfortunately I couldn't see it. Thankfully your very friendly and helpful staff at this site were only too happy to help me. Alec kindly climbed into the receptacle and started looking for my ring, and to my delight he found it after 10-15 minutes of searching. He is an asset to your team in Lutterworth. I can't thank him enough. Regardless of the events today, I have always found the attendants at Lutterworth Waste Site to be friendly, helpful and provide excellent customer service. Today's experience only serves to underline just how friendly and efficient the team are there. (E & T)

12. Action Planning for 2011/12

Listed below are actions identified for attention by the end of 2011/12. The current status of each action is indicated by the following symbols:

✗ = To do / not started

✓ = Started / ongoing

Complaints Service	
To provide quarterly updates to DMTs regarding complaints received and lessons learnt.	✓
To maintain a high level of performance relating to the complaints process, aimed at ensuring that those who complain receive a good quality service in line with regulations and the County Council's customer service standards.	✓
To ensure that, where appropriate, responses to complaints involving more than one department are co-ordinated centrally and a joint response is sent to the complainant, to demonstrate a joined up approach.	✓
Greater consideration to be given to alternative dispute resolution e.g., mediation or conciliation meetings and, where appropriate, undertake these as part of the initial investigation process, rather than as a remedy, after the complainant has expressed dissatisfaction with the response.	✓
To agree and consistently follow the protocol for complaints received by DMTs, to ensure that the Complaints Service is aware of all complaints as they are received.	✗
More robust arrangements to be implemented regarding the quality checking of responses before they are sent out to complainants, to ensure greater consistency and accuracy and reduce the chances of a poor response leading to dissatisfaction with it and escalation to the Ombudsman.	✗
Policy and Procedure	
Circulate / promote the procedures relating to complaint handling and investigation to raise awareness amongst managers and staff.	✗

Complete an Equality Impact Assessment to determine actions necessary to comply with legislation and ensure fair and effective access for all complainants.	×
Carry out annual review of the complaints procedure in conjunction with stakeholders	×
Publicity and Information	
Revise complaints leaflets and consider other versions to reach under-represented groups.	×
Review internet and intranet information to ensure clarity and compliance with current procedures.	✓
Up to date list of mediators to be compiled and maintained by the Complaints Service to enable the effective location of trained mediators.	×
Review the customer satisfaction survey form to improve the effectiveness of returns	✓
Staff Development and Training	
Handling complaints effectively should be routinely included in new manager induction.	✓
Mediation Skills training to be arranged by the Complaints Service, to equip more staff with the skills required, to be able to routinely offer this service without having to appoint external mediators.	✓
Complaints handling training to be provided to raise awareness and confidence amongst managers and staff.	×
Provide specific information relating to the role of the Ombudsman.	×
Provide issue specific workshops to address common themes arising from complaints, e.g., communication.	✓

Commendations	
Ensure that services receiving compliments and commendations pass the details on to the Complaints Manager to ensure that they are recorded and shared as appropriate. Consider using for nominations for the Corporate 'You're a Star' Awards.	✓
Learning from Complaints	
To encourage and develop the "lessons learnt" culture across departments.	✓
To monitor the outcome of all complaints, to ensure that lessons are identified and implemented and inform decisions about planning and service delivery.	✓
To share lessons learnt within and across service areas to ensure maximum impact on service improvement within the Authority.	✗

Corporate Complaints Manager
Corporate Resources Department

November 2010