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SECTION 1:

Children's Services, Adult Services and Public Health Complaints Activity 1 October 2019 to 31 December 2019

1.0 Children's Services – Complaint Activity

1.1 Informal Complaints

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for children/young people, parents and carers to raise issues of concern without those matters being treated as formal complaints as long as they are speedily and effectively addressed. These are referred to as informal complaints; 12 informal complaints were received during quarter three (1 October to 31 December 2019) compared to 23 received during quarter three 2018/19; a decrease of 11 cases.

1.2 Stage One Complaints

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council received ten stage one Children's Services complaints compared to 16 during quarter three for 2018/19, a decrease of six cases.

The ten complaints received during this third quarter refer to three separate service areas. No service area received a disproportionate amount of complaints, the highest figure of three cases referred to Court Team, Adoption@Heart and Children and Young People in Care Team 1.

1.3 Timescales

Overall, 12 complaints were responded to and concluded during this third quarter. No complaints were responded to within 10 working days, four within 11-20 working days, and the remaining eight in just over 21 working days. Cases responded to 21 days or over timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint.

1.4 However, it should be noted that of the 12 complaints closed and resolved during this period six were dealt with in accordance with the Children's Act, with an average timescale of 19 days and six complaints were dealt with in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Policy (Non-Children's Act) which states complaints should be responded to within 21 calendar days; the average timescale was 23 calendar days. Out of the 12 complaints closed and resolved, two cases were upheld (at fault), five cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and five cases not upheld (not at fault).

1.5 Stage Two Complaints

During this period, we have received three stage two complaints which were dealt with in accordance with the Corporate Complaints Policy and, therefore, there were no financial implications for Children's Services. Out of the three complaints received, two were not upheld (not at fault) and one partially upheld (partially at fault).

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Stage two complaints received as follows:

- Adoption@Heart – One complaint received for Adoption@Heart in relation to the home visit for interest to adopt and delays in responding to correspondence; outcome partially upheld
- Children and Young People in Care - One complaint received for fostering was in relation to conduct of social work manager; outcome not upheld
- Strengthening Families - One complaint received for Child Protection was in relation to home visit, conduct of social work and inaccuracies made by social worker; outcome not upheld.

1.6 Stage Three Complaints

Where a stage two complaint investigation has been carried out and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to request matters proceed to the final stage of the complaint's procedures, a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel. There were no complaints escalated to stage three during this quarter.

1.7 Complaint Category

These are the headings under which we register the complaint against, based on the complaint details received – see attached Dashboard.

1.8 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's quarterly monitoring process. During this third quarter, a pleasing 26 compliments were received for Children's Services, compared to 23 in quarter three 2018/19. Safeguarding Team received five compliments, followed by Connecting Families Hub receiving four and Disabled Children and Young People and Transitions Team 1 receiving three.

2.0 Public Health Complaints

2.1 Regionally and nationally, Councils receive very few complaints in relation to Public Health Services. A typical complaint would be where a Council has commissioned a service for local people through a Clinic or GP practice. Complaints in relation to GP's and Hospitals are dealt with through an entirely separate complaint process managed by Health Services. In relation to Public Health services, there have been no complaints received in quarter three (1 October to 31 December 2019).

3.0 Adult Social Care Complaints

3.1 Informal Complaints

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council received 11 informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to 15 informal complaints received during quarter three 2018/19, a decrease of four cases.

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3.2 Stage One Complaints

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council received 17 formal complaints compared with 21 in quarter three 2018/19; representing a decrease of four complaints this quarter. Out of the 17 formal complaints received, three complaints were received in relation to contracted/independent services. This is where Adult Social Care commission an independent agency to deliver a service on its behalf. No service area received a disproportionate amount of complaints. The 17 complaints received covered 11 separate service areas; the highest figure of four complaints referred to the Adult Community Team East.

3.3 Complaint Category

These are the headings under which we register the complaint against, based on the complaint details received – see attached Dashboard.

3.4 Timescales

Overall, ten complaints were responded to and concluded during this third quarter. Five complaints were responded to within 10 working days, three within 11-20 working days and two complaints were responded to over 21 working days. The average number of days to respond and close all complaints over the term significantly was 11 days. Cases responded to 21 days or over timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint. Out of the ten cases closed and resolved one case was upheld, four cases partially upheld and five cases not upheld.

3.5 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's quarterly monitoring process. 55 compliments were received during this third quarter relating to Adult Services compared to 32 in quarter three 2018/19. Welfare Rights received 13 compliments, following by Bradley Resource Centre receiving eight and Personalised Support Team receiving five.

3.6 Areas of Learning from Complaints

See Appendix 4 for stage 1 learning.

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SECTION 2: Corporate Complaints Activity, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Complaints Activity 1 October to 31 December 2019

4.0 Corporate Complaints Activity, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman

4.1 Informal service requests/enquiries

The customer feedback team works alongside the person complaining and the service involved, to resolve the complaint informally, preventing it becoming a formal complaint. It should be noted that 204 service request enquiries were logged with the customer feedback team during quarter three, compared to 270 received during quarter two. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, missed bin collection, parking, litter, appeals; all enquiries were logged and resolved informally or sign posted to the correct process without going through the corporate complaints procedure, therefore providing a better outcome and resolution for the customer.

4.2 Corporate stage 1 complaints

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council received 43 stage one corporate complaints compared to 69 during quarter two for 2018/19, a decrease of 26 cases. No service area received a disproportionate amount of complaints. The 43 complaints covering 18 separate service areas, the highest figure of 13 complaints referring to Waste Management, Revenues and Benefits received seven and Licensing received three. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those matters at service level.

4.3 Corporate Complaint Category

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the main issue of complaint involved failure to provide a service (15), followed by failure to achieve standards/quality (12), conduct of employees (4), failure to consider relevant matters (4), dissatisfaction of council policies (3), delays in responding or administrative (4) and failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities (1).

4.4 Corporate Timescales

The average response time for responding to each complaint is 12 days for quarter three. This figure has improved from the previous quarter of 13 days; The response timescale for stage 1 complaints responding within 21 calendar days is 91%; 39 cases were responded to within 21 calendar days and 4 cases responded outside of this timescale. The target of 95% response time has therefore not been achieved; the Customer Feedback Team will continue to monitor this response time and work with service groups to improve this timescale.

4.5 Stage 2 corporate complaints

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council received four stage two corporate complaints; out of the four cases received, two cases were upheld (at fault) and two cases not upheld (not at fault).

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Stage two complaints received as follows:

- City Environment - One complaint received for Waste Management in relation to missed garden waste collection; outcome upheld. Action Plan compiled and agreed with recommendations and learning carried out by the service
- City Environment – One complaint received for Arboriculture Department in relation to maintenance of fir trees; outcome not upheld
- Finance/City Environment – One complaint received for Revenues and Benefits/ Customer Services in relation to errors made by the Council Tax department resulting in enforcement action; outcome upheld. Action Plan compiled and agreed with recommendations and learning carried out by the services
- City Housing – One complaint received for Planning Department in relation to decision to build a larger than planned house at the rear of a property; outcome not upheld

4.6 Corporate Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's quarterly monitoring process. During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the Council has received 41 compliments, a decrease from the previous quarter. Planning received 16, followed by Bereavement 13 and The Hub team receiving 5.

4.7 Area of Learning for Corporate Complaints

See Appendix 4 for stage one learning.

5.0 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman

5.1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Enquiries

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the council received four Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries as follows:

- Children's Services received one enquiry for Children and Young People in Care in relation to delays in adoption process; draft decision received, awaiting final report from the Ombudsman
- Wolverhampton Homes received one enquiry for Homeless Team in relation to failure to take appropriate action in respect of a housing and homelessness situation; outcome not upheld, no maladministration
- City Environment received one enquiry for Licensing Department in relation to the clarity of information on the council's application form for private vehicle licence; outcome upheld, maladministration and injustice. An action plan has been compiled and the appropriate remedies agreed with the service accordingly
- Adult Services received on enquiry for the West Team in relation to failure to offer an assessment following surgery; outcome awaiting decision from the Ombudsman

5.2 Housing Ombudsman Enquiries

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the council received one enquiry from the Housing Ombudsman for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

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- One complaint received in relation to the landlord's response to the level of damp/mould and moisture in a property; outcome awaiting Housing Ombudsman's decision

5.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) assessment enquiries

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the council received 12 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman assessment enquiries.

Children Services received three complaints as follows:

- Fostering Team – one complaint in relation to Council's failure to make fostering payments for looking after her younger siblings; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction
- Strengthening Families Team – one complaint in relation to house being searched and conduct of social worker; outcome passed to Ombudsman investigation team for further consideration
- Adoption@Heart – one complaint in relation to home visit for interest to adopt; outcome premature complaint

Adult Services received two complaints as follows:

- Adult Community Team West – one complaint in relation to response and assessment/reablement after care; outcome progressed to a full investigation
- Community Support Team – one complaint in relation to a short break holiday for carers; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

City Environment received three complaints as follows:

- Parking Services – one complaint in relation to enforcement officer conduct and not given the option of a payment plan; outcome premature complaint
- Environmental Services – one complaint in relation to street cleansing; outcome closed after initial enquiries no further action
- Transportation Services – one complaint in relation to highway repairs; outcome premature complaint

Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint as follows:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Team – one complaint in relation to ASB enquiry; passed to Ombudsman investigation team for further consideration

Finance received three complaints as follows:

- Insurance Team – one complaint in relation to compensation due to an increase in an insurance premium; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction
- Revenues and Benefits – one complaint in relation to council tax liability/appeals; outcome complaint invalid; not recorded on annual figures
- Revenues and Benefits – one complaint in relation to council tax liability; outcome closed after initial enquiries - out of jurisdiction

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5.4 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries

During this quarter (1 October to 31 December 2019) the council received three Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries for Wolverhampton Homes.

- One complaint in relation to noise nuisance and lack of response/action; outcome, complaint logged and is under investigation
- One complaint in relation to landlord's handling of her complaint about disrepairs; outcome; complaint logged and is under investigation
- One complaint in relation to reports of anti-social behaviour; outcome, complaint logged and is under investigation

6.0 Action Plans/Learning

6.1 See attached dashboard.