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SECTION 1:

Children's Services, Adult Services and Public Health Complaints Activity 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020

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; nine informal complaints were received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 compared to 14 received during 2019/20; a decrease of five cases.

1.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received eight stage one Children's Services complaints compared to 11 during 2019/20, a decrease of three cases. The eight complaints received during this period refer to six separate service areas. No service area received a disproportionate amount of complaints, the highest figure of two cases referred to Children and Young People in Care Team 1 and the Child Protection Team. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally.

1.3 Timescales

Overall, seven complaints were responded to and concluded during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. Three complaints were responded to within 10 working days, nil within 11-20 working days, and the remaining four 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 seven complaints closed and resolved during this period two were dealt with in accordance with the Children's Act, with an average timescale of 18.5 working days and five 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 15.5 calendar days. Average timescales for children's statutory and corporate have improved in comparison to quarter 1 during this period. Out of the seven complaints closed and resolved, zero cases were upheld (at fault), four cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and three cases not upheld (not at fault).

1.5 Stage Two Complaints

During this period 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, we have received no statutory stage two complaints which are investigated in accordance with the Children's Statutory complaints procedure and no children's stage two complaints which are dealt with in accordance with our Corporate Complaints policy and procedure. This is in comparison to no cases received for 2019/20 for this same period. Several other complaints that could have proceeded down this route were resolved after significant intervention,

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mediation and problem solving with the complainant, relevant service and customer feedback team.

1.6 Stage Three Complaints

Where a statutory children's 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 statutory complaint procedure; a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel. During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 no complaints escalated to a stage three panel during this period; this is in comparison to no stage three cases received for 2019/20 for the same period.

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 annual monitoring process. During this period, four compliments were received for Children's Services, compared to 33 during 2019/20. Children and Young People in Care Team 2, Fostering Team, Social Work Unit 8 and the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) team all received one compliment.

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 for example mental health and well-being, weight management. Complaints in relation to Hospitals and GP's are dealt with through a separate complaint process managed by Health Services. In relation to Public Health services, there has been one complaint received for this period regarding WV Active membership fee. This is in comparison to no cases received for 19/20 for the same period.

3.0 Adult Social Care Complaints

3.1 Informal Complaints

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received 12 informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to eight informal complaints received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2019, a decrease of four cases.

3.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received six formal complaints compared with 11 during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2019; representing a decrease of five complaints during this period. Out of the six formal complaints received, one complaint was received in relation to Commissioning Services; CRG Homecare. This is where Adult Social Care commission an independent agency to deliver a service on its

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behalf. The six complaints received covered six separate service areas; each of these areas received one complaint. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally.

3.3 Complaint Category

These are the headings under which we register the complaint against, based on the complaint details received – see Appendix 1.

3.4 Timescales

Overall, six complaints were responded to and concluded during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. One complaint was responded to within 10 working days, one within 11-20 working days and four complaints was responded to over 21 working days. The average number of days to respond and close all complaints over the term was 26 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 six cases closed and resolved, two cases were upheld, two cases partially upheld and two cases not upheld.

3.5 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's annual monitoring process. 47 compliments were received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 relating to Adult Services compared to 69 during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2019. Welfare Rights received 12 compliments followed by Health and Social Care team who received nine compliments and Adult Locality West Team received eight compliments.

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 July 2020 to 30 September 2020

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 287 service request enquiries were logged with the customer feedback team during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, compared to 270 received during 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, litter, parking, missed bin collection, 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 swift outcome and resolution for the customer.

4.2 Corporate stage 1 complaints

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received 73 stage one corporate complaints compared to 35 during 1 July 2019 to 30 September 2019 an increase of 38 cases. Out of the 73 cases received, 25 were upheld (at fault). The 73 complaints covered 12 separate service areas, the highest figure of 50 complaints received referred to Waste Management; this is in comparison to seven stage one complaints received during quarter two 2019/20.

4.3 Corporate Complaint Category

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the main issue of complaint involved failure to provide a service (50), followed by dissatisfaction of council policies (14), conduct of employees (4), failure to consider relevant matters (3), bias/unfair discrimination (1), failure to achieve standards/quality (1).

4.4 Corporate Timescales

The average response time for responding to each complaint is 13 days for this period; this is in comparison to 13 days for 2019/20. The response timescale for stage 1 complaints responding within 21 calendar days is 97%; 71 cases were responded to within 21 calendar days and 2 cases responded outside of this timescale. The average response time has improved since quarter one 2020/21 and the target of 95% response time has therefore been achieved.

4.5 Stage 2 corporate complaints

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received six stage two corporate complaints compared to seven cases for 19/20, an increase of one case. Out of the six cases received, one case was partially upheld (at fault) and five cases were not upheld (not at fault).

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Stage two complaints received as follows:

City Environment received four cases as follows:

- One complaint received for Markets Service; outcome not upheld
- One complaint received for Transportation in relation to TRO highways plan; outcome not upheld
- One complaint received for Licensing in relation to conduct of officers and inspection; outcome not upheld
- One complaint received for Parks in relation to anti-social behaviour and request to remove bench; outcome not upheld

Regeneration received one case as follows:

- One complaint received in relation to planning application at a food superstore; outcome not upheld

Chief Executive's office received one case as follows:

- One complaint in relation to lack of action to correspondence submitted; outcome not upheld

4.6 Corporate Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's annual monitoring process. During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, the council received 36 compliments, a decrease of 33 in comparison to the same period for 2019/20. Planning received 15, followed by Customer Services (3) and Waste Management (2).

4.7 Area of Learning for Corporate Compliments

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 (LGSCO)

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received three Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman enquiries as follows via each Directorate:

Children's Services received one complaint as follows:

- Adoption@Heart received one enquiry in relation to a request to register as a potential adopter; draft decision received, awaiting final report

Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint as follows:

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- Adaptions Team received one enquiry in relation to disabled adaptations to a property; outcome upheld, maladministration and injustice; the appropriate remedies and recommendations as outlined in the final report have been put in place

City Environment received one complaint as follows:

- Environmental Crime received one enquiry in relation reports of rat infestations; outcome upheld, maladministration and injustice; the appropriate remedies and recommendations as outlined in the final report have been put in place

5.2 Housing Ombudsman Enquiries

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received one enquiry from the Housing Ombudsman for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

- One complaint received in relation to landlord's handling of energy billing problems and a heating/hot water outage; awaiting final outcome

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

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received seven Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman assessment enquiries as follows:

Governance received two enquiries as follows:

- Legal Services received one complaint in relation court witness expenses; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction
- Legal Services received one complaint in relation to officer conduct; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

Children's Services received two enquiries as follows:

- Strengthening Families received one complaint in relation to a child protection plan and actions of Children's Services; outcome premature complaint
- Children and Young People in Care received on complaint in relation to consistent delays and issues with assessment; outcome premature complaint

Adult Services received one enquiry as follows:

- Adult Services received one complaint in relation to care provided and safeguarding investigation; outcome premature complaint

Environmental Services received one enquiry as follows:

- Waste Management received one enquiry in relation to council's failure to collect industrial sized bin; outcome awaiting decision

Revenues and Benefits received one enquiry as follows:

- Finance received one complaint in relation to housing benefit/council tax and failure to carry out actions of an appeal; outcome premature complaint

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5.4 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries

During 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020 the council received two Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation the handling of the safety of the property; outcome awaiting final decision
- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to the handling of boiler issues and financial loss/damaged possessions; outcome awaiting final decision

6.0 Learning/Action Plans

When a complaint is upheld (council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a financial remedy, change to policy or service delivery, the Customer Feedback Team produce an action plan report. Recommendations within these reports are agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Manager/Director to ensure appropriate remedies and changes to policy/service delivery are implemented. Customer Feedback Team and Directorates are committed to learning from customer feedback and require the completion of a tracking form/learning log from each complaint investigated at all stages. Where complaints highlight that things have gone wrong, heads of service, managers and the customer feedback team are required to identify these areas, implement remedies and review processes/procedures where necessary. The Customer Feedback Team also attend regular quality assurance meetings with Children's Services to ensure learning is implemented on all upheld cases. See attached Appendix 4, Learning dashboard.