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SECTION 1:

Children's Services, Adult Services and Public Health Complaints Activity 1 October to 31 December 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; 11 informal complaints were received during 1 October to 31 December 2020 compared to 12 received during 2019/20; a decrease of one case.

1.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received ten stage one Children's Services complaints compared to ten during 2019/20; a consistent number of cases. Out of the ten cases received, one case was dealt with under our statutory complaints procedure and nine cases were dealt with under our corporate complaints procedure. The ten complaints received during this period refer to 9 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. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally.

1.3 Timescales

Overall, nine complaints were responded to and concluded during 1 October to 31 December 2020. No complaints were responded to within 10 days, four within 11-20 days, and the remaining five over 21 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 It should be noted that nine complaints closed and resolved during this period were dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and procedure (Non-Children's Act); in line with this policy, complaints should be responded to within 21 calendar days, the average timescale for this period has increased in comparison to quarter two. The customer feedback team has worked with Children's Services to improve these response times; improvement strategies have been implemented and are reviewed by the service on a regular basis. No complaints were dealt with in accordance with the Children's Act.

Out of the nine complaints closed and resolved, no cases were upheld (at fault), four cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and five cases not upheld (not at fault).

1.5 Stage Two Complaints

During this period 1 October to 31 December 2020, we have received no statutory stage two complaints, which are investigated in accordance with the Children's Statutory complaints procedure. Three children's stage two complaints, which are dealt with in

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accordance with our corporate complaints policy and procedure, were received as follows:

- One complaint for Strengthening Families in relation to actions/process and procedure of Children's Services and child protection conference; outcome not upheld
- One complaint for Strengthening Families in relation to non-attendance at a child protection conference and actions of social worker; outcome upheld
- One complaint for Strengthening Families in relation to child protection conference process/procedure, inaccuracies in reports and conduct of social worker; outcome upheld

Several other complaints that could have proceeded down this route were resolved after significant intervention via meetings, mediation and problem solving with the complainant.

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 children's complaint procedure; a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel. During 1 October to 31 December 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 Appendix 1.

1.8 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. During this period, four compliments were received for Children's Services, compared to 26 during 2019/20. Children and Young People in Care Team 1 received three compliments and Children and Young People in Care Team 2 received one compliment.

1.9 Area of Learning for Children's Complaints

See Appendix 4 for stage one learning.

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 no complaints received for this period. This is in comparison to no cases received for 19/20 for the same period.

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3.0 Adult Social Care Complaints

3.1 Informal Complaints

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received six informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to 11 informal complaints received during 1 October to 31 December 2019, a decrease of five cases.

3.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received seven formal complaints compared with 17 during 1 October to 31 December 2019; representing a decrease of 10 complaints during this period. Out of the seven formal complaints received, two complaints were received for the Adult Locality East Team, one complaint for Adult Locality West Team, one complaint for Travel Unit, one complaint for Independent Living, one complaint for Welfare Rights and one complaint for Commissioning Services. The seven complaints received covered six separate service areas. 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, five complaints were responded to and concluded during 1 October to 31 December 2020. Three complaints were responded to within ten working days, one complaint within 11-20 working days and one complaint was responded to over 21 days working days and over. The average number of days to respond and close all complaints over the term was 14 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 five cases closed and resolved, two cases were upheld, one case 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 monitoring process. 19 compliments were received during 1 October to 31 December 2020 relating to Adult Services compared to 55 during 1 October to 31 December 2019. Welfare Rights Service received eight compliments, Health and Social Care Team (Hospital Team) received five compliments and Independent Living Services received two compliments

3.6 Area of Learning for Adult's Complaints

See Appendix 4 for stage one 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 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 service involved and the customer complaining to resolve the complaint informally, preventing it becoming a formal complaint. It should be noted that 214 service request enquiries were logged with the customer feedback team during 1 October to 31 December 2020, compared to 204 received during 1 October to 31 December 2019. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, missed bin collection, appeals, litter, parking; all enquiries are logged and resolved informally, or sign posted to the correct process without going through the corporate complaints policy and procedure; this provides a swift resolution and outcome for the customer.

4.2 Corporate stage 1 complaints

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received 43 stage one corporate complaints compared to 43, which is consistent in the number of cases received during 1 October to 31 December 2019. Out of the 43 cases received, 19 were upheld (at fault). The 43 complaints covered 11 separate service areas, the highest figure of 24 complaints received referred to Waste Management; this is in comparison to 13 stage one complaints received during quarter three 2019/20. However, it should be noted that Waste Management attend approximately 135,000 kerbside properties each week; an average of 585,000 collections each month. The Customer Feedback Team has worked closely with Waste Management to ensure the areas of concerns are addressed whilst providing the best outcome for the customer.

4.3 Corporate Complaint Category

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the main issue of complaint involved failure to provide a service (18), followed by failure to achieve standards/quality (10), dissatisfaction of council policies (7), delays in responding, or administrative (4) and conduct of employees (4).

4.4 Corporate Timescales

The average response time for responding to each complaint is 13 days for this period; this is in comparison to 12 days for 2019/20. The response timescale for stage 1 complaints responding within 21 calendar days is 95%; 36 (84%) of cases were responded to within 21 calendar days and 7 cases responded to outside of this timescale. The target of 95% response time has therefore not been achieved and the customer feedback team will be working with services to improve this timescale.

4.5 Stage 2 corporate complaints

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During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received five stage two corporate complaints compared to four cases for 2019/2020, an increase of one case. Out of the five cases received, two cases were upheld (at fault) and three cases were not upheld (not at fault). Stage two corporate complaints received as follows:

City Environment received three cases as follows:

- One complaint received for Bereavement Services in relation to parking at a cemetery; outcome not upheld
- One complaint received for Arbor Team in relation to a tree at the front of the customer's property and damage to driveway; outcome not upheld
- One complaint received for Waste Team in relation to non collection of purple bin; outcome upheld

Strategy received one case as follows:

- One complaint received for Projects and Programmes Team in relation to road work noise and disturbance; outcome upheld

Finance received one case as follows:

- One complaint received for Revenues and Benefits in relation to an appeal and investigation with DWP; outcome not upheld

4.6 Corporate Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. During 1 October to 31 December 2020, the council received 71 corporate compliments, an increase in comparison to the same period for 2019/20 where the council received 41. Planning received the highest number of compliments, followed by Waste Management.

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 (LGSCO)

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received three Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries as follows via each Directorate:

Adult Services received two complaints as follows:

- Adults Services and Health Partnerships received one enquiry in relation to reduction in care package; outcome upheld, maladministration and no injustice; appropriate resolution and remedy has been put in place by the council and the Ombudsman is satisfied with the action that the council has proposed
- Adult Services and Communities received one enquiry in relation to domiciliary care provided and an outcome of a safeguarding investigation; outcome upheld maladministration and injustice; appropriate learning, resolution and remedies are

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being put in the place by the council within the specified timeframes as outlined by the Ombudsman

Regeneration received one complaint as follows:

- Planning Department received one enquiry in relation to a planning application for an extension to a supermarket; outcome not upheld, no maladministration

5.2 Housing Ombudsman Enquiries

During 1 October to 31 December 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 a repair to the boiler at a property and damage caused to possessions; outcome service failure; appropriate remedies and resolution have been recommended by the Housing Ombudsman and implemented accordingly

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

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received 14 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) assessment enquiries as follows:

City Environment received four enquiries as follows:

- Transportation received one complaint in relation to a dropped kerb; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action
- Licensing received one complaint in relation to issuing a licence and right to work in the UK; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction
- Environmental Protection received one complaint in relation to noise nuisance; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration
- Markets received one complaint in relation to a market stall; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

Adult Services received three enquiries as follows:

- Adult Services and Health received one complaint in relation to reduction in care package; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration
- Adult Services and Health received one complaint in relation to adult social care concerns for a relative; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration
- Adult Services and Communities received one complaint in relation to service received for specialist equipment; outcome premature complaint

Children's Services received two enquiries as follows:

- Strengthening Families received one complaint in relation to an exclusion at a child protection conference; outcome premature complaint
- SEND team received one complaint in relation to delays in receiving an EHCP plan; awaiting outcome from the Ombudsman

Finance received two enquiries as follows:

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- Revenues and Benefits received one complaint in relation to a council tax refund; outcome premature complaint
- Revenues and Benefits received one complaint in relation to an appeal and investigation with DWP; outcome case closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

Strategy received one enquiry as follows:

- Projects and Programmes Team received one complaint in relation to a noise complaint due to road works; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration

Governance received one enquiry as follows:

- Democratic Support received one complaint in relation to an appeal against the refusal of a school place; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration

Regeneration received one enquiry as follows:

- Planning received one complaint in relation to lack of response to a planning enquiry; outcome passed to investigation team for further consideration

5.4 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries

During 1 October to 31 December 2020 the council received two Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation the Landlord's handling of and response to a repair request and a request for compensation; outcome awaiting Ombudsman's decision
- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to visits to a property and various issues; outcome awaiting Ombudsman's 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. The 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 for Adults and Children's Services to ensure they use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements. See attached Appendix 4, Learning dashboard.