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SECTION 1:

Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health Complaints Activity

1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021

1.0 Children's and Education Services – Complaint Activity

1.1 Informal Complaints

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for young people/children, parents, advocates and carers to raise issues of concern without those matters being treated as formal complaints, as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner. These are referred to as informal complaints; 17 informal complaints were received during 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 compared to 11 informal complaints received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020; an increase of six cases. Out of the 17 informal complaints, one enquiry was received via an advocacy service.

1.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received ten stage one Children's and Education Services complaints compared to ten during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020, a consistent number of cases received. The ten complaints received during this period refer to five separate service areas. The highest figure of five cases referred to the SEND Team. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. The following customer groups submitted complaints to the council; nine parents and one relative. All ten complaints logged and investigated were submitted via email. No stage one complaints were received via an advocacy service. Out of the ten complaints logged and investigated during this period, one case was upheld (at fault), five cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and four cases not upheld (not at fault).

1.3 Timescales

Out of the ten complaints logged and investigated during this period, no complaints were dealt with in accordance with the Children's Act. Ten complaints were dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and procedure (Non-Children's Act) with a response timescale of 21 calendar days; the average timescale for complaint responses was 17 days. The customer feedback team regularly reviews response times with Children's Services to improve timescales and complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint, whilst providing realistic timescales.

1.4 Stage Two Complaints

During this period 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021, the council received no statutory stage two complaints; this is in comparison to no complaint cases received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

The council received no children's and education stage two complaints in accordance with our corporate complaints policy and procedure. This is in comparison to three cases received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

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1.5 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 complaints procedure; a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel. During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 no complaints escalated to a stage three panel during this period; this is in comparison to no stage three cases during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

1.6 Complaint Category

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

1.7 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. During this period 32 compliments were received for Children's Services, compared to four during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020. Safeguarding and Exploitation team received eight compliments followed by Court Team receiving six compliments and Adoption@Heart and Child Assessment Team both received 3 compliments. See Appendix 4 for compliments.

2.0 Public Health – Complaint Activity

- 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 a separate complaint process managed by Health Services. In relation to Public Health complaints, there has been no complaints received during 1 October to 31 December 2021; this is in comparison to no complaints received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020.

3.0 Adult Services – Complaint Activity

3.1 Informal Complaints

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for adult complaints to be resolved informally utilising a number of resolution methods as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner. During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received 13 informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to six informal complaints received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020, an increase of seven cases.

3.2 Stage One Complaints

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received eight formal complaints compared to seven during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020, representing an increase of one case during this period. The eight complaints received covered eight separate service areas, each consistently receiving one complaint. All eight complaints were received via email. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. During this period,

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five complaints received were in relation to commissioned services – see Appendix 1. Out of the eight cases logged and investigated during this period, one case was upheld, no cases partially upheld and six cases not upheld. One case has not been finalised and is currently under investigation.

Out of the eight complaint cases received, no cases escalated to stage two under the corporate complaints policy and procedure.

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

All eight complaints logged and investigated during this period were dealt with in accordance with the Statutory Adults procedure with a response timescale of 18 working days. Cases responded to outside of the ten working day organisational 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.

3.5 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. 121 compliments were received during 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 relating to Adult Services compared to 19 during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020. 109 compliments were received for Welfare Rights, followed by five compliments received for Community OT Team. See Appendix 4 for 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 October 2021 to 31 December 2021

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

4.1 Informal complaint enquiries/service requests

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 334 informal complaints and service request enquiries were logged with the customer feedback team in line with our complaints policy and procedure during 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021, compared to 214 received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, missed bin collection, contaminated bins, appeals, parking enquiries, litter or enquiries that fall outside of the complaints policy and procedure jurisdiction. All enquiries were logged and resolved informally or sign posted to the correct process without going through the corporate complaints procedure; this provides a swift outcome and resolution for the customer by resolving concerns at service level.

4.2 Corporate stage 1 complaints

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received 27 stage one corporate complaints compared to 43 received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020; a decrease of 16 cases. Out of the 27 cases logged and investigated, eight cases were upheld (at fault) and 19 not upheld (not at fault). The 27 complaints cover nine separate service areas, the highest figure of 13 complaints refer to Waste Management, followed by Licensing received four cases. The 13 complaints for Waste Management refer to general waste as follows, seven bin collections, two officer conduct, one assisted waste collection, one alleged damage to property, one lack of service/delays in responding and one bulky waste collection. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those matters at service level. Out of the 27 stage one complaints received, 21 cases were submitted via email, three cases via telephone, two cases via written correspondence and one case via webform.

4.3 Corporate Complaint Category

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the main issue of complaint involved failure to provide a service (10), conduct of employees (8); dissatisfaction of council policies (3), failure to achieve standards/quality (3), delays with responding or administration (3).

4.4 Corporate Timescales

The average response time for responding to each complaint is 15 days for this period; this is in comparison to 13 days for 1 October 2020 to 30 December 2020. The response timescale for stage 1 complaints responding within 21 calendar days (corporate complaints policy and procedure) is 93%. Out of the 27 cases logged and investigated during this period, 25 cases were responded to within 21 calendar days and 2 cases responded to 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

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work with service groups to improve this timescale. Cases responded to outside of the 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.

4.5 Stage 2 corporate complaints

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received seven stage two corporate complaints compared to five cases for 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020, an increase of two cases. Out of the seven cases received, one case was upheld (at fault) and three cases partially upheld (partially at fault) and three cases not upheld (not at fault).

Stage two complaints received are as follows:

City Housing and Environment received five cases as follows:

- Waste Management received one case in relation to assisted waste collection; outcome not upheld
- Waste Management received one case in relation to location of a bin; outcome partially upheld; appropriate learning and remedy has been put in place
- Private Sector Housing received one case in relation to gaining entry into a property without consent; outcome partially upheld; appropriate, learning and remedy has been put in place
- Private Sector Housing received one case in relation to handling of personal data and breach of data on register; outcome upheld; appropriate learning and remedy has been put in place
- Arboricultural Team received one case in relation to maintenance of tree near property; outcome partially upheld; appropriate learning and remedy has been put in place

Regeneration received one case as follows:

- Planning received one case in relation to a planning application process and impact of direct daylight; outcome not upheld

Governance received one case as follows:

- Equality and Diversity Team received one case in relation to equality identification information on the council's online form; 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 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received 32 compliments; this is in comparison to 71 received during 1 October 2020 to 31 December 2020. Planning Department received 17, Waste Management received four followed by Highways receiving two. See Appendix 4 for compliments.

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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 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received three Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries as follows:

Adult Services received one complaint as follows:

- Adult Services and Health Partnership received one complaint in relation to professionals involved in care, failure to provide intensive care support and failure of nursing home/trust adequately addressing complaints and failure to supply health records; outcome not upheld, no maladministration

Children's Services received one complaint as follows;

- Children and Young People in Care received one complaint in relation to no offers of suitable fostering placements and failure to communicate in relation to whereabouts of a young person; outcome upheld, no further action. The LGSCO confirmed this case will be recorded as a satisfactory remedy carried out by the council

Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint as follows;

- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to the standard of work carried out by tradesman when completing adaptations to a property under a grant from the council; the council failed to carry out a follow up inspection in relation to the quality of work; outcome not upheld, no maladministration

5.2 Housing Ombudsman (HO) Enquiries

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received four enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

- One enquiry received in relation to the treatment the resident received while in temporary accommodation, conduct of tenancy officers when securing a new tenancy, the response to their reports that their personal property was returned from storage damaged and the duplication of council tax charges; outcome falls outside of the HO's jurisdiction; complainant sign posted accordingly
- One enquiry received in relation to the response to the resident's damp and mould reports; outcome awaiting HO's decision
- One enquiry received in relation to the handling of repairs to the paving and shed; outcome no maladministration
- One enquiry received in relation to the landlord's handling of the resident's reports concerning the condition of the front garden, security and key access; outcome awaiting HO's decision

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

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received eight Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman assessment enquiries as follows:

Children's Services received three enquiries as follows;

- Children and Young People in Care received one enquiry in relation to actions of the fostering service; outcome case progressed to further consideration by the LGSCO
- Education SEND Team received one enquiry in relation to failure to produce draft EHCP within legal timescales, data breach and officer conduct; outcome progressed to a full investigation
- Strengthening Families Team received one enquiry in relation to section 7 report content and recommendations; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

Regeneration received two enquiries as follows:

- Planning received one enquiry in relation to how a planning application was dealt with close to the complainant's home; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action
- Planning received one enquiry in relation to officer conduct; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

Finance received one enquiry as follows:

- Risk and Insurance Team received one enquiry in relation to allegations of refuse officers damaging a front wall and insurance response; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

Governance received one enquiry as follows:

- Electoral Services/Legal Services received one enquiry in relation to electoral fraud; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

Wolverhampton Homes received one enquiry as follows:

- Wolverhampton Homes received one enquiry in relation to eviction from a tenanted property; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

5.4 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries

During 1 October 2021 to 31 December 2021 the council received four Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries as follows:

Wolverhampton Homes received four enquiries as follows:

- One enquiry in relation to the landlord's handling of plastering carried out in a property and the time the landlord is taking to respond to their formal complaint; outcome premature complaint

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- One enquiry in relation to reports of rubble left in the garden, issues with the drainage system and reports of disrepair to the kitchen flooring; outcome premature complaint
- One enquiry in relation to HO requesting a copy of the final decision statement referenced in Wolverhampton Homes complaint letter; outcome premature complaint
- One enquiry in relation to the lack of a response and action to access to heating or hot water; outcome premature complaint

6.0 Learning/Action Plans

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. Customer Feedback Team and Directorates are committed to learning and require the completion of a tracking form/learning log from each complaint investigated at all stages. When a complaint is upheld/partially 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 also attend regular quality assurance meetings for Adults and Children's Services and Waste Liaison Meetings to ensure they use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements and implement learning into their practice improvement plans.

See attached Appendix 4, Learning dashboard