

Complaints Scrutiny Report - Action Plan Jan

Report Ref	Rec. No.	Recommendation	Who by	When by	Stage
What complaints information information is provided by the council and how is it communicated to res					
3.2.1	1.1	The panel felt that it would be useful if complaints (and compliments) would appear on the main page of the council's website with comprehensive drop down menus to facilitate ease of navigation. Alternatively there could be a link to the complaints pages on the main page.	CD	end of March	
3.1.3 - 3.1.6 3.1.11	1.2	The complaints policy and any downloadable forms should be more easily accessible from the front pages of the website. All forms should be up to date and contain the correct information and clear instructions of what to do with the completed form.	CD	end of March	
3.1.2	1.3	A more reader friendly version of the complaints policy should be available online for customers.	CD	end of March	
3.1.3	1.4	It would be helpful to have guidance notes to assist residents to complete any online forms	CD	end of March	
3.1.1	1.5	The complaints booklet/pack should be more readily available in hard copy and from Access Croydon, libraries, etc to cater to those customers who are not able access the internet to complete the form online or download and print documents. Perhaps a shorter version of the booklet could be produced and offered with the feedback form	CD	end of March	
How do customers make a complaint?					
3.2.5	2.1	Residents should be able to report their complaint to an officer if they are already speaking to someone either face to face or in person and, in the interest of customer service, should not be directed to end the call and then log the complaint online.	MT/CD	TBC	
How easy is it to access the service in order to give a compliment or make a complaint?					

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3.3.2 - 3.3.6	3.1	The complaints procedure needs to cater to all needs and abilities. The website and online complaints reporting facility needs to be more user friendly for more vulnerable residents and those who are not computer savvy.	CD	end of March	
	3.2	Contact centre phone menus should contain an option for complaints that callers can select and to report their complaint.	CD	not agreed	
3.3.8	3.3	A dedicated phone number or option(s) from the main menu for those who would like to report a complaint or compliment via the phone.	not agreed	not agreed	
3.3.5 3.3.7	3.4	A reference number and/or contact details of the officer/manager dealing with the complaint should be sent to the complainant along with acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint	not agreed	not agreed	
3.3.4	3.5	Allow more time for completing the online form to avoid time out issues when inputting information about the complaint. Also review the character count – currently 5000 characters per box and provide an option to upload files or pictures to aid in making the complaint.	CD to liaise with MT		
3.3.5 3.3.7	3.6	Allow more time for completing the online form to avoid time out issues when inputting information about the complaint. Also review the character count – currently 5000 characters per box and provide an option to upload files or pictures to aid in making the complaint.	agreed	agreed	

Do residents understand the complaints process?

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3.4.1	4.1	The complaints pack needs to be more readily available in printed form for those who may not have access to the website or online facilities. These should be available from Access Croydon, libraries, community hubs, etc to raise awareness of the complaints procedure and advise customers how to complain should the need arise.	CD	end of March	
3.4.3	4.2	The existence of a complaints procedure and policy needs to be publicised as widely as possible to residents. However, the panel do recognise that this might generate excessive complaints and overburden the existing system.	CD	end of March	
3.4.3	4.3	There should be a link on the main page of the website that takes customers to the complaints pages to avoid having to search around in order to make a complaint	CD	end of March	
3.4.5	4.4	The role of the housing complaints panel and other designated persons should be highlighted in the policy document so complainants know what their options are and are at liberty to bring their complaint before the panel if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint at stage 2.	CD	end of March	
3.4.6	4.5	The complaints booklet available online for download needs to be updated and the correct contact details for the ombudsman inserted	CD	end of March	
Quality of responses					
3.5.2	5.1	Staff dealing with stage one complaints need training and refresher courses on how to respond consistently and effectively to reports of dissatisfaction from customers. Training should help staff to tease out the issues and address all of the concerns raised in the original complaint.	not agreed	not agreed	

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3.5.2	5.2	There should be quality checking and proof reading on all response letters that are sent out to complainants either by officers or by a resident panel.	ALL	ongoing	
3.5.3	5.3	Letters should be more concise and less repetitive and have more of an empathetic tone even when the council is in the right.	CD HB	agreed	
3.5.2 3.5.3	5.4	Quarterly complaints assessments should be done on a random sample of complaints to check customer satisfaction levels, whether the complaints are being handled well and to identify any trends and learning needs that arise with a view to service improvement.	ALL	ongoing	
3.5.2	5.5	Someone needs to take a holistic view of complaints in order to identify any emerging trends and to deal with them accordingly before they escalate further	ALL	ongoing	
	5.6	Review timescales for responding to complaints. Acknowledge complaints within 2 working days of receipt.	not agreed	not agreed	
	5.7	Where possible, investigating officers should meet with complainants to discuss the issue and to give the complainant the opportunity to discuss the evidence further.	ALL	ongoing	

Additional findings:

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	6.1	Issues with the IT system for logging complaints need to be addressed and resolved to facilitate smoother running of the complaints handling procedure. The complaints handling team should have a system that allows them to gather the relevant information in order to fully investigate the complaint.	ALL	Ongoing	
	6.2	There needs to be a change in the way that the various services view complaints. It should not be looked at negatively, and is an opportunity to improve services rather than a criticism.	CD	not agreed	
	6.3	Complainants should receive an 'exit' questionnaire to monitor their experience and satisfaction levels with the complaints procedure (not the outcome) once their cases have been investigated, responded to and closed. These should then be regularly reviewed and any trends identified for service improvement purposes.	CD	Jul-20	
	7.1	Yaw suggested having a 'How to Complain' booklet giving residents instructions and tips of how to complete the complaint form to include relevant information,	CD	ongoing	
	8.1	Housing Green Paper looks at complaints reporting and making it easier for residents to complain. When it comes out, panel will review this scrutiny exercise.	SP	ongoing	

CD: Clare Davis - Complaints Manager

HB: Hazel Butcher - Members and Resident Services Manager

MT: Michelle Thake

SM: Sharon Murphy - Interim Head of Tenancy & Neighbourhood Services

VF: Verna Francis - Senior Resident Involvement Officer

SP: Scrutiny panel

January 2020

Action

Identifies

Agreed

Form to be removed from website as it has been agreed not appropriate place and hard copy to be made available via other sources.

Agreed

Agreed

Agreed

To be discussed further. May need to write something clear for the website to differentiate between stage one and stage two. Clare will look into this with the website update.

January 2020

Action

Not advisable as we are trying to resolve problems before the complaint is made.

Not advisable as we are trying to resolve problems before the complaint is made.

The service dealing with the complaint should be sending out an acknowledgement e-mail with the reference number within 5 days. Online complaints form was recently reviewed. Also have a new CRM system that will generate an auto acknowledgement and reference number.

Staff are encouraged at the 1st point of contact to resolve problems, instead of escalating and leading to complaints: Michelle Thake

Already implemented

January 2020

Action

Agreed

Agreed

Agreed

Agreed

Agreed

CD advised CRM has simplified the complaints process, training is being rolled out to all relevant staff. HB advised training is also being rolled out in repairs. Hints and tips are already provided to staff via ongoing training

January 2020

Action

There is no standard templates across the council, but VF will provide sample letters scrutinised by panel to CD and HB, SM to liaise on improving responses. CD advised Feedback is currently given in regards to poor quality responses for stage 1; stage 2 are checked by Executive Directors.

Monthly spot checks are done on 3 letters per officer for which they receive feedback and scores.

Already implemented. HB also advised that any trends or problems are picked up and added to their service improvement plans. Also surveying stage 2 complainants to gauge their experience of the process.

Already implemented: HB does satisfaction surveys on a monthly, quarterly basis. CD quarterly.

Not agreed. It would be ideal, but due to resources limited to current 5 days

Already in place on a limited scale only due to limited resources. Done on a case by case basis and where the complainant is vulnerable or the case is complex. Needs to be promoted

uary 2020

Action

Relates to old CRM system. The new CRM system was rolled out in July 2019 and not ideal but is more user friendly

Cultural change needed universally, but CD already takes this approach. CD will look at complaints policy to include this suggestion and also add the proviso 'that abusive or personal comments will not be tolerated.'

Already in place on a trial basis, CD will review the process in July 2020.

CD to take forward

Scrutiny panel to review