

Report for: Statutory Officer Group – 18/10/16

Item number: To be added by the Committee Section

Title: Complaints Information and Analysis for Period 2015/16

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Ward(s) affected: N/A

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Non Key Decision

1. Describe the Issue under Consideration

- 1.1 As part of the governance arrangements for managing complaints within the authority, a report is taken to Statutory Officer Group (SOG) each year. This report gives information on performance across all complaints received and highlights the statutory complaints against both Children's and Adults Social Care services.
- 1.2 In addition, the report looks at the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman and the outcome of these.
- 1.3 Finally the report highlights some next steps being taken as an authority in relation to complaints.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the report and proposed next steps are noted by SOG

3. Overview of Complaints Process

- 3.1 As an authority we welcome feedback and complaints and have set challenging targets to respond to 95% of Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days and 80% of Independent Reviews (formally Stage 2 complaints) within 25 working days.
- 3.2 The majority of complaints are received electronically through email or the online form.

Submission Method	Percentage 2015/16	Comparison with 2014/15
Email / Online Form	85%	↑ from 77%
Post	11%	↔
Phone Call	5%	↓ from 11%
Personal Visit	Negligible	↓ from 1%

3.3 In order to encourage channel shift steps have been taken to remove hard copy paper forms from public access points and the direct email / postal address for the complaints team is not publicised.

3.4 From May 2014, calls have been directed to the general Customer Services phone number with the aim being for complaints and issues to be resolved at that first contact. A steady decrease in calls has been the result of promotion of the online offer via in-queue messages and by the officers themselves.

4. Volumes and Performance

4.1 In 2015/16 we closed 1,818 Stage 1 complaints and responded to 83% on time.

4.2 This is a decrease in the performance from 2014/15 however the response time target changed from 15 working days to 10 working days in July 2015 which may account for this.

4.3 The below table shows the comparison between 2015/16 and 2014/15 and specifically reflects an issue with Children’s Social Care complaints:

Submission Method	2014/15 (Total / % Replied to on-time)	2015/16 (Total / % Replied to on-time)
Stage 1 Complaints	1793 90%	1818 83%
Childrens Social Care Complaints	73 85%	28 54%
Adults Social Care Complaints	42 95%	39 95%
Independent Reviews (Stage 2)	396 77%	443 85%

4.4 54% of Corporate Stage 1 complaints were upheld or partly upheld (compared to 56% for the previous year). A complaint may be partly upheld if it was about more than one issue and it was found that the council was at fault in one but not all of the issues raised, or if the council was partly at fault but the complainant’s own actions contributed to the problem.

4.5 This shows that in over half of all cases, the investigating officer agreed with the complainant that the Council had done something wrong.

4.6 The below table breaks down this information across all areas

	% Upheld / Partly Upheld	
	2014/15	2015/16
Stage 1 Complaints	56%	54%
Childrens Social Care Complaints	32%	32%
Adults Social Care Complaints	57%	61%
Independent Reviews (Stage 2)	36%	36%

5. Complaints Analysis

5.1 The following table shows the number of issues raised and % upheld broken down by Service Area – it is worth noting that some complaints contain multiple issues.

Service Area	Number of Issues Raised	Percentage Upheld / Partly Upheld
Veolia	399	74%
SSC - Revenues	242	43%
Customer Services	231	69%
SSC - Benefits	230	59%
Parking Infrastructure	166	37%
Housing Support & Options	100	40%
Housing Needs and Lettings	74	27%
Development Management and Planning Enforcement	53	28%
Sustainable Transport	47	53%
Customer Services - Libraries	43	58%
Neighbourhood Action Team	40	40%
Parking Operations	39	46%
Housing Improvement - Private Sector	32	34%
Regulatory Services - Enforcement Response	27	30%
Children in Care	22	41%
ASBAT	19	26%
Parks and Leisure Services - Arb and Allotments	16	44%
Planning Policy and Transport Planning	16	31%
Regulatory Services - Pest Control	13	54%
Parks and Leisure Services - Green Spaces (Events)	12	17%
Regulatory Services – Licensing	10	60%

5.2 The following table shows the top 5 Service Areas for volume of complaints received and a comparison with data from 2014/15. Veolia continues to be the highest complained about area.

Service Area	Volume of Complaints 2014/15	Volume of Complaints 2015/16
Veolia	278	↑ 330
Customer Services	236	↓ 233
SSC - Revenues	259	↓ 213
SSC - Benefits	227	↓ 209
Parking Infrastructure	96	↑ 144

- 5.3 The top reason for complaint was that the service was of a poor standard and these complaints were upheld in 64% of cases.
- 5.4 The following table shows the top 5 reasons for complaint and the % upheld in each case.

Issues raised in complaint	No. of complaints	% of complaints upheld
Service of poor standard	554	64%
Decision was wrong	266	39%
Service incomplete	251	37%
Employee Behaviour	246	45%
Communication inadequate	193	51%

- 5.5 The category of “employee behaviour” has seen the most significant change from 2014/15 with a 37% increase of complaints received from 156 to 246.

6. Independent Reviews

- 6.1 The overall escalation rate from a Stage 1 complaint to a Stage 2 complaint (termed Internal Review) is 10%. Of the 446 Independent Reviews received 159 (36%) were upheld or partly upheld. A high upheld rate at this stage indicates that complaints have not been addressed and resolved adequately at the first stage.
- 6.2 The following table shows the top 5 areas that received Independent Reviews and the % upheld in each case.

Service Area	No. of Independent Reviews	% upheld
Housing Operations	71	37%
Neighbourhood Action (including Veolia)	66	62%
HFH Repairs	57	54%
SSC – Revenues	36	14%
Traffic Management	32	44%

7. Ombudsman Cases

7.1 The Local Government and Housing Ombudsman (LGO) reviewed 99 complaints about Haringey Council (HFH manage their performance separately), a decrease of 11% from 2014/15. Of these complaints 32% were upheld against our internal target of 30%.

7.2 The following table breaks down the outcome of all 99 cases.

Ombudsman Decision	Number Received	% of Total
Closed after initial enquiry - out of jurisdiction / no further action	52	53%
Upheld - Maladministration & Injustice	27	27%
Not upheld - No Maladministration	11	11%
Upheld - Maladministration, No Injustice	5	5%
Not upheld – no further action	4	4%

7.3 The following table shows the 5 areas that received the most referrals to the Ombudsman. Housing Services appear to be the area of most concern with 71% of the cases considered being upheld.

Service Area	No. of complaints considered	% Upheld
Environmental Services & Community Safety	22	32%
Community Housing Services	14	71%
Shared Service Centre (Revenues and Benefits)	13	15%
Adult Social Services	11	45%
Customer Services	11	0%

8. Next Steps

8.1 It is recognised that the overall volume of complaints received at all stages is high and work needs to be undertaken to understand the demand better and pre-empt requests where possible. We also need to look at action taken at the first point of contact to ensure that is as good as it can be,

8.2 We will continue to maximise the relationship between the Ombudsman and Haringey. The Ombudsman has introduced an “Assistant Ombudsman” responsible for relationship management, partnership meetings will be arranged where performance and learning can be shared.

8.3 The Housing Ombudsman has launched a role focused on development and learning. We have been in contact with them and they are coming into conduct some focused training around engaging with Landlords for both Haringey and HFH.

8.4 Haringey is already part of a London Wide Local Authority partnership group which looks at complaints (both statutory and non-statutory) and FOIs. It meets quarterly

and shares best practice and future plans. We will look to see if this area of learning can be strengthened.

- 8.5 Regular half day training courses are already run by the team. These will be more proactively advertised and will be part of a wider campaign to raise awareness across the Council so staff are aware of their responsibilities and role in managing the organisation's reputation.
- 8.6 The Feedback and Information Governance Team has recently moved into the Shared Service Centre (SSC). As part of this move we will be looking a reviewing existing processes and policies and developing an action plan for the Council to improve performance and share learning.