Report for:	Overview and Scrutiny – 25th March 2019

Title:	**Complaints and Member Enquiries Annual Report 2017/2018**

Report authorised by :	Richard Grice: Director of Customers, Transformation & Resources

Lead Officer:	Debbie Darling: Acting FIG & Business Support Manager Tel: 0208 489 4763 Email: Debbie.darling@haringey.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

Report for Key/
Non Key Decision: N/A – report for noting

1. Describe the issue under consideration

1.1 This is the annual report and analysis of Complaints and Member Enquiries for the period 2017/2018.

1.2 Due to the need to prioritise work associated with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) programme of work, this report is being presented later than usual. Going forward we anticipate the annual performance report for 2018/19 to be issued in July 2019.

2. Input Requested from O&S

2.1 It is requested that O&S note the contents of the report and proposed next steps.

3. Complaints: Background and Summary

3.1 Haringey Council welcomes feedback and complaints and has set challenging targets to respond to 95% of Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days and 80% of Independent Reviews (second stage complaints) within 25 working days.

3.2 The Business Change team, based within Customer Services and Libraries, administer complaints at the first stage; the Feedback & Information Governance Team, based within the Shared Service Centre, administer and investigate second stage complaints: Independent Reviews.

3.3 The majority of complaints are received electronically through email or via an online form. In order to encourage channel-shift hard copy paper forms have been removed from public access points and the direct email/postal address for the complaints team is not publicised.

3.4 There has been a small increase of complaints being received direct by email in the past year and a decrease in communication by post and phone call.

Method	16/17	17/18
Email	56%	60%
Online form	31%	30%
Letter	9%	6%
Phone Call	4%	3%

3.5 As per the below table, there has been a decrease in performance levels for 2017/18 by 4%

	Volume % Replied to on-time 2016/17	Volume % Replied to on-time 2017/18
Stage 1 Complaints	1,896 89%	1,396 85%
Children's Social Care Complaints	16 56%	21 71%
Adults Social Care Complaints	61 100%	56 96%

3.6 Corporate Resources and Children's Safeguarding have had an increase in late cases compared to 2016/17, this was mainly due to an increase in volume and staff changes. Plans have been put in place in both of these Services to prioritise complaint responses going forward

3.7 Children's Social Care complaints performance has improved from the previous year despite a slight increase in the number of cases received. This is due to a greater effort by the Service to resolve issues informally by meeting with complainants to discuss their concerns before going through the formal process. Adults Social Care complaints performance is still on target at 95%.

3.8 Where it is accepted that the Authority is at fault in some way the complaint is "upheld". 47% of first stage complaints were upheld in 2017/18, a 6% reduction on 2016/17.

3.9 The following table shows the upheld rate across the different service areas. The majority of upheld complaints were for the three council services that receive the most complaints and relate to delays in processing claims or responding to correspondence.

Service Area	% of Complaints Upheld
Environmental Services and Neighbourhoods	34%
Corporate Resources	32%
Customer Services and Libraries	20%
All other Services	14%

3.10 The following table shows the five Service Areas that received the most complaints in both 2017/18, as expected they are also the service areas that interact most with residents.

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Service Area	No. of Complaints	% of Total Complaints Received
Revenues (Council Tax and Business Rates)	292	21%
Commissioning & Client Highways & Parks, Community & Safety, Enforcement, Waste & Active Communities	201	14%
Customer Services - Contact Centre	201	14%
Operations Environment & Neighbourhoods, Highways and Parking	167	12%
Benefits	150	11%

3.11 The following table shows the top reasons why people submit complaints:

Complaint Reason	%
Poor standard of service	33%
Inadequate / inaccurate communication	28%
Failure to provide a service	23%
Dissatisfaction with policy / decision	8%
Employee Behaviour	7%

4. Stage Two Complaints (Internal Reviews)

4.1 The Feedback and Information Governance (FIG) Team reviews Stage Two complaints for both the Council and Homes for Haringey. The following table shows the performance over the past two years

Stage Two	2016/17	2017/18
Volume	402	280
% responded to on-time (Target 80%)	84%	87%

4.2 All first stage responses provide the complainant with details on how to escalate their complaint to the second stage should they remain dissatisfied. These are called Stage Two Complaints or Independent Reviews. A total of 20% took their complaints to Stage Two. Of the 280 investigated, a total of 21% were upheld or partially upheld. The following table breaks this information down across Service Areas;

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Service Area	No of Stage 2s	% of Total Stage 2s	No. upheld / partly upheld	% of total upheld / partly upheld cases
Homes For Haringey	137	49%	62	71%
Environment & Neighbourhoods	59	21%	10	11%
Corporate Resources	37	13%	6	7%
Customer Services & Libraries	15	5%	4	5%
Planning	12	4%	1	1%
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	7	3%	1	1%
Children's Services - Early Help and Prevention	5	2%	1	1%
Adult Social Services	3	1%	1	1%
Commissioning	2	1%	1	1%
Corporate Governance	2	1%	0	0%
Schools and Learning	1	0%	0	0%
Total	**280**		**87**	

4.3   Where appropriate, compensation is awarded to a complainant as part of the resolution of their complaint. The following table breaks down the amounts awarded across the different Service Areas;

Service Area	Financial Redress £
Homes for Haringey	17, 334.84
Children's Services Early Help & Safeguarding & Social Care	15,898.32
Adult Social Care	4,650.00
Corporate Resources	575.00
Customer Services and Libraries	175.00
Environment & Neighbourhood	170.00
Total	39,013.16

5. Complaints: Next Steps

5.1   Our priority will be to continue working in partnership with all Services, including Homes for Haringey to see how we can improve our complaints performance, this includes how we share learning and best practice and to support with training where required.

5.2   We are reviewing the current split between the Feedback team who process first stage complaints and member enquiries and the FIG team which are responsible for the complaints and member enquiries' policy and procedure. Currently these teams sit in two separate parts of the council, but we are considering whether a more coherent and consistent service could be provided if the teams are merged.

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6. Member Enquiries

6.1 In 2017/18 a total of 2,249 enquiries were received from Members including enquiries on behalf of customers and residents from Haringey Councillors (74%) and Members of Parliament (26%).

6.2 The target is to respond to 95% of Member Enquiries within the 10 working days. In 2017/2018 the response rate was 89%.

6.3 The following table shows the performance data across the last three years

	Number	% Replied to on-time
2017/18	2,249	89%
2016/17	3,042	91%
2015/16	2,665	88%

6.4 The following table shows the breakdown of Member Enquiries received across service areas.

Service Area	No. of MEs	% of total MEs
Environment & Neighbourhoods	1178	53%
Corporate Resources	330	15%
Planning	181	8%
Adult Social Services	113	5%
Housing and Growth	107	5%
Customer Services & Libraries	73	3%
Regeneration	59	3%
Children's Services - Safeguarding & Social Care	43	1%
Children's Services - Early Help and Prevention	38	1%
Schools and Learning	37	1%
Commissioning	36	1%
Corporate Governance	28	1%
Strategy & Communications	13	1%
Public Health	11	1%
Transformation and Resources	2	1%

6.5 The following table breaks this information down further for the top 3 service areas

Environment & Neighbourhoods	53%
Operations	27%
Community Safety & Enforcement	13%
Commissioning & Client	13%

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Corporate Resources	15%
SSC - Benefits	10%
SSC – Revenues	5%

Planning	8%
Development Management and Planning Enforcement	7%
Planning Policy and Transport Planning	1%

6.6 The following table gives a breakdown of the issues raised within the enquiries. General Information requests relate to queries that do not involve any personal data and as such the response simply provides information - such as recycling locations or operating hours of a service. Service requests are where specific action needs to be taken as result of the request – such as clearing dumped rubbish or investigating delays in processing a housing benefit application. The reports on Respond, the database used for logging these, currently do not differentiate between the two which leads to a lack of clarity on whether the enquiries were raised when there were other avenues available.

Nature of Enquiry	%
General Information / Service Request	80%
Poor standard of service	6%
Inadequate / inaccurate communication	5%
Failure to provide a service	4%
Dissatisfaction with policy / decision	3%

6.7 Haringey Council has been taking steps to encourage residents to self-serve via apps or through the website as this is the most efficient way to report such matters due to the integration with current operating systems managed by both Homes for Haringey and Veolia (our external Waste Management contractor) rather than raise them via their Councillors.

6.8 Following on from this, as part of the induction training given to Members in April/May 2018, discussions were held on how to support residents with this. This was in addition to training provided in September 2017 which focused on managing constituent casework.

7. Complaints and Member Enquiries: Next Steps

7.1 We recognise the importance of feedback and its value in shaping our service delivery. We are currently facing challenging times across the Council with

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fewer resources and higher demand, notwithstanding that we continue to emphasise the importance of responding to Feedback and MEs.

7.2   As part of the closing activities on complaints and MEs the Feedback officers make notes on what the issue was and how it has been resolved. This information, along with the standard performance reports, is shared with Service Areas on a regular basis

7.3   Individual Service Areas use this within their team meetings to consider how to improve processes, letter templates and staff engagement. We are planning to expand on this and have lessons learnt reviews where we share best practice from other LAs and internal Services to improve this further.

7.4   We continue to review whether incoming complaints and MEs are being received through the appropriate channels and encourage self-serve wherever appropriate. Our priority is to address things quickly, correctly and via the most appropriate channel and where there are repeat issues identified we take steps to intervene.

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