



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute
Valuation Joint Board*

Customer Complaints Monitoring Report

Annual Report 2016/17

This report covers the twelve month period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. Appendix 1 contains the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman's Performance Indicators.

What is a Complaint?

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board's definition of a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Joint Board's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Joint Board.'

A complaint may relate to:

- Failure to provide a service
- Failure to achieve standards or quality of service promised by the Joint Board
- Dissatisfaction with Joint Board policies or the way they are being applied or administered
- Disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (for example an appeal) to resolve the matter
- The Joint Board's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
- Failure, negligence or delays in responding to customers' inquiries or requests
- Unhelpful or insensitive treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff
- Malice, bias or unfair discrimination
- Inadequate or incomplete provision of information and/or advice
- Failure to take account of relevant matters in coming to a decision

This list does not cover everything.

A complaint is **not**:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- A request for compensation only
- An issue that is in court or has already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- A disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists, for example in relation to council tax or non-domestic rating appeals or Electoral Registration objections
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision.

Complaints Received During 2016/17

There were a total of 14 Complaints received during 2016/17 all bar one of these related to the Electoral Registration function. Half of these complaints were regarding people who were not on the Electoral Register, most of these complaints were received during Election periods and after the registration cut off period. In 5 of these instances all legislative procedures were followed, in one instance a particularly complex and unusual case has led to a change of procedures and updated training. There was one complaint concerning the non receipt of a poll card but as the distribution of poll cards is a function for the returning officer this is out with our remit. There was one complaint regarding a postal vote application. If the application had been processed then the postal vote would have arrived while the elector was on holiday, they were advised that appointing a proxy may have been a better option, initially the elector was unhappy with this advice.

There was one complaint concerning a prescribed form that was correctly issued to a 15 year old, upon investigation it was found that the form correctly included all relevant information. One complaint was from a non EU or Commonwealth Citizen who received several invitations to register when they are not eligible. His details have been updated to ensure no unnecessary correspondence will be issued directly to him.

The complaint relating our Council Tax function related to a failure to inform the Valuation Appeal Committee of the withdrawal of an appeal, the learning from this complaint resulted in the provision of training for a member of staff.

Resolution of Complaints

Most complaints were resolved at the frontline resolution stage. With the majority resolved on either the day of receipt or the day after. Three complaints were escalated to the investigation stage and these were all closed within 20 working days.

Referral to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman

No complaints were referred to the Ombudsman

Conclusion

The number of complaints was down substantially from 2015/16 which may in part be due to the bedding in of the new system of Individual Registration that was introduced from September 2014. A number of the complaints received have resulted in changes to our procedures and training for staff. We view this learning from complaints as a valuable resource.

R Nicol

6th July 2017

Appendix 1

SPSO Performance Indicators

Indicator 1: Complaints Received per 1000 of population.

0.049

Indicator 2: Closed complaints.

The number of complaints closed at stage one as a percentage of all complaints : 79%

The number of complaints closed at stage two as a percentage of all complaints: 14%

The number of complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation as a percentage of all complaints: 7%

Indicator 3: Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld.

The number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one: 36%

The number of complaints not upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one: 64%

The number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one: 0%

The number of complaints upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two: 0%

The number of complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two: 100%

The number of complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two: 0%

The number of escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 100%

The number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 0%

The number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 0%

Indicator 4: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one: 2 days

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two: 1 day

Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation: 2 days

Indicator 5: Percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.

The number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

The number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

The number of escalated complaints within 20 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension was authorised.

The number of complaints closed at stage one where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage one: 0%

The number of complaints closed at stage two where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage two: 0%

Indicator 7: Customer satisfaction

The statutory functions undertaken by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer are covered by a number of different appeal mechanisms, such as Non Domestic Valuation and Council Tax Appeals and some aspects of Electoral Registration. Representations under these are quite rightly not recorded as complaints. The resolution of these appeals can be confrontational or adversarial, despite this our staff have scored consistently highly for their professionalism and knowledge in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. The relatively low number of customer complaints does not lend itself to an analysis solely of these.

Indicator 8: Learning from Complaints

Reports of the number and type of complaints received are submitted to the management team at each meeting, normally held every 4 to 6 weeks with any trends being identified. The learning from our complaints has resulted in some changes to our processes including the treatment of ineligible electors.