



One Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

8 December 2010

Report from the Director of Strategy, Partnership & Improvement

For Information

Wards Affected:
ALL

Complaints Annual Report 2009/10

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides members of the One Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an executive summary of the key issues contained in the complaints annual report 2009/10 (attached)

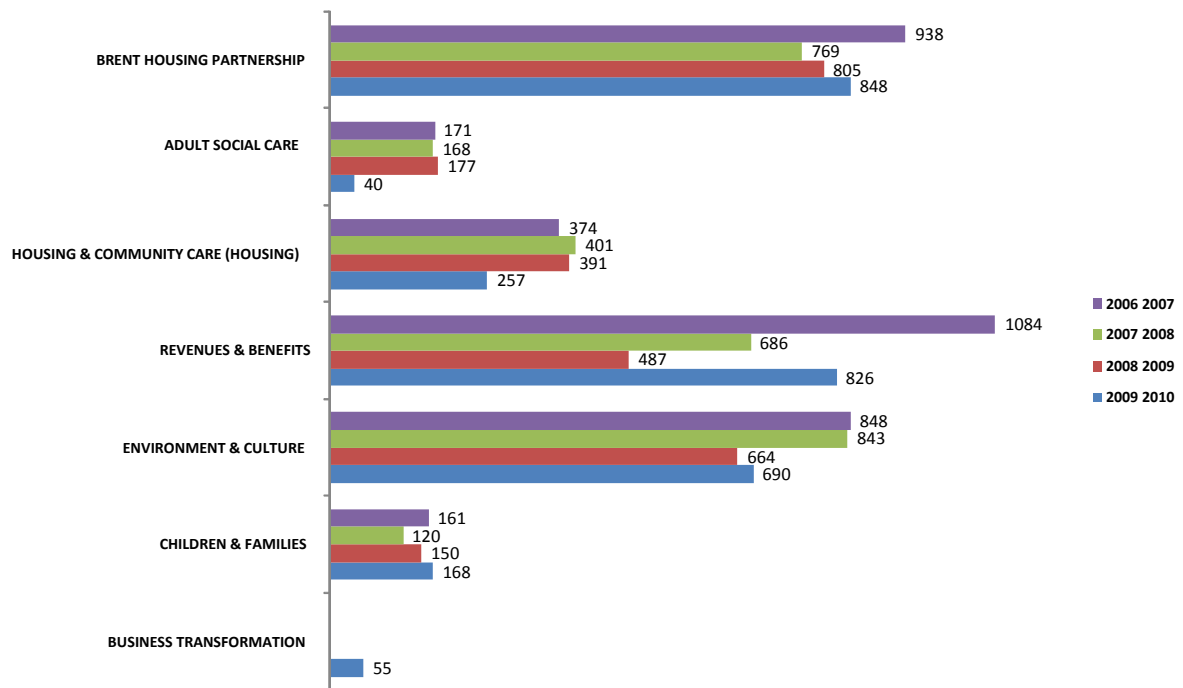
2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That members of the committee comment on the complaints annual report 2010/11

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The following table provides a service area overview of the total corporate and social care complaints received during 2009/10 and compares this figure with the three previous years. Corporate complaints represent by far the majority of complaints received by the Council. The balance is made up of adults and children and families social care complaints.

Comparison of Stage 1 complaints received between 2006/07 and 2009/10



3.2 Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) and Revenues and Benefits saw a significant increase in complaints received. In the case of BHP it is worth noting that based on the numbers received in the first two quarters of 2010/11 the overall number is expected to reduce by 25%.

3.3 In the case of Revenues and Benefits the increase in complaint numbers was in part due to the significant increase in the number of new or change in circumstance claims dealt with rising from 11,332 claims in 2008/09 to 14,456 in 2009/10. The service has witnessed major improvements over the past year which has contributed to a projected 70% decrease in complaint numbers in 2010/11.

Percentage of complaints not resolved at the first stage

3.4 The Council's target is that no more than 15% of complaints will escalate beyond stage 1. Performance against this target was patchy with Housing, Adults Social Care and BHP's rates of escalation being in excess of the target. The target escalation rate from stage 2 to 3 is 20%. None of the service areas achieved the target. The Corporate Complaints Manager will be working closely with departments to improve performance in this area.

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) complaints

3.5 77 were investigated – the same number as in 2008/09. Continuing the trend of recent years, just over 40% related to Housing matters with Environment and Culture service (25%) and Revenues and Benefits (18%) representing the other main areas.

3.6 For the third year running, the LGO did not issue any formal reports against the Council. Seven complaints resulted in local settlements. This is when the

ombudsman asks the Council to carry out a specific action in order to remedy the complaint. In all other cases (70 in total) the LGO found no reason to criticise the Council's actions. This represents one of the lowest local settlement rates in London.

How quickly did we respond to complaints?

- 3.7 The target is to respond to stage 1 and stage 2 complaints within 15 and 20 working days respectively. The corresponding response rates were 77% and 75%. Figures for the first two quarters of 2010/11 indicate that there has been across the board improvements in response time.

Developments in complaint handling

- 3.8 With effect from April 2009 a simplified one-stage complaint process was introduced for adult social care complaints. The previous process had been three stages. The new process also required the Council and the NHS to ensure that complaints that cut across both organisations were investigated in a coordinated way with the complainant receiving one comprehensive response.

3.9 ***Looking towards 2011/12***

- In recognition of the policy and service improvement role that complaints management has within the organisation, and as part of the wider Council reorganisation, the departmental complaints teams reporting line changed to the Corporate Complaints Manager within the Strategy, Partnerships and Improvement Department with effect from October 2010. The Corporate Complaints Manager will be working with departmental colleagues on a range of projects to promote consistent joined up complaints management across the Council.
- More work will be done to focus on ensuring that service improvements arising from complaint investigations are properly recorded and implemented.
- With effect from October 2010 the areas that the Ombudsman can investigate was extended to include complaints about self-funded care provision in respect of adult social care complaints. The next complaint report will comment on the impact that this has had.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 None

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 None

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None

7.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

7.1 None

Background Papers

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