

Appendix D - Learning and improvements arising from complaints – summary and selected examples 2023/24

Complaint investigations provide learning and improvement opportunities across all areas of the Council. Sections 3.36 to 3.53 of the complaints annual report for 2023/24 (appendix A) include detailed information on learning points arising from Ombudsman complaints. Service improvements arising from complaints are also detailed in sections 3.2.48 to 3.2.50 of the annual housing complaints report (appendix E), in section 14 of the annual ASC complaint report (appendix B), and section 10 of the annual CYP complaint report (appendix C).

The further examples below from second stage corporate complaint investigations during 2023/24 have been selected to indicate the range of learning and improvements highlighted to various areas of the Council:

Housing Management

- A Housing Management Service complaint in which the complainant was adamant that repairs operatives did not bring ID cards with them when carrying out repairs led to a general reminder to contractors of the importance of carrying and displaying ID cards when carrying out work to tenants' homes.

Housing Needs Service

- A Housing Needs Service complainant claimed to be unaware that her homeless application had been closed. This resulted in Housing Needs Service officers being reminded of the importance of notifying applicants in writing when their applications are closed due to a lack of engagement from the applicant. If the application is not formally closed, and the applicant contacts the Housing Needs Service again at a later point, they can claim that they have been waiting for further contact from their case worker and that the service is responsible for delay in progressing their case.

Planning and Development Service

- A complainant alleged an apparent lack of transparency relating to pre-application presentations to the Planning Committee when major developments are proposed. This resulted in further information being added to the Council's website. The planning pages of the Council's website now explain in more detail the role of Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs). The pages explain that the purpose of a PPA is to provide a framework, agreed between the local planning authority and applicants or potential applicants, about the process for considering major development proposals. The website also provides transparency on the fees that need to be paid for engaging in this process.

SEND

- The parent of a child with special educational needs complained about a delay in providing him with a speech and language therapy (SALT) IT programme that had been approved to assist his learning. The delay was caused by poor communication. The standard text in written communication about this issue was therefore improved, making the purchase and reimbursement process entirely clear for parents, to ensure that there is no future delay in delivering this type of support to children with special educational needs after its provision has been approved by the service.