

Appendix H - Learning and improvements arising from complaints – summary and selected examples 2024/25

Complaint investigations provide learning and improvement opportunities across all areas of the Council. Section 4.20 of the complaints annual report for 2024/25 (**appendix A**) includes detailed information on learning points arising from complaints. Service improvements arising from complaints are also detailed in section 3.0.58 of the annual housing complaints report (**appendix E**), and section 10 of the annual CYP complaint report (**appendix C**).

The further examples below from second stage corporate complaint investigations during 2024/25 have been selected to indicate the range of learning and improvements highlighted to various areas of the Council.

Housing and Resident Services

Complaints received by Housing and Resident Services most frequently related to homelessness applications and accommodation, repairs (including outstanding repairs, damp and mould) and Council Tax enforcement activity. Case descriptions commonly described delays, residents not receiving clear updates, and concerns about decisions or actions not being explained clearly. Learning and improvements include ensuring statutory processes are followed consistently, communication is timely and accessible, and there is clear ownership of next steps and timescales.

One example is a Housing Needs Service complainant became confused about whether he was eligible to bid for social housing because two Locata accounts remained open. In fact, the complainant should not have been able to bid on Locata at all because he and his family had been satisfactorily rehoused through a homeless application. The complaint highlighted the need for Housing Needs and Support Service officers to ensure all redundant Locata accounts are closed down when a homeless application is suitably rehoused.

Service-led improvements highlighted include:

Housing Needs officers should introduce a simple “closure checklist” that must be completed before any homelessness case can be closed: the duty end decision letter has been issued to the applicant, review rights are included, key evidence/notes are on file, and the applicant has been told the outcome and next steps.

Housing Management officers are also reminded not to reschedule appointment windows on CRM for subcontracted works, as subcontractors manage their own diaries and this leads to missed appointments.

The Council Tax team will ensure the Capacity Grid has an updated list of exemptions at the start of every year.

Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Complaints received by Neighbourhoods and Regeneration most frequently related to parking enforcement and permits, with some complaints also relating to planning enforcement. Case descriptions often highlighted disagreement with decisions, concerns about whether evidence had been properly considered, and frustration with the clarity and consistency of communications. Learning and improvements include ensuring decisions are clearly

explained, evidence is properly logged and reviewed, and residents receive timely, accurate updates on appeal and investigation processes.

One example is a complainant escalated the troubles they were facing with how their vehicle crossing (dropped kerb) application was being handled, describing repeated contact with multiple officers, uncertainty about what information/actions were still required, and frustration with the pace of progress; the case description points to the importance of a single, clear route through the process and regular updates so applicants are not left guessing what happens next.

Children & Young People

Complaints received by Children & Young People most frequently related to education/service requests (input forms), front door/safeguarding and quality of service, and care planning/leaving care. Case descriptions commonly referenced concerns about timeliness, follow-up, the quality of engagement with families and young people, and clarity around decisions and next steps. Learning and improvements include strengthening communication standards, improving oversight of follow-up actions, and ensuring families and young people understand what will happen next and by when.

One example is a complaint about serious failings in a Child Protection Plan (CPP) process, where the complainant said they were not provided the final report before the court hearing despite chasing and that delays/changes were not communicated clearly; the case description highlights the importance of timely information sharing and transparent process management in vulnerable safeguarding cases.

Service-led improvements highlighted include School Admissions implementing weekly monitoring of the School Admissions mailbox to identify urgent messages, complaints or appeals that have been received but not processed.

Community Health and Wellbeing

Complaints received by Community Health and Wellbeing most frequently related to access and information, social worker/officer involvement, and hospital discharge. Case descriptions frequently described residents not being kept updated, difficulty getting timely contact, and concerns about follow-up actions. Learning and improvements include ensuring proactive communication, clear recording of actions, timely responses to safeguarding and care-related concerns, and robust follow-up where risk is identified.

One example is a complaint linked to a dispute about provider payments / reduced hours, where the case description centres on a highly vulnerable client (described as an older adult affected by polio, a wheelchair user with advanced dementia) and the complainant challenged an internal account of events and the decision-making; the case description shows why records need to be precise and why any changes to support must be clearly explained to those involved.

Finance and Resources

Complaints received by Finance and Resources were lower in volume but included facilities/access issues, insurance claims, and pensions/payroll administration. Case descriptions often focused on communication delays, unclear ownership, and the impact of errors or lack of response. Learning and improvements include ensuring clear points of contact, timely acknowledgements and updates, and quality assurance checks where errors could cause financial or personal distress.

One example is a complaint about an insurance claim appeal where the complainant described repeated chasers with no acknowledgement or update despite providing evidence, highlighting the need for clear ownership, timely responses, and transparent timescales in claim handling.