
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

30 May 2024

Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Title: 2023/24 Complaint Report

Purpose: To inform the Audit and Scrutiny Committee of the Council's complaint performance and the volumes and trends of complaints received in Financial Year 2023/24.

Recommendation: That the Committee notes the report and the information provided.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report details complaint information relating to North Ayrshire Council during 2023/24, covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 1.2 To allow comparisons to be made the report also details some complaint data relating to 2021 and 2022.
- 1.3 Performance is measured through a number of Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) performance indicators, some of which have national targets.

2. Background

- 2.1 This section contains statistical information and commentary on some of the key complaint performance indicators. More information relating to the indicators can be found in the attached report. This report is being presented to Committee earlier than is usually the case and for that reason the complaints data relating to KA Leisure is not available.

2.2 *Volume of complaints received*

Year	Volume of complaints
2021	2,827
2022	2,629
2023	1,948

2.2.1 A 26% decrease in complaints seen when comparing 2023 with the previous year.

2.3 **Complaints closed at each Stage**

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Stage One	2,671	2,510	1,888
Stage Two	156	119	151

2.3.1 Although there is no national target for the number of complaints to be closed under each Stage, the Council seeks to maximise closure at Stage One as complainants receive a quicker resolution compared to Stage Two, reduces the impact on service resources and reduces the possibility of SPSO referrals.

2.4 **Complaint outcomes**

Stage One

Outcome	
% closed as Resolved	39%
% closed as Upheld	32%
% closed as Partially Upheld	12%
% closed as Not Upheld	17%

Stage Two

Outcome	
% closed as Resolved	4%
% closed as Upheld	13%
% closed as Partially Upheld	39%
% closed as Not Upheld	44%

2.4.1 Up to 31 March 2021, a complaint that meets our complaint criteria could be upheld, partially upheld or not upheld. From 1 April 2021 a fourth outcome became available to use called 'Resolved'. Resolved complaints are where the Council has taken action to address a problem or issue without making a decision on whether there were any failings (this would happen where we agree a solution with the complainant at the outset without needing to actually investigate the complaint).

2.4.2 Complaint outcome analysis can be found in the attached report.

2.5 **Average time in working days for a full response at each Stage**

Stage One	Average number of working days to close	Target
2021	4.2	5 workings days or less
2022	4.2	5 workings days or less
2023	3.8	5 workings days or less

Stage Two	Average number of days to close	Target
2021	15.4	20 working days or less
2022	14.9	20 working days or less
2023	16.8	20 working days or less

2.5.1 The average time in working days for a response under both Stages is better than the SPSO target response timescales for the last three years.

2.6 ***Complaints closed within timescale***

Stage	% closed on time	Target
Stage One	87%	80% and above
Stage Two	88%	85% and above

2.6.1 The volume closed on time includes extended complaints that met their new due dates.

2.6.2 Further details of complaints not closed on time are contained in the attached report.

2.7 ***Changes or Improvements made as a result of complaints***

2.7.1 Not all Services can implement improvements as a result of complaints due to a number of factors, including the feasibility of making changes and resource/budget considerations. That said, improvements were implemented in some Services and a selection are noted in the attached report.

2.8 **Compliments**

2.8.1 The Council received and recorded many compliments during the year. Some praised specific individuals or teams, some related to more than one Service and some were raised by employees complimenting other employees. A selection can be found in the attached report.

3. **Proposals**

3.1 It is proposed the Committee approves the report and recognises the Council's complaint handling performance in relation to Section 2 above.

4. **Implications/Socio-economic Duty**

Financial

4.1 None.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 None.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 None.

Climate Change and Carbon

4.5 None.

Key Priorities

4.6 The Two Stage Complaint Handling Procedure supports the Council's key priority of delivering more effective and efficient service provision. It demonstrates commitment through focussing on, and determining, trends for service improvement and delivery for North Ayrshire residents, customers and visitors.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 None.

5. Consultation

5.1 None.

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For further information please contact **Darren Miller, Complaint Manager**, on **(01294) 322988**.

Background Papers

North Ayrshire Council Complaint Report 2023/24