
Complaints Report 2018/2019

JUNE 2019

Stirling Council

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Introduction

Our complaints performance

Stirling Council is committed to providing quality services that reflect the needs of our customers. We value complaints and use information from them to help us improve our services. Stirling Council publishes its performance of complaints handling to provide assurance in relation to our performance and to delivery continuous improvement.

This report outlines Stirling Council's performance against the indicators set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) from 1st April 2018 until 30th March 2019. The Council implemented a new model Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP) in April 2017 in order to comply with the SPSO expectations and to ensure our CHP can be benchmarked against other Local Authorities within Scotland.

Complaint criteria

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our action or lack of action, or about the standard of the service provided by or on behalf of the council. This includes, a failure to follow the proper administrative processes; delays in responding to service requests and enquiries; failure to provide a service to the expected standard; failure to meet our Service Standards; dissatisfaction with Council policies and procedures; and, treatment by, or attitude of a member of staff.

All complaints received by Stirling Council customers are managed under the two stage complaints process:

STAGE ONE: Also known as Frontline Resolutions should be straightforward. A stage one complaint could mean immediate actions to resolve the complaint. Stage one complaints should be answered in 5 working days.

STAGE TWO: Also known as the investigation stage. A Stage 2 complaint is a concern that has not been successfully resolved at Stage 1 or a complaint that is complex and requires a full, detailed complaints investigation. Stage two complaints should be answered in 20 working days.

2018/2019 SUMMARY

Customers can make a complaint via a number of different routes. Stirling Council have attempted to make our complaints process as accessible as possible. Customers can complaint:

- **In person**, to their frontline worker or any council employee, at any Council building (including libraries) and in our Customer Service Points in the town center.
- **By telephone** via our contact center or direct to staff.
- Via our **online**, Complaints, Compliments and Enquiry form that is accessible on the Stirling Council website.
- **By letter** or by using our Customer Complaints form that is available from any staff member or Stirling Council building.

Complaints are measured under four broad headings. During 2018/2019, 1,838 complaints were recorded relating to **service delivery**; 126 complaints regarding **staff conduct**; 54 regarding Council **policies and procedures**; and 33 regarding the **quality or lack of information**

In 2018/2019, Stirling Council received 2,051 complaints from customers. This is an increase of 272 from 2017/2018. 86% complaints were managed at Stage 1 and 14% were managed at Stage 2.

In 2017/2018, Stirling Council received 1,579 complaints from customers. This is a decrease of 425 from 2016/2017. 87% complaints were managed at Stage 1 and 13% were managed at Stage 2.

During 2017/2018, 1,227 complaints were recorded relating to **service delivery**; 162 complaints regarding **staff conduct**; 124 regarding Council **policies and procedures**; and 66 regarding the **quality or lack of information**.

During 2018/2019, 87% of Stage 1 complaints were answered on time and 85% of Stage 2.

During 2017/2018, 68% of Stage 1 complaints were answered on time and 57% of Stage 2.

The stage 2 figures includes all complaints originally logged as Stage 1 and escalated to Stage 2. The Council recognises that there is room for improvement and have implemented a number of strategies in an attempt to support staff to improve on these figures. This will be discussed later in this report.

According to the office of National Statistics, on the 30th June 2018, the population of Stirling was 94,330. This is an increase of 0.4% from 94,000 in 2017.

30th June 2017, the population of Stirling was 94,000. This is an increase of 0.3% from 93,750 in 2016.

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/stirling-council-profile.html>

INDICATOR ONE – COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PER 1,000 POPULATION

TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED PER 1,000 POPULATION

2016/2017	2,004	21
2017/2018	1,579	17
2018/2019	2,051	22

INDICATOR TWO – CLOSED COMPLAINTS

	2018/2019	%	2017/2018	%	2016/2017	%
TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED	2051		1498		1915	
TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1	1779	86%	1327	89%	1768	92%
TOTAL COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2	147	7%	10	1%	13	2%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 AFTER ESCALATION	146	7%	161	11%	116	6%

INDICATOR THREE – COMPLAINTS UPHeld, PARTIALLY UPHeld & NOT UPHeld

<u>STAGE ONE COMPLAINTS:</u>	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1	1779	1327	1768
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHeld AT STAGE 1	1348	886	1286

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD AT STAGE 1 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 1	76%	67%	73%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 1	183	165	122
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 1 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1	10%	12%	7%
% OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD OR PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 1	86%	79%	89%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AT STAGE 1	248	276	200
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AT STAGE 1 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 1	14%	21%	11%

STAGE TWO COMPLAINTS:

2018/2019 2017/2018 2016/2017

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2	147	10	31
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD AT STAGE 2	22	8	11
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 2	15%	80%	35%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 2	46	1	6
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2	31%	10%	19%
% OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD OR PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 2	46%	90%	54%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AT STAGE 2	79	1	14
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS A % OF ALL COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 2	54%	10%	46%

ESCALATED COMPLAINTS:

2018/2019 2017/2018 2016/2017

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCALATION	146	161	116
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD AFTER ESCALATION	94	122	93

THE NUMBER OF ESCALATED COMPLAINTS UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS % OF ALL ESCALATED COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 2	64%	76%	80%
THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AFTER ESCALATION	22	20	10
THE NUMBER OF ESCALATED COMPLAINTS PARTIALLY UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS A % OF ALL ESCALATED COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 2	15%	12%	9%
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AFTER ESCALATION	30	19	13
THE NUMBER OF ESCALATED COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD AT STAGE 2 AS A % OF ALL ESCALATED COMPLAINTS CLOSED IN FULL AT STAGE 2.	21%	12%	11%

INDICATOR FOUR

<u>AVERAGE RESPONSE TIMES</u>	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
STAGE 1			
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 (FRONTLINE RESOLUTION)	1779	1327	1768
AVERAGE TIME IN WORKING DAYS FOR A FULL RESPONSE AT STAGE 1	3.3	7.8	7.1
STAGE 2			
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 (INVESTIGATION)	147	10	31
AVERAGE TIME IN WORKING DAYS FOR A FULL RESPONSE AT STAGE 2	12.8	25.1	21.8
ESCALATED			
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCALATION	146	161	116
AVERAGE TIME IN WORKING DAYS FOR A FULL RESPONSE AFTER ESCALATION	21.8	25.3	24.8

INDICATOR FIVE

PERFORMANCE AGAINST TIMESCALES

STAGE 1	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 (FRONTLINE RESOLUTION)	1779	1327	1768

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 WITH 5 WORKING DAYS.	1627	898	1039
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 WITHIN 5 WORKING DAYS AS A % OF TOTAL STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS.	92%	68%	59%
STAGE 2			
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 (INVESTIGATION)	147	10	31
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS	134	6	19
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 WITHIN 20 WORKING DATES AS A % OF TOTAL STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS.	91%	60%	61%
ESCALATED			
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCALATION	146	161	116
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCALATION WITHIN 20 WORKING DAYS	120	91	60
NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCALATION WITHIN 20 WORKING DATES AS A % OF TOTAL ESCALATED COMPLAINTS	82%	56.5%	52%

INDICATOR SIX

Use of Extensions

	2018/2019	2017/2018	2016/2017
STAGE 1			
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1	1779	1327	1768
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED.	15	240	5
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 1 WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED AS A % OF TOTAL STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS.	0.8%	18.1%	0.3%
STAGE 2			

TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2	147	3	31
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED.	12	10	7
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AT STAGE 2 WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED AS A % OF TOTAL STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS.	8%	30%	23%
ESCALATED			
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCULATION	146	161	116
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCULATION WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED.	7	49	4
TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS CLOSED AFTER ESCULATION WHERE AN EXTENSION WAS AUTHORISED AS A % OF COMPLAINTS ESCULATED.	4.9	30%	3%

INDICATOR SEVEN

Customer Satisfaction

Customer feedback has been an ongoing action for Stirling Council Corporate Complaints Team. Stirling Council value feedback from customers accessing the Complaints function. As part of the team's action plan, gathering feedback will be pivotal to service improvements and delivery. To date, the team has been gathering informal feedback from customer's as they journey through the complaints pathway. The Corporate Complaints Coordinators have been contacting complainants, seeking their views and ensuring the process meets their needs and expectations.

The team are currently taking guidance from the SPSO Complaints Handlers Network regarding a suitable template for compiling customer feedback. This feedback will be formally recorded, monitored and reported on as part of our performance data. This data will be provided as part of the 2018/2019 yearly report.

INDICATOR EIGHT

Learning From Complaints

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership is developing a model that recognises and guides practice in respect of complex, multi service cases. The Service has identified the importance of accurate information gathering and sharing as well as keeping the service user and their family informed and the impact this can have.

Clackmannanshire and Stirling Health and Social Care Partnership have identified a need for multi-agency training with an external providers. They intend to review current processes and identify customer relations training.

Across the council, changes are being considered in respect of how we reflect unexpected staff absence in our telephony systems. This is to ensure customers do not leave voicemails for staff on long term absence.

Children and Families Social Work plan to review Kinship Assessment processes and guidance to ensure workers have a clear understanding of timescales and expectations in line with national guidance.

Within Housing Services, direct staff supervision has been offered regarding staff conduct and professional expertise.

The Safer Communities team have implemented staff training in conflict resolution and have reviewed their Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and processes.

The Safer Communities Team, Waste Services, Housing Services and Roads and Land have started to work collaboratively to provide a more holistic approach to complaints.

Land Services have reviewed the use of a centralised team mail box to prevent customer concerns going direct to officers. This change is intended to minimise drift when officers are out of the office and to avoid missed communication.

Following a complaint received by the Roads Team, resident communication has been reviewed to insure residents are alerted to potential disruptions in advance.

Within Waste Services, route optimization software has been implemented to improve operational performance of collections by sharing real-time information with Stirling Council vehicles and crew to enable them to complete their routes on time, safely and efficiently.

Waste Services have completed a review and replacement of signage and line markings across all three Household Waste Recycling Centers to improve safety and customer experience.

Waste Services are rolling out refresher customer service training across the service, ensuring good practice and conflict strategies are shared amongst the team.

Based on a complaints regarding missed bin delivery, Waste Services have investigated alternative collection methods for areas with restricted access.

Within education, schools will promptly communicate proposed class organisations with parents. Parents of children who will be placed in composite classes will now be informed in writing.

Not all Services are able to implement improvements from complaints due to competing resource considerations and feasibility to make changes. However, this is an ongoing area of attention for the Council who are committed to implementing service changes and improvements as a result of complaints and closing the learning circle.

COMPLAINTS CONSIDERED BY THE SPSO

<i>COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE SPSO</i>	<i>2018/2019</i>	<i>2017/2018</i>
<i>TOTAL NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY THE SPSO</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>COMPLAINTS INVESTIGATED BY THE SPSO</i>	<i>6*</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>COMPLAINTS NOT TAKEN FORWARD BY THE SPSO</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>10</i>

**3 complaints listed do not have a decision yet from the SPSO and are still under investigation*

During 2018/2019, the Council received one upheld decisions, two partially upheld decisions and one not upheld from the Ombudsman.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP COMPLAINTS

	<i>2018/2019</i>	<i>2017/2018</i>
<i>NUMBER OF STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>NUMBER OF STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>NUMBER OF ESCALATED COMPLAINTS</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>
<i>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS UPHELD/PARTIALLY UPHELD</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS NOT UPHELD</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1</i>

Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council and NHS colleagues have been liaising as part of our collective commitment to good practice in respect of complaints handling. In order to ensure a consistency in approach across the partnership, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council and NHS colleagues have coordinated information regarding complaints to provide to staff and customers. Joint processes have also been agreed and communicated with key stakeholders.

