

**COMPLAINTS FORUM**  
**Thursday, 25th September, 2008**

**Present:-**

Councillor Wyatt

**in the Chair**

Zoe Burke

Complaints Manager, Children and Young People's Service

Graham Clark

Customer Liaison Manager, Environment and Development Services

Mark Evans

Customer Services Client, Financial Services

Mark Gannon

Transformation and Strategic Partnerships Manager

Adam Hurst

Complaints Manager, Neighbourhoods and Adult Social Services

Mark Leese

Corporate Complaints Officer, RBT

Andrea Pearson

Senior Administrative Officer, Chief Executive's Office

Sneh Soni

Customer Service Officer, 2010 Rotherham Ltd.

Jayne Wilde

Corporate Complaints Officer for Financial Services

Dawn Mitchell

Senior Democratic Services Officer, Chief Executive's Office

An apology for absence was received from Janet Wykes.

**1. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE GROUP**

**Agreed:-** That Mark Evans consult with all members of the Group and submit proposed Terms of Reference to the next meeting.

**2. RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mark Gannon circulated a report that was to be submitted to CMT which outlined the response to the Scrutiny Review of Corporate Complaints incorporating proposals for dealing with each of the recommendations.

Mark asked that officers consider the report and inform him by 30<sup>th</sup> September of any amendments or any altered timescales. All comments would be combined and the report submitted to CMT on 6<sup>th</sup> October and then onto Cabinet.

**Agreed:-** That any comments on the report be passed to Mark Gannon by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

### 3. TELL US YOUR VIEWS ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

Mark Evans circulated a draft report setting out details of the Council's corporate-wide feedback procedure 'Tell Us Your Views' which incorporated corporate complaints, comments, compliments and suggestions for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007-31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008.

The report would be submitted to CMT and then into the Member arena. Members of the Group were asked to review the figures contained within, particularly the appendices, with comments passed to Mark Evans by 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Discussion ensued on the report with the following points raised:-

- Directorates had different methods of capturing information
- What was the definition of a compliment?
- The need to capture and include in future reports the number of preliminary enquiries made before a customer decided to pursue a complaint with the Ombudsman and the amount of work it entailed

**Agreed:-** (1) That any comments on the report be passed to Mark Evans by 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2008.

(2) That "lessons learnt" be included as an appendix to the report.

### 4. PEOPLE AND SERVICE FIRST GUIDES ON COMPLAINTS

Mark Evans reported on the revamp of the People and Service First documentation which would incorporate the guidance for staff and investigating officers and the Tell Us Once booklet and be branded Customer First.

Discussion took place on the revamp and ways of making the document accessible other than producing it in hard copy.

**Agreed:-** That a draft of the new document be submitted to the next meeting.

### 5. CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE STANDARD ACCREDITATION

Mark Evans reported that an assessment of the corporate evidence had already been supplied to the assessors and formally signed off which included the corporate feedback procedure 'Tell Us Your Views'. Going forward with future Directorate assessments this information will not have to be provided.

NAS had already been formally accredited against the new Customer

Service Excellence standard in June.

A report was to be submitted to CMT on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

The timescale for the Council to achieve accreditation was by Summer, 2009.

The timescale around the remaining Directorates was included in the report to CMT based on self-assessments that had been undertaken by the Directorates, status of where they thought they were against the criteria.

**Agreed:-** That the report be noted.

## **6. QUARTER 1 COMPLAINT STATISTICS**

Mark Leese presented a report for information containing the first quarter complaints statistics which showed some improvement compared to the annual figure for 2007/08.

Discussion ensued on the table which showed the statistics by Ward. It was pointed out that it reflected the Ward that the complainant lived in which was not necessarily the Ward where the incident occurred. If it needed to be refined to reflect other factors the smart script within the Siebel system would need to be amended accordingly.

The annual report showed complaints at Area Assembly and Ward level which future quarterly reports would also copy.

**Agreed:-** That the report be noted.

## **7. SIEBEL SYSTEM USER ISSUES**

Mark Leese reported that he was still feeding back on the odd issues to officers but any outstanding issues that arose he would report to this meeting as necessary.

Over the coming months he was hoping to offer more targeted support to users in an attempt to prevent any common areas.

If there were any changes required to the system Mark Evans and himself should be contacted as a matter of urgency in order that the change could be made in the timescale required.

**Agreed:-** That the report be noted.

## **8. COMPLAINANT SATISFACTION SURVEYS**

Mark Leese reported that each Directorate had sent out their surveys to a range of customers who still had a live complaint. To date, Mark had only

been notified of 11 responses from approximately 200 surveys. The agreement had been that every completed survey would go for analysis through SNAP.

**Agreed:-** (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That Neighbourhoods and Adult Services forward the responses that they received directly.

**9. REQUESTS TO GO TO STAGE 3 OF THE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

Graham Clark raised the issue of complaints that officers felt would not be successful at Stage 3 of the Complaints Procedure and whether officers could advise the customer of such and thus save time and expense.

Sneh Soni reported that, for 2010, where a complaint was against Policy and it was known it would be a waste of the complainant's, officers' and Board Members' time, the complainant had been advised of such and the complaint stopped.

Mark Leese stated that in the revised procedures it did say that if it was thought that no purpose would be served in going to Stage 3, officers could go to Legal Services for their decision as to whether to proceed or not.

It was felt that there should be a standardised letter across all Directorates advising complainants about referring their complaint to Councillors surgeries.

**10. OMBUDSMAN ENCLOSURES**

Andrea Pearson asked that she receive any enclosures that could not be sent through to her electronically in good time prior to the 28 calendar day deadline.

**11. SEMINAR**

**Agreed:-** That Anne Seex, Local Government Ombudsman, be approached with a view to conducting a seminar for all Members.

**12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM**

New Adult Health and Social Care Complaints Procedure

**13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**Agreed:-** That a further meeting be held on 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2009, commencing at 2.00 p.m.