

ROTHERHAM METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

1. Meeting:	Self Regulation Select Commission
2. Date:	11 October 2012
3. Title:	Complaints – Annual Report 2011 – 2012
4. Directorate:	All Directorates

5. Summary

This report provides information about complaints made between 1 April 2011 and 31 March 2012 to the Local Authority, under the Corporate Complaint's Procedure, the Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services complaint regulations

The figures in the report include details of the number of complaints made by customers. The information is presented for the Council and by each Directorate. It contains a summary of complaints received, main complaint issues and how services have been improved.

The report also includes details on how complaint handling has been improved over the year and how it can be improved further.

In total over the last 12 months the total number of complaints received by the Council has **reduced** from **1248 (2010/11)** to **724 - 42%** reduction

Overall **94%** of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to **76% (2010/11)**

6. Recommendations

That the Self Regulation Select Commission

- Note the content of the report

7. Proposals and Details

In 2011-2012 the Council has greatly improved performance in terms of complaints dealt with in target time. We are also committed to reducing the number of complaints received, reducing the number of escalations through the complaint procedure, improving the experience of customers and reducing the cost of dealing with complaints both in terms of efficiencies in complaint handling and the amount of compensation awarded.

Overall 94% of all complaints were responded to within the statutory timescales, compared to 76% (2010/11). This demonstrates a progressive approach to performance management across the Council, leading to year on year improvement. All Directorate leads are targeted to achieve 100% performance.

Headline Results 2011/12

- Number of comments (quick response concerns) increased **30%** from **1457** in 2010/11 to **2095**
- Number of complaints (at all levels) reduced from **1248** to **724** (42% reduction)
 - Complaints for NAS – Housing and Neighbourhood services reduced from **781** to **370** (**52%** decrease)
 - Complaints for Resources reduced from **86** to **44** (**49%** decrease)
 - Complaints for Children and Young Peoples services reduced from **120** to **87** (**27%** decrease)
 - Complaints for Environment and Development services reduced from **148** to **115** (**22%** decrease)
 - Complaints for NAS – Adult services reduced from **113** to **108** (**4%** decrease)
- Total number of complaints (at all stages) upheld increased, **319**, **43%** compared to **380**, **40%** 2010/11.
- Reduction in the number of complaints escalating reduced **40%** from **102** in 2010/11 to **61** (Stage 1 complaints escalating to Stage 2)
- Complaints about quality of service reduced from **286** in 2010/11 to **195**
- Complaints about actions of staff reduced from **222** in 2010/11 to **176**
- Ombudsman average response time was **25.1** days from **14** first enquiries (**25.1** days from **7** first enquiries in 2010/11)
- Total compensation awards made in 2011/10 was **£540**

- External complaint investigation costs in CYPS reduced from **£22,541** in 2010/11 to **£12,592** in 2011/12.
- Savings made in Resources and CPP restructure in respect of complaint team's resources was **£112,391** (staffing costs).

The Directorate complaints teams has maintained the recent significant improvements in the following areas:

- Learning from all Complaints to identify service improvements
- Improved performance on enquiries responded to in time
- Reduced the number of complaints received
- Increased the number of comments (quick response concerns) received
- Improving the timeliness of responses to customers
- Improving the quality of responses
- Improving satisfaction of the complaint management process
- Training in complaint handling which is delivered on a rolling programme to all managers.
- Learning from complaints workshops with staff.
- Reduction in the amount of compensation paid.
- Reduction in cost of responding to complaints, reducing cost of external investigators
- Aligned complaint functions – improved sharing of best practice.
- Internal review of complaint handling completed – see **2011/12 Improvement Actions** page 18.

8. Risks and uncertainties

Although positive management of complaints can be achieved, the number and type of complaints received is determined by circumstances beyond the control of the complaint service. Regardless of any external factors the service is required to maintain a high level of performance and excellent customer care.

The financial decisions the Authority is making will also affect the number of complaints received, changes to services drive the level of complaints received.

9. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The complaints report reflects the policy and performance agenda requirements of both national government and the Council. These include;

- Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 (Making Experiences Count).
- The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006.
- Corporate Complaint procedure (Making Experiences Count)
- Rotherham's local plans including corporate and service plans.
- Corporate Complaint Review, looking at complaint handling processes across the Authority.

10. Background Papers and Consultation

- Appendix 1 Complaints Annual Report 2011-2012 (in full)

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