DATA LABEL: Public

Performance Committee

West Lothian Civic Centre
Howden South Road
LIVINGSTON
EH54 6FF

7 June 2017

A meeting of the **Performance Committee** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Council Chambers, West Lothian Civic Centre** on **Monday 12 June 2017** at **2:00pm**.

For Chief Executive

BUSINESS

Public Session

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business

4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of Performance Committee held on Monday 10 April 2017 (herewith).

5. Advice Shop - Report by Head of Finance and Property Services (herewith).

6. Complaint Performance Report 2016/17 - Report by Depute Chief Executive (herewith).

NOTE **For further information please contact Eileen Rollo on 01506 281621 or email eileen.rollo@westlothian.gov.uk**

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE of WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, WEST LOTHIAN CIVIC CENTRE, on 10 APRIL 2017.

Present – Councillors Stuart Borrowman (Chair), Tony Boyle, Carl John, Greg McCarra, John McGinty

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The committee confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 30 January 2017 as a correct record. The Minute was thereafter signed by the Chair.

3. CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING, CUSTOMER AND BUILDING SERVICES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an overview of the performance of the Customer and Community Services service.

The report advised that in November 2015 the Council Executive agreed that Community Facilities and Customer Service Development should be integrated to deliver a modernised frontline service on behalf of the council. The two services came together on 1 April 2016 following a major restructure.

Much of the service activity during 2016/17 had been aligned to ensure the service delivered the agreed services across many locations, working in partnership with communities in the form of voluntary management committees. Significant effort was made to ensure that staff was able to meet the requirements of their new generic roles.

The service continued to progress Partnership Centre developments, with East Calder, Linlithgow and Blackburn all due to open in 2017. Early work had begun on Partnership Centres in Armadale and Whitburn with communities taking a lead role in progressing layouts and structures.

The report went on to advise that the service also supported the voluntary community centre management committees through the formation of a Management Committee Forum. The purpose of the Forum was to support committees, share experience and knowledge, arrange training and keep communities of service or legislative changes.

In September 2016 the service undertook an interim review of the service restructure which took account of views from customers, staff and

management committees. A detailed action plan was then put in place to address the issues that arose.

The amalgamated services had a robust performance framework in place that allowed data capture at an individual basis. Following the service reorganisation a full review of all performance indicators was undertaken and a new performance framework was created to allow reporting across the service as well as at neighbourhood level.

In conclusion the report advised that the service went through a major restructure and had built a new performance management framework in order to monitor and assess performance across a range of services.

The report recommended that the committee:-

1. Note the performance report for Customers and Community Services

2. Provide feedback on the performance information.

3. Identify any issues and make recommendations for performance improvement.

There then followed a number of questions particularly in relation to change of hours at libraries, staff training, Management Committees and the Management Committee Forum and what assistance it provided.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. HR AND SUPPORT SERVICES PERFORMANCE - REPORT BY HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Corporate Services providing an overview of the performance of HR and Support Services.

The report advised that the HR and Support Services was part of the Corporate Services grouping and provided a range of services, advice and support to all council services. A significant function was to ensure that appropriate employment and people development strategies, policies and procedures were in place to drive and support corporate and service business objectives, modernisation and improvement.

The service also provided a range of administration and support functions within the Civic Centre and to a number of locations outwith the Civic Centre. In addition the service administered payroll services on behalf of the Improvement Service, West Lothian College and West Lothian Leisure

The report went on to advise that the service had a range of performance indicators which were used to measure the performance for the service. In addition the service was responsible for three specified performance

indicators: the average number of days per employee lost through sickness absence, the number and percentage of highest paid 5% earners amongst council employees that were women and the gender pay gap.

In conclusion the report and attached appendix summarised the work and performance of HR and Support Services.

The report recommended that the committee:-

1. Note the performance report for HR and Support Services
2. Provide feedback on service performance
3. Identify any recommendations for performance improvement

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5 COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE QUARTER 3 2016/17

The committee considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Depute Chief Executive providing the quarterly analysis of closed complaints for Quarter 3 2016-17.

The committee was advised that the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed and published a model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) on 28 March 2012. The model CHP was to ensure a standardised approach in dealing with customer complaints across the local authority sector. All local authorities were required to adopt the model CHP by 31 March 2013.

Contained within the report at Table 1 was complaints information by category for Quarter 3 over the 5 year period 2012-13 to 2016-17. It was noted that of the 2523 complaints for Quarter 3, 2016-17, 2090 of these were attributed to Housing, Customer and Building Services and Operational Services.

The main contributors in Standard of Service complaints were Housing, Customer and Building Services with 255 complaints and Operational Services with 694 complaints. The increase in complaints for Operational Services was linked to Waste Services roll out of the 140 litre containers and the route optimisation activity.

The Depute Chief Executive explained that of the 694 Operational Services Standard of Service complaints, Waste Services received a total of 503. These complaints continued to range from missed container collections, issues relating to customer container take out service and the provision of replacement containers.

A total of 435 Policy related complaints were received which was an increase of 159 from the equivalent quarter. An increase in Waiting Time

complaints were generated by Operational Services and Housing Customer and Building Services.

Housing, Customer and Building Services was a main contributor to waiting time complaints, these complaints were generally linked to the time the customer was expected to wait for a repair to be carried out or issues about repeat repairs that required additional work to be carried out.

The Corporate Complaint Steering Board identified 4 high level indicators that provided a summary of complaint handling performance and detailed as follows:-

- Total complaints received
- Complaints closed within 5 working days
- Complaints closed within 20 working days
- Complaints partly upheld/upheld

Table 2 within the report provided a summary of service performance against these four indicators for Quarter 3 in 2015/16 and 2016-17.

Table 3 provided indicative ratios for the number of complaints against the specific customer groups for Area Services, Education Services, Housing, Construction and Building Services and Operational Services.

Table 4 provided a service trend summary of upheld, part upheld complaints as a percentage of complaints received by quarter cover 2015/16, Q1 and Q2 2016/17

The report concluded that the level of complaints received in Quarter 3; 2016-17 had shown an increase when compared to the equivalent quarter in the previous year but had decreased compared to previous quarter. The main contributor to the increase continued to be Operational Services. Operational Services had implemented various corrective actions to manage the demand that was currently being placed on the service.

It was recommended that the Performance Committee :-

1. Note the corporate and service complaint performance against the standards outlined in the council's complaint handling procedure; and

2. Continue to monitor complaint performance and request additional information from services as required.

<u>Decision</u>

To note the terms of the report.

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West Lothian Council

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

ADVICE SHOP

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to provide the Performance Committee with an overview of the Advice Shop service and details of service performance.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Performance Committee:

1. Notes the performance report for the Advice Shop service;
2. Provides feedback and recommendations on performance; and
3. Identifies any recommendations for performance improvement.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	**Council Values**	Focusing on our customers' needs; being honest, open and accountable; providing equality of opportunities; developing employees; making best use of our resources; working in partnership.
II	**Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)**	None.
III	**Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers**	None.
IV	**Impact on performance and performance Indicators**	Appendix 1 details the range of performance indicators and results currently reported for the service.
V	**Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement**	Our economy is diverse and dynamic, and West Lothian is an attractive place for doing business. People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances. We live longer, healthier lives and have reduced inequalities.

VI	**Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)**	Activity is delivered through agreed Council budgets with additional external funding.
VII	**Consideration at PDSP**	The Advice Shop reports to the Partnership and Resources and Social Policy PSDP as appropriate.
VIII	**Other consultations**	None.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D1 Background

The Advice Shop provides a free, impartial and confidential service to people in West Lothian with a focus on alleviating poverty and promoting inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy. It helps individuals and families to; increase their disposable income, manage debt and remain in their home and keep warm. The Advice Shop also provides money and budgeting advice and leads on the development and delivery of the Community Planning Partnership's 'Better Off: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy.

The Advice Shop delivers a service to targeted customer groups, such as those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged and likely to be in poverty. The service provides comprehensive advice to adults and specifically targets those who are;

- Without work or in low paid work
- Are poor and/or fuel poor
- Have money/debt issues
- Have been affected by cancer or other long term conditions
- Are over 60

The service dealt with 13,500 customers and 60,000 enquiries generating £27.9 million in additional benefits to citizens in West Lothian in 2016/17. This was a slight increase on 2015/16 when the service generated £27.5 million in additional benefits.

D2 Performance Measurement

The Advice Shop measure a suite of performance indicators, in line with the council's performance management framework, using the Covalent system. These indicators are representative of the range of services delivered by the service and include measure of both customer and staff perception. Appendix 1 shows a selection of these indicators in full detail, including current and past performance.

D3 WLAM Performance

In December 2014 the service undertook a WLAM Assessment. The overall score was 476 and the service was asked to report back to the performance panel in one year on People Results. The service introduced a staff focus group and developed an action plan to develop and implement improvements which included;

- A major refresh of the CRM (Case Record Management) system;
- A review of key performance indicators

The service improved in six People Results and in March 2015 the service was placed on Cycle 1 (Three Years).

E. CONCLUSION

The report and attached appendices summarise the work and the performance of the Advice Shop. The Performance Committee is asked to consider the report, consider any performance measures they would like to explore further and provide any recommendations on performance improvement.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

None.

Appendices/Attachments: Appendix 1: Advice Shop Performance Committee Report
Appendix 2: Advice Shop Annual Report 2015-16

Contact Person: Elaine Nisbet, Anti-Poverty and Welfare Advice Manager

Donald Forrest
Head of Finance & Property Services

Date of meeting: 12 June 2017

Public

Delivering Better Outcomes

Advice Shop

Performance Committee Report

June 2017

Contents

1 Overview of Advice Shop Service

1.1 Purpose

1.2 Activities

1.3 Achievements

1.4 Key Partners

1.5 Customer Participation

2 Activity Budget

3 Actions 2016/17 and 2017/18

4 Service Structure

5 Case Studies

6 Key Performance Indicators

1. Overview of Advice Shop Service

Manager:	Elaine Nisbet
Number of Staff (FTE):	36
Location:	Bathgate Partnership Centre and various locations

1.1 Purpose

The Advice Shop contributes to the Community Planning Partnership's priority "Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality" by providing comprehensive advice to people in West Lothian who are:

- Without work or in low paid work
- Are poor and / or fuel poor
- Have money / debt issues
- Have been affected by cancer or other long term conditions
- Are over 60

The service aims to help these groups increase their disposable income, manage their debt, to remain in their home and, to appeal decisions made by the Department of Work and Pensions. The service provided consists of information, advice, advocacy and representation. The service dealt with 13,500 customers and over 60,000 enquiries, generating £27.9 million in additional benefits to citizens in West Lothian in 2016/17. It answered over 20,000 phone calls and prevented 655 families from losing their home through the intervention of the Court Advice project.

There are significant numbers of households whose personal indebtedness is increasing and which have no means to redress this. In 2016/7, there were 900 new referrals to money advice with over £8 million of debt. The service managed 80% of this debt to a successful conclusion which included 36% of households undertaking an approved Scottish Government debt scheme including bankruptcy and sequestration.

The service offers six different volunteering opportunities: Communications volunteer, IT Buddy, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance (DLA), DLA/PIP Volunteer, Macmillan Information Volunteer, Medical Assessment Volunteer and Events volunteer. The volunteers provide a valuable role in supporting customers to access services, engage with new technology and provide a listening ear which can offer a network of support and information. Over the past year, volunteers have provided 1500 hours of help, undertaken 350 hours of training and worked with over 600 customers.

All activity across the service is informed and prioritised by the 'Better Off: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy'. The overall purpose of this strategy is to help minimise the impact of poverty on the people of West Lothian. Its objective is to ensure that people are equipped to cope with the challenges they currently face and the impact that this has on their health, education and community involvement. The

aim is to help people to obtain and retain employment as a key route out of poverty. The service attracts external funding.

1.2 Activities

The main activities of the service are:

- Income maximisation
- Money, debt and housing advice
- Fuel advice
- Extend the Macmillan @ West Lothian project
- Produce a refreshed 'Better Off: the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy' and deliver the actions contained in the anti-poverty and welfare reform annual action plan
- Seek external funding to continue to offer in court representation for those presenting at the doors of court who potentially face eviction
- Develop a project targeting those who have long term mental health issues to access financial advice
- Work with St John's Hospital to embed financial advice for both patients, families and staff
- Lead on the delivery of a community development finance initiative in collaboration with Falkirk and Fife Councils
- Working with the Scottish Legal Aid Board to gain the National Standards for Information Advice Providers
- Offer a range of volunteering opportunities to support individuals to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence which will also support and enhance service delivery and to embed accreditation where appropriate
- Planning for the proposed 60% increase in appeals through HM Courts and Tribunals Service

1.3 Achievements

The main achievements for the service were:

- Successfully re-tendered for the Scottish Legal Aid Board project which offers advice to adults and families at risk of losing their home
- Refreshed the project which supports adults with a cancer diagnosis to access benefits, advice and support in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support and the Western General Hospital
- Delivered two information and support hubs at Bathgate and Strathbrock Partnership Centres as part of the Macmillan @ West Lothian project
- Worked with Scottish Legal Aid Board to prepare for the pilot of the new National Standards for Information Advice Providers
- Created a partnership with Children 1st to work with young parents on a long term basis to increase their financial capability
- Worked with Falkirk and Fife Councils to produce a business case for a Community Development Finance Initiative and completed a tendering exercise to appoint a contractor

- Worked with Housing, Customer and Building Services to provide budgeting and money advice to all potential tenants of council new build housing
- Consolidated outreach sessions in key locations and with key partners in the community
- Developed targeted campaigns to mitigate the effect of the ongoing welfare changes

1.4 Key Partners

The service actively works with our partners to plan, design and deliver improved services for our customers. Our key partners are:

- Macmillan Cancer Support as an external funder
- Scottish Legal Aid Board as an external funder
- Children 1st as an external funder
- West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy Board and Action Plan Development Group
- West Lothian Advice Network
- Department for Work and Pensions
- West Lothian Food Bank and Clothes Bank
- Local Credit Unions: Blackburn, Seafield and District Credit Union and West Lothian Credit Union
- Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian
- Citizens Advice Bureau

1.5 Customer Participation

The service will actively engage customers and potential customers in the delivery and re-design of services to ensure that are accessible and focused on their needs and preferences.

Customer Consultation Schedule				
Customer Group	Survey Method	Frequency	Responsible Officer	Feedback Method
Advice Shop Customers	Satisfaction survey of 25 customers per week paper based and e-survey creator	Monthly	Senior Advisor Income Maximisation	Performance indicators
Service Stakeholder group	Focus group on specific areas of delivery	Annually	Senior Advisor Projects	Annual report/website

2. Activity Budget 2017/18

Activity Budget 2017/18

Activity Name and Description		Link to Corporate Plan	Performance Indicator and Target 2017/18	PI Category	Staff Resource (FTE)	Revenue Expenditure Budget 2017/18 £	Revenue Income Budget 2017/18 £	Net Revenue Budget 2017/18 £
Income maximisation	Promote social inclusion by maximising income and improving the standard of living of those individuals, families and households who are living in poverty.	5. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	ADS043_9a.1a - Unit cost per advice shop engaged customer (2017/18 Target £42)	Public	19.4	748,692	(121,266)	627,426
			ADS061_9b.1a - Total quarterly amount the Advice Shop has gained for its customers (2017/18 Target £6.75million per quarter)	Public				
Energy Advice	Promote social inclusion by reducing fuel poverty	5. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	ADS043_9a.1a - Unit cost per advice shop engaged customer (2017/18 Target £42)	Public	5.80	224,385	(46,338)	178,047
			ADS068_9b.1a - Total value of energy advice savings (2017/18 Target £250,000 per annum – Q1 £75,000, Q2 £50,000. Q3 £50,000, Q4 £75,000)	High Level				
Money and Housing Advice	Promote social inclusion by maximising income and improving the standard of living of those individuals, families and households who are living in poverty, and prevent	5. Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	ADS043_9a.1a - Unit cost per advice shop engaged customer (2017/18 Target £42)	Public	10.6	410,237	(186,613)	223,624
			ADS066_9b.1a - Advice Shop Money Advice - Customer debt managed through money advice intervention (2017/18 Target £2,000,000 per quarter)	High Level				

Data Label: PUBLIC

Activity Budget 2017/18

Activity Name and Description		Link to Corporate Plan	Performance Indicator and Target 2017/18	PI Category	Staff Resource (FTE)	Revenue Expenditure Budget 2017/18 £	Revenue Income Budget 2017/18 £	Net Revenue Budget 2017/18 £
	homelessness in West Lothian.		ADS081_9b.1c - Housing advice - number of evictions prevented (2017/18 Target 150 per quarter)					
Service Support	Provision of management and administrative support	Enabler Service - Corporate Governance and Risk	Support activities contribute towards the overall performance of the service. Performance is monitored through the indicators for front line activities		0.2	7,790	0	7,790
	Total :-				**36.0**	**1,391,104**	**(354,217)**	**1,036,887**

3. Advice Shop Actions – 2016/17

Actions 2016/17						
Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status
Increase financial capability of people in West Lothian	Support local credit unions to expand membership in West Lothian among people at risk of financial exclusion Support the development of a local community development finance initiative offering low cost loans and embedded money advice	The two local credit unions will operate from venues that allow them to provide better coverage across West Lothian, and grow their memberships Adults will be able to access low cost loans and improve their budgeting and financial skills	The Advice Shop Manager	April 2016	March 2017	Completed
Increase access to money advice	West Lothian Advice network will be the lead partner in the coordination of preventative money advice	The Network will embed systems and activity so that people in West Lothian have equity of access to joined up preventative money advice	Senior Advisor Projects	April 2016	March 2017	Completed
Submit application for funding for West Lothian Court Advice Project (in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian, funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board) for continuation of project from September 2016	Help home owners and tenants avoid home repossession / eviction through advice and representation at Sheriff Court Assist customer to make successful small claims through Sheriff Court	Home owners / tenants keep their homes Customers gain financial redress through small claims process	Senior Advisor Money and Housing	April 2016	September 2016	Completed

Data Label: PUBLIC

Actions 2016/17

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status (Planned, Active, Complete)
Refresh the Macmillan Benefits Project	Work with Macmillan Cancer Support to implement a new delivery model at the Western General Hospital	Adults, families and carers have access to benefits advice and other support to make good financial decisions	Senior Advisor Age and Illness	April 2016	March 2017	Complete
Implement Macmillan @ West Lothian	Develop five information and support hubs and 10 information points throughout West Lothian Train 30 Volunteers and offer accreditation opportunities	Adults who are diagnosed with cancer are better able to manager the non-clinical aspects of their journey with cancer	The Advice Shop Manager	April 2016	March 2017	Complete

Data Label: PUBLIC

Advice Shop Actions – 2017/18

Actions 2017/18						
Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status
Increase financial capability of people in West Lothian	Support the delivery of a local community development finance initiative offering low cost loans and embedded money advice	Adults will be able to access low cost loans and improve their budgeting and financial skills	The Advice Shop Manager	April 2017	March 2018	Planned
Deliver project to support those with poor mental health to become financially included	Part of the ESF employability pipeline to target those who are furthest from the job market to become financially included	Adults with long term and enduring mental health issues are able to be more confident in managing their finances	Senior Advisor Projects	April 2017	March 2018	Active
Submit application for funding for West Lothian Court Advice Project (in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian, funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board) for continuation of project from September 2016	Help home owners and tenants avoid home repossession/eviction through advice and representation at Sheriff Court. Assist customers to make successful small claims through the Sheriff Court.	Home owners/tenants keep their homes. Customers gain financial redress through the small claims process.	Senior Advisor Money and Housing	April 2017	September 2017	Planned

Data Label: PUBLIC

Actions 2017/18

Action	Description	Planned Outcome	Owner	Start	End	Status
Re-submit funding for the macmillan Benefits Project	Work with macmillan Cancer Support to continue delivery model a the Western General Hospital	Adults, families and carers have access to benefits advice and other support to make good financial decisions	Senior Advisor Age & Illness	April 2017	August 2017	Planned
Refresh the Community Planning Partnerships' Better Off: the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy 2014-17	Review the anti-poverty strategy to reflect better the changing needs of those affected by welfare reform and financial hardship	Revised strategy and action plans help alleviate poverty in West Lothian.	The Advice Shop Manager	April 2017	March 2018	Planned
Implement Macmillan@ West Lothian	Develop five information and support hubs and 10 information points throughout West Lothian. Train 30 volunteers and offer accreditation opportunities	Adults who are diagnosed with cancer are better able to manage the non-clinical aspects of their journey with cancer		April 2017	March 2018	Active

Data Label: PUBLIC

4. Service Structure

The service structure is outlined in figure 3 below:

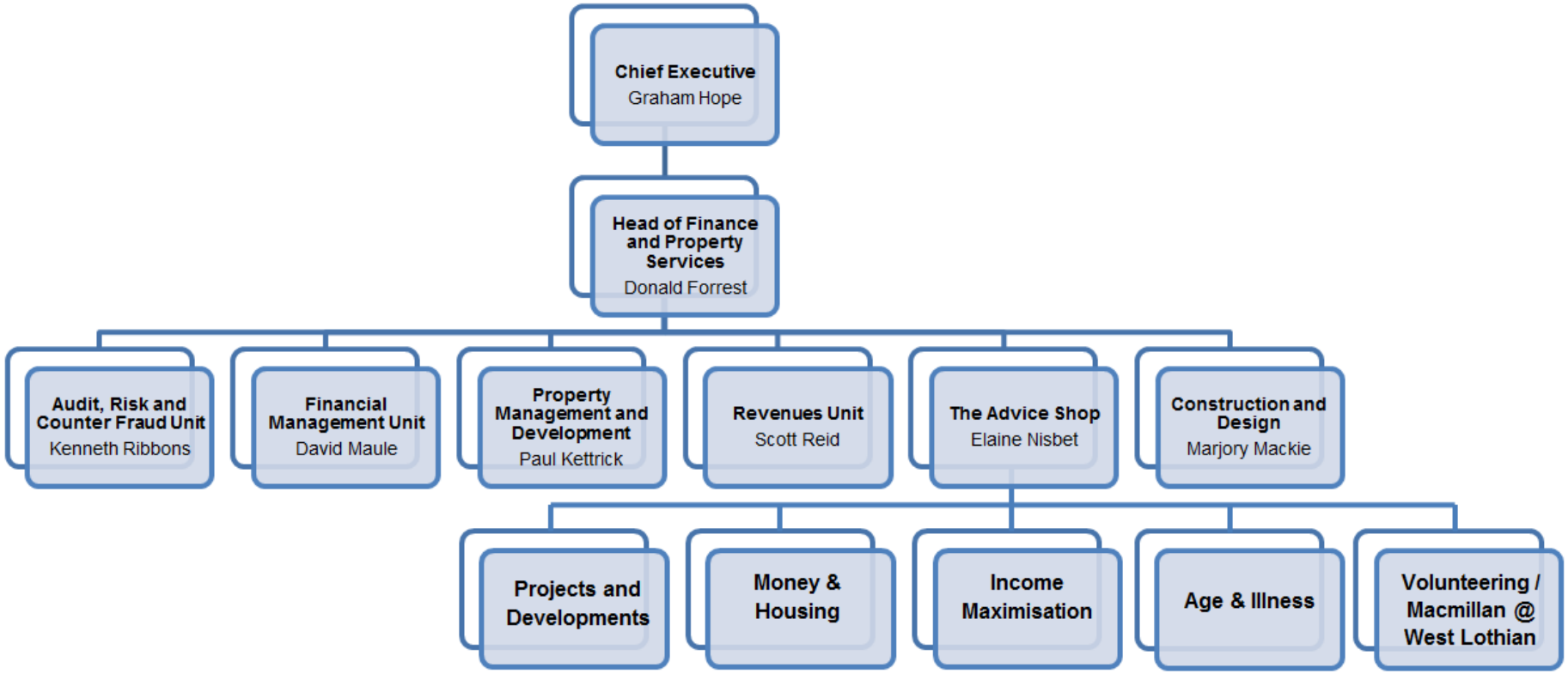


Figure 3: Service Structure

Data Label: PUBLIC

5. Case Studies

Miss K

Miss K had fled domestic violence with four children. Miss K moved into a three bedroomed private let which was charging well over a reasonable amount for the property. Miss K had significant rent arrears and debt due to being unable to cope with her situation and buying her children Christmas presents as she felt guilty because of what they had been through.

The adviser managed to engage with Miss K at the Families Included session and made arrangements to manage debts including her rent arrears with her landlord. Through discussion with Miss K it was established that one of her children was disabled and the advisor successfully applied for a disability benefit which was awarded. The adviser worked with Revenues and Social Work to ensure Miss K was awarded a four bedroom rate. Miss K was assisted to claim for a backdate of benefit and was awarded a £1,500 backdate and full entitlement to housing benefit. This allowed Miss K to clear her arrears and also successfully manage debts.

Unfortunately Miss K was assaulted by her landlord but, with guidance and support, is now in a position with no arrears and some money for a deposit to find a new property and remove herself from violence and start her new life on a solid base.

Mrs O

We assisted Mr O to complete his PIP claim, which was fast-tracked due to the terminal nature of his illness. Once he was awarded Personal Independence Payment, we carried out a further benefit check with his wife and established that they would be entitled to Pension Credit, which would allow them to receive full Council Tax Reduction and other savings elsewhere. Unfortunately, Mrs O had a bad experience when calling the Pension Service to make her claim, and soon afterwards her husband passed away so she was unable to cope with addressing their benefit situation.

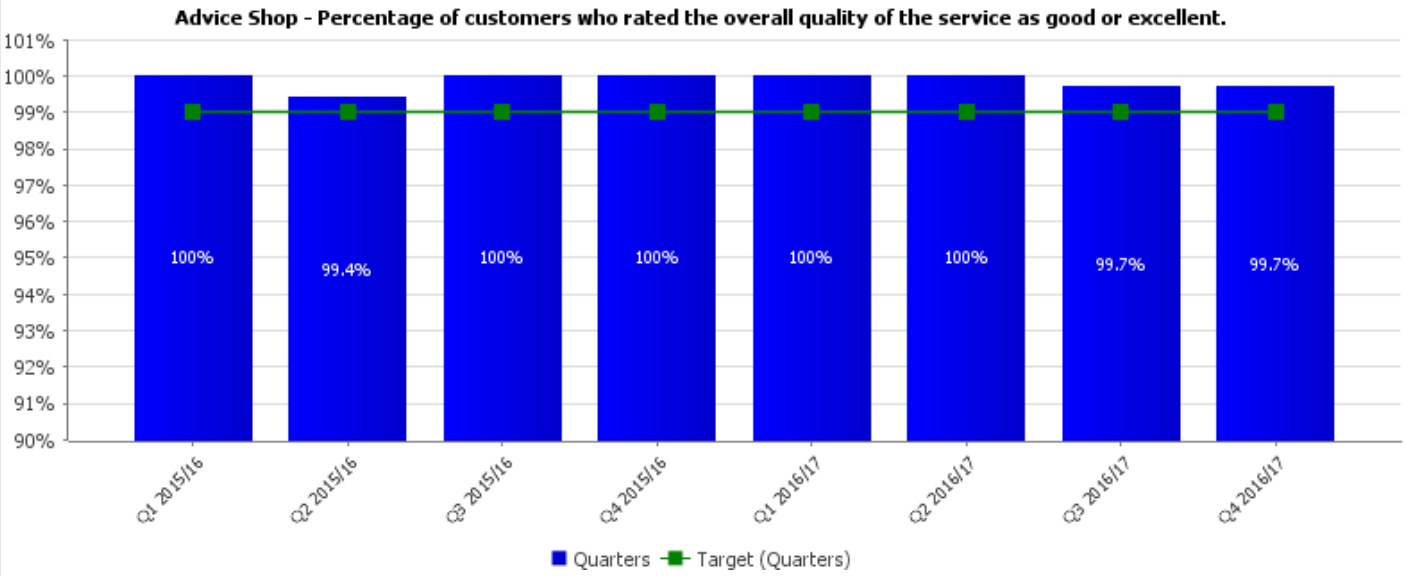
We contacted the DWP's escalation team on Mrs O's behalf to resolve the matter. We arranged appointments with Mrs O to assist her in person with her change of circumstances, to update the Council and Department for Work and Pensions. We also discussed whether she would qualify for any disability benefit. She had never looked into this herself as she was so busy caring for her husband through his illness, however she herself suffers from a health condition which causes her to lose consciousness, fall and injure herself. We identified that she may qualify for a disability benefit.

We assisted Mrs O to phone and make a claim for Attendance Allowance. She was quickly awarded the highest rate of Attendance Allowance, which gave her an extra £82 per week, along with giving her a new entitlement to Pension Credit and to full Council Tax Reduction. In total, we helped to increase her income by over £100 per week at a time when the household income had dropped when her husband passed away.

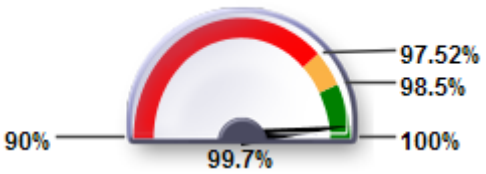
Mrs O was hugely grateful for our support and advice, not just for the financial benefit but for the kindness and compassion we showed her while she was going through such a difficult time dealing with the last days of her husband's illness. She explained that the extra income would enable her to enjoy a well-deserved break away, and she told us that she could not have coped through any of this without our help.

6. Key Performance Indicators

Performance Indicator	**P:FEADS007_6a.7 Advice Shop - Percentage of customers who rated the overall quality of the service as good or excellent.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zAS_PIPublicAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	From the start of 2012/13 we have measured this performance indicator on a quarterly basis. Responses are gathered from our customer survey cards and from our on-line questionnaire which we ask a random sample of at least 25 customers per week to complete following their involvement with the Advice Shop. The Advice Shop monitor results on a quarterly basis to identify any positive or negative trends which allows us to continue to provide the best possible service to our customers. Advice Shop customer satisfaction has been measured since 1999.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Chris Nelson



Q4 2016/17 result

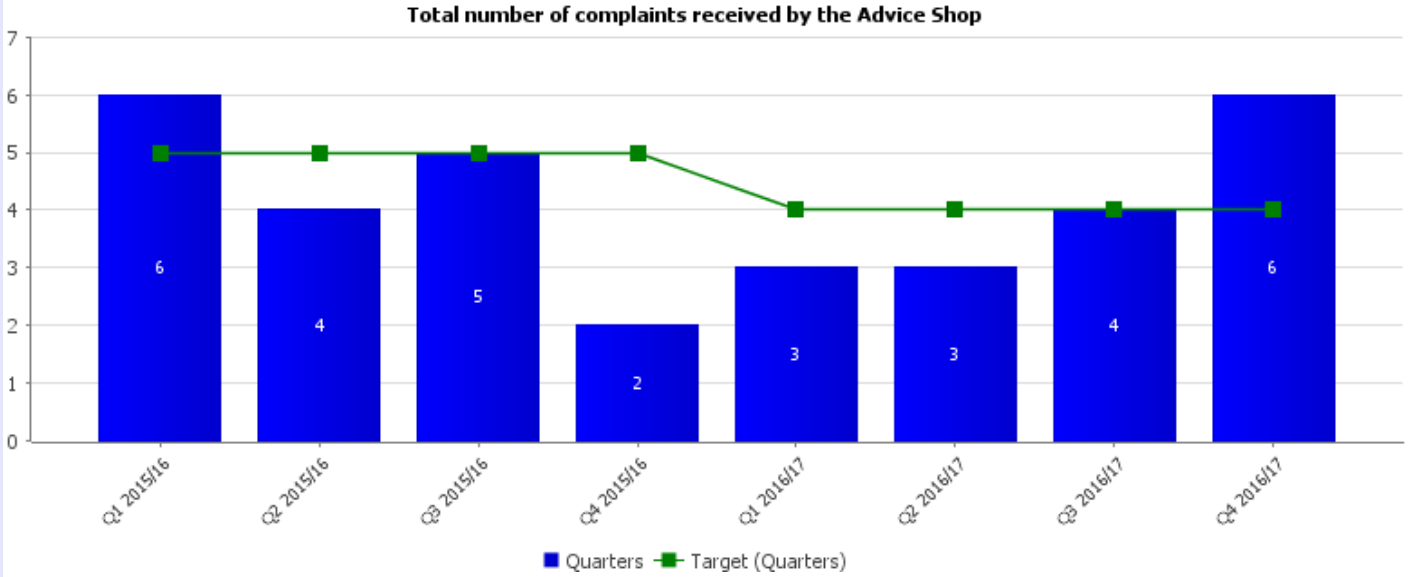


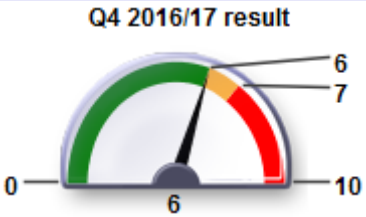
Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	PDSP_Partnership & Resources PDSP_Social Policy PPR Public Performance Reporting
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes

	Notes on Latest Data Entry
Trend Chart Commentary Over the last 8 quarters we have exceeded our target. The service actively encourages the sharing of ideas and improvements from both customers, staff and partners. We discuss any suggested improvements and implement where appropriate. This ensures the overall customer experience continues to develop and improve. In 2016/17 there has been an increase in the number of customers completing the questionnaires; 20% are completed on-line. **2016/17** **Quarter 4 -** In this quarter 99.7% of 357 respondents felt that the overall quality of service was good or excellent. Over the last year we have made continued improvements within the service such as processes, guidance and the customer journey. This has all assisted in keeping high satisfaction levels in this quarter and over the year. **Quarter 3** - In this quarter 99.7% of 310 respondents felt the overall quality of service was good or excellent. One respondent rated this as very poor and through analysis the overall quality of service was appropriate although a difficult message was being delivered. **Quarter 2 -** In this quarter all respondents rated overall quality of the service was good or excellent. Following improvements to our customer survey card we have significantly improved the total number of respondents reaching 337 in this period. **Quarter 1** - In this quarter all respondents rated overall quality of the service was good or excellent. There were only 67 responses received in this period. We have now adapted our customer survey and have improved our monitoring of response rates. We expect responses to increase in the next quarter. **2015/16** **Quarter 4 -** In this quarter all respondents felt the overall quality of service was good or excellent. There were only 87 completed surveys within this period. The service has identified areas where we can improve response rates and would expect number to increase in the 2016/17 period. **Quarter 3 -** In this period 100% of responses rated the overall quality as service as good or excellent. There was a slight reduction in the number of responses as we are currently introducing the new online version to customers. We received 138 responses in this period. **Quarter 2 -** In this period we met our target of 99% with 99.4% of responses rating the overall quality of service as good or excellent. There was a reduction in the number of completed surveys within this period as we have reviewed our processes. We would expect this to rise to over 200 per quarter as the new process becomes established. Following investigation of this 1 response, we identified that the advice given was appropriate and unfortunately the outcome of this advice was not as positive as the customer had hoped for. We received 178 responses within this period.	

Quarter 1 - In this period all responses felt that the overall quality of service was good or excellent. Within the service we have developed an excellent internal training programme which identifies staffing needs and keeps advisors fully up to date with any changes which affect our services and the customers who may use it. There were 197 responses within this period. **2017/18 Target -** Our target will remain at 99% for this period. We have adjusted the trigger thresholds to ensure we identify any trends early in the coming year. Each quarter we are looking to collect 350 completed questionnaires across all service delivery activity.	

Performance Indicator	**P:FEADS011_6b.3 Total number of complaints received by the Advice Shop**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Advice Shop. It is the total number of complaints received by the Advice Shop at stage one (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) and those received directly at stage two (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days). Note: This is to ensure complaints escalated from stage 1 and stage 2 are not double counted. The Advice Shop investigates and manages all complaints by following corporate guidelines. We closely monitor and analyse complaints to quickly identify any trends. We use complaints to make improvements in our service.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Denise Arbeiter





Gauge Type	Aim to Minimise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	
Categories	PDSP_Partnership & Resources PDSP_Social Policy PPR Public Performance Reporting
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes

Trend Chart Commentary:

Over the last two years the number of complaints has decreased. There has been an increase in the number of complaints about standards of service. The number of complaints about staff attitude has decreased. There has been training and coaching sessions to support staff to deliver difficult messages.

Notes on Latest Data Entry

18-Apr-2017 6 complaints were received in this quarter against a target of 4. Five of the complaints were for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. 4 complaints were upheld and 2 not upheld.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - 6 complaints were received in this quarter against a target of 4. Five of the complaints were for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. 4 complaints were upheld and 2 not upheld.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - In this quarter 4 complaints were received. 1 for poor communication and 3 for standard of service. The poor communication complaint was upheld, 1 standard of service complaint was part upheld and the other two were not upheld. The result has been staff training and staff counselling.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - In this quarter 3 complaints were received. 2 for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. Neither standard of service complaint was upheld and the poor communication complaint was part upheld.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - In this quarter 3 complaints were received. 2 for standard of service and 1 for employee attitude. All 3 complaints were investigated and outcome was that the employee complaint was not upheld, 1 standard of service was upheld and the other partially upheld. This is a reduction of 4 complaints to the same quarter in the previous year when we received 6 complaints.

Quarter 4 2015/16 - In this quarter we received 2 complaints both for standard of service and both were upheld. Staff members were spoken to as a result of these complaints and reminded of the high level of standard of service expected. 2 complaints received is a reduction of 6 on the same period last year and a reduction of 3 from the previous quarter. This reduction reflects staff training invested in the Advice Shop to maintain high levels of customer service.

Quarter 3 2015/16 - In this quarter 5 complaints were received. 3 for employee attitude, 1 for standard of service and 1 for communication. This is an increase of 1 complaint on the previous quarter and 2 more than the same period last year. All complaints were investigated and 2 were upheld - 1 for staff attitude and 1 for standard of service which resulted in staff training and briefings.

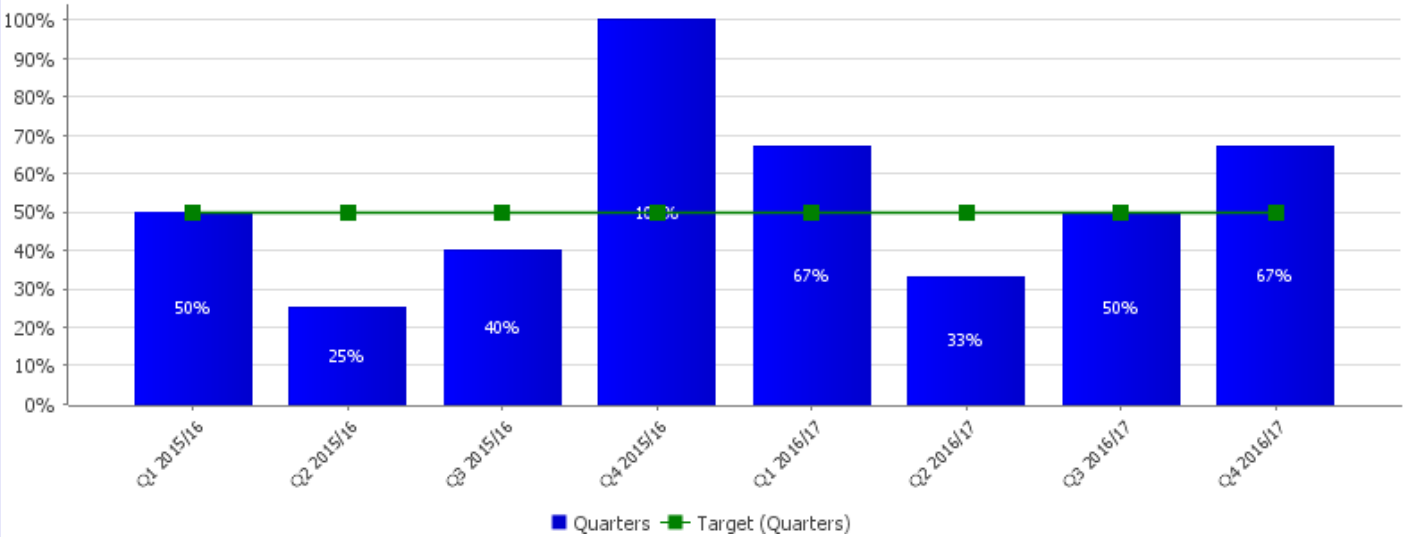
Quarter 2 2015/16 - In this quarter 4 complaints were received. 3 for standard of service and 1 for employee attitude. This is a reduction of 2 complaints on the previous quarter but 2 more than the same period in the previous year. All complaints were thoroughly investigated and the 3 complaints for standard of service were not upheld and the employee attitude was partly upheld which resulted in staff counselling.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - The target for 2015/16 was reduced from 6 to 5 for the year 2015/16. In this quarter 6 complaints were received. 2 for poor communication, 2 for standard of service and 2 employee attitude. This is a reduction of 2 complaints compared to the previous quarter mainly reflecting the reduction in complaints for employee attitude. All complaints were thoroughly investigated and 3 were upheld - 2 for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. For complaints upheld staff counselling and training were implemented and also a review and change of procedure.

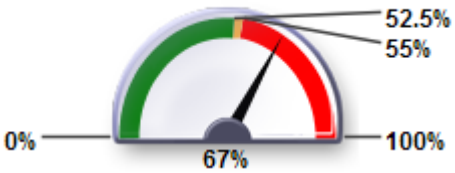
Target 2017/18 - will remain at 4 complaints. This reflects a challenging target as only 2 quarters in the year 2016-17 were below the target of 4 complaints and both were 3 complaints.

Performance Indicator	**FEADS012_6b.4 The percentage of complaints received by the Advice Shop that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints received by the Advice Shop which were upheld or partially upheld, as a percentage of all complaints received.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Denise Arbeiter

The percentage of complaints received by the Advice Shop that were upheld / partially upheld against the total complaints closed in full



Q4 2016/17 result



Gauge Type	Aim to Minimise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	
Categories	High Level
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	No

Notes on Latest Data Entry

20-Apr-2017 In this quarter 6 complaints were received. 5 for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. All 6 complaints were investigated and outcome was that 4 complaints were upheld and 2 not upheld. This equates to 67% of complaints were upheld against the total number of complaints received.

Trend Chart Commentary:

The Advice Shop investigates and manages all complaints by following corporate procedure We closely monitor and analyse complaints to quickly identify any trends. We use complaints to make improvements in our service.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - In this quarter 6 complaints were received. 5 for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. All 6 complaints were investigated and outcome was that 4 complaints were upheld and 2 not upheld. This equates to 67% of complaints were upheld against the total number of complaints received.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - In this quarter 4 complaints were received. 1 complaint for poor communication was upheld and 1 complaint for standard of service was part upheld which means 50% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - In this quarter 3 complaints were received. 2 for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. All 3 complaints were investigated and the outcome was that the poor communication complaint was part upheld. This means 1 complaint from the 3 was partly upheld which means 33% of complaints were upheld or partly upheld.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - In this quarter 3 complaints were received. 2 for standard of service and 1 for employee attitude. All 3 complaints were investigated and outcome was that the employee complaint was not upheld, 1 standard of service was upheld and the other partially upheld. This means that 2 complaints were upheld or partially upheld and means 67% of complaints upheld or partially upheld.

Quarter 4 2015/16 - We received 2 complaints in this quarter and both were for standard of service. Both complaints were upheld which means 100% of our complaints were upheld. In the same quarter period of last year we received 8 complaints, so the service has received significantly less complaints and both being upheld reflects how we investigate our complaints. Staff training was implemented to improve our standards.

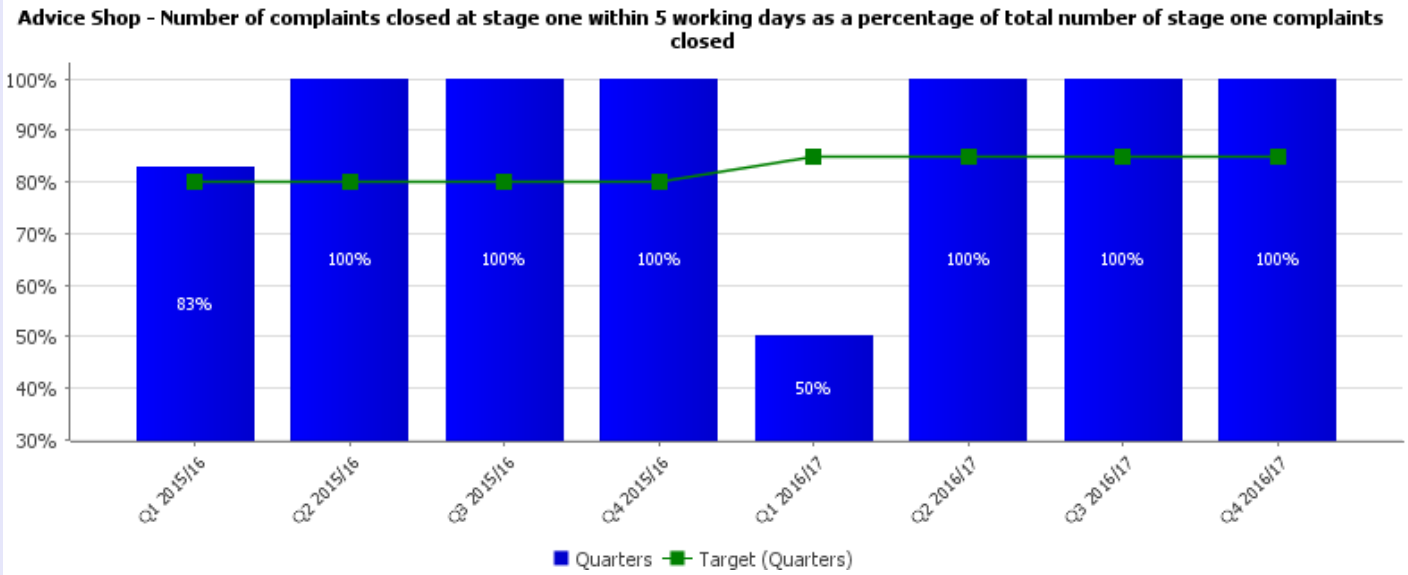
Quarter 3 2015/16 - We received 5 complaints in this quarter and 2 were upheld. This means 40% of our complaints were upheld. The complaints were for employee attitude and standard of service which resulted in staff training and briefings.

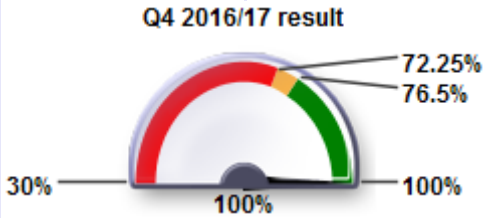
Quarter 2 2015/16 - We received 4 complaints in this quarter and 1 was partially upheld. This means 25% of our complaints were partially upheld. This complaint was for employee attitude which resulted in staff counselling.

Quarter 1 2015/16 -We received 6 complaints in this period and 3 of these were upheld. This means 50% of our complaints were upheld. 2 of the complaints were for standard of service and 1 for poor communication. As a result of this, staff counselling, training and a procedural review were undertaken. Complaints upheld have increased from the previous 2 quarters and this reflects the requirement for staff training that was implemented.

2017/18 Target will remain at 50% as agreed by the service.

Performance Indicator	**FEADS013_6b.1 Advice Shop - Number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as a percentage of total number of stage one complaints closed**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This indicator measures the total number of stage one complaints (complaints that the council aims to deal with within 5 working days) which are closed within 5 working days as a percentage of the total number of stage one complaints closed by the Advice Shop.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Denise Arbeiter





Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	High Level
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	No
Notes on Latest Data Entry	

Trend Chart Commentary:

This is a new KPI introduced in 2015-16 for all council services to monitor the percentage of complaints completed within the service standard timescales.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - In this period we received 6 complaints and all 6 were investigated within the councils 5 day service standard and all were resolved within 5 days which equates to 100% completion within the service standard.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - In this period we received 4 complaints and 3 were investigated within the councils 5 day service standard and all were resolved within 5 days which equates to 100% completion within the service standard.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - In this period we received 3 complaints and 2 were investigated within the councils 5 day service standard and both were resolved within the 5 days which equates to 100% completion within the service standard.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - In this period we received 3 complaints and 2 were investigated within the councils 5 day service standard but only 1 was resolved within the 5 days which equates to 50% completion within the service standard.

Quarter 4 2015/16 - In this period we received 2 complaints and both were investigated and resolved within the council's 5 day service standard which equates to 100% completion within service standard.

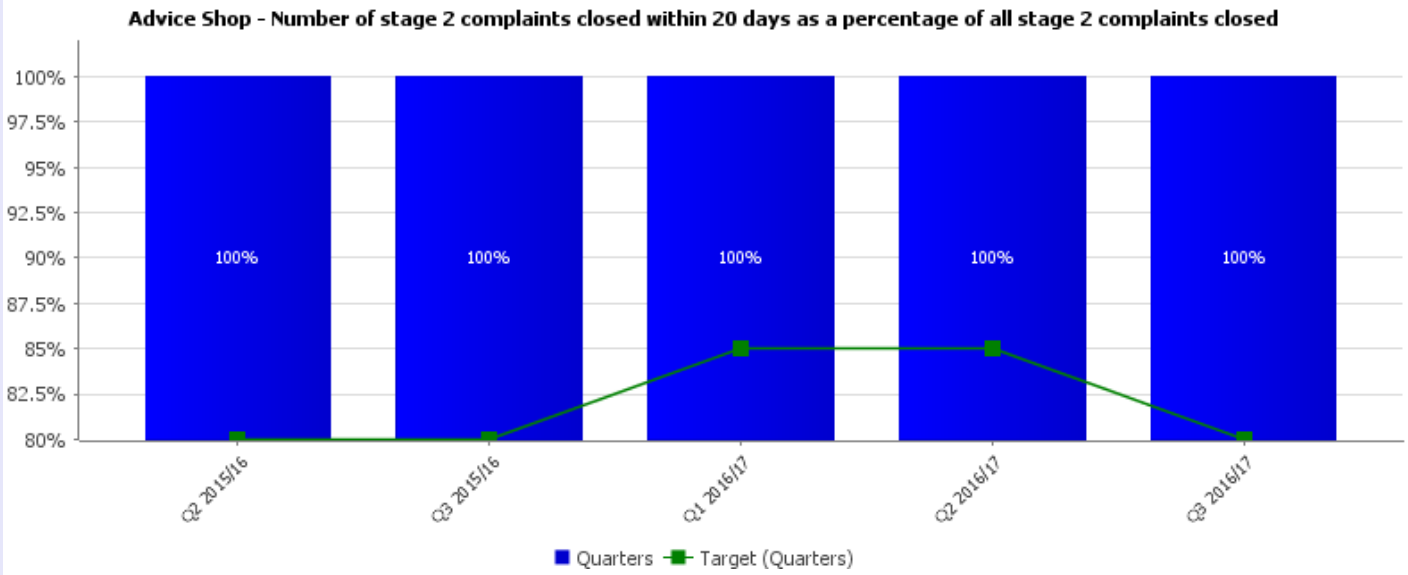
Quarter 3 2015/16 - In this period 5 complaints were received and 3 were completed within the council's 5 day service standard and 2 were escalated to stage 2. The 3 stage 1 complaints were completed within the stage 1 service standard which equates to 100% of all complaints being completed within the stage 1 service standard.

Quarter 2 2015/16 - In this period 4 complaints were received and 3 were completed within the council's 5 day service standard and 1 was escalated to stage 2. The 3 stage 1 complaints were completed within the stage 1 service standard which equates to 100% of all complaints being completed within the stage 1 service standard.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - In this period 6 complaints were received and 5 were completed within the council's 5 day service standard. This equates to 83% of all complaints received were completed within the stage 1 service standard.

2017/18 Target will remain at 85% as this is seen as a challenging target.

Performance Indicator	**FEADS014_6b.2 Advice Shop - Number of stage 2 complaints closed within 20 days as a percentage of all stage 2 complaints closed**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This indicator measures the total number of complaints closed within 20 days as a percentage of the total number of stage two complaints (more complex complaints that the council aims to deal with within 20 working days) closed by the Advice Shop. This indicator includes complaints that have been escalated from stage one. An escalated complaint is a complaint that was dealt with at stage one frontline resolution and then reopened at stage two investigation due to continued dissatisfaction by the customer on the outcome of the complaint at stage one.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Denise Arbeiter



Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	?
Categories	High Level
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	No

Trend Chart Commentary:

This is a new KPI introduced for all council services to monitor the percentage of complaints escalated to stage 2 which are completed within the service standard timescales.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - No complaints were escalated to stage 2 in this period. In the period we received 6 complaints but all were resolved within stage 1.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - We received 4 complaints in this period and 1complaint was escalated to stage 2 resolution and it was resolved within the 20

Notes on Latest Data Entry

20-Apr-2017 No complaints were escalated to stage 2 in this period. In the period we received 6 complaints but all were resolved within stage 1.

day service standard which equates to 100% of complaints resolved within the service standard.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - 1 complaint was escalated to 20 days service standard and it was resolved within the 20 days which equates to 100% of complaints escalated being resolved within the service standard.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - 1 complaint was escalated to 20 days service standard and it was resolved within the 20 days which equates to 100% of complaints escalated being resolved within the service standard.

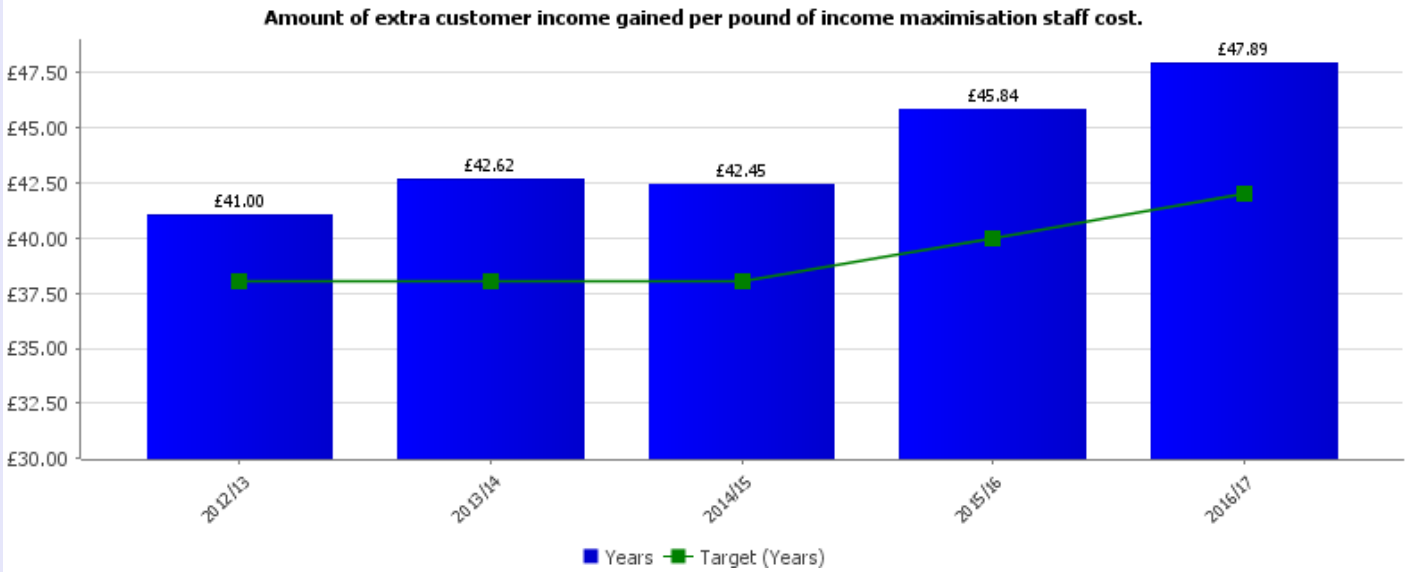
Quarter 4 2015/16 - No information is displayed as no complaints were escalated to stage 2 during this period.

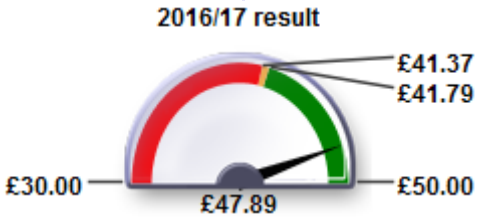
Quarter 3 2015/16 - In this period 5 complaints were received and 2 were escalated to stage 2. Both complaints were completed within the stage 2 service standard which equates to 100% of all complaints being completed within the stage 2 service standard.

Quarter 2 2015/16 - 1 complaint was escalated to stage 2 as more time was needed to investigate the complaint. The complaint was completed within the 20 days service standard which means that 100% of stage 2 complaints were completed within the stage 2 service standard.

Quarter 1 2015/16 – No information is displayed as no stage 2 complaints were received during this period.

Performance Indicator	**P:FEADS060_9a.2a Amount of extra customer income gained per pound of income maximisation staff cost.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This performance indicator measures the amount of estimated income gained for all customers measured against the overall cost of Advice Shop staff working in the 'income maximisation' team (The Income Maximisation Service aims to increase customers' income by checking their entitlement to welfare benefits. If entitlement is identified the team assist customers to apply therefore maximising their income).	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Chris Nelson





Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	PDSP_Partnership & Resources
	PPR Public Performance Reporting
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes

Notes on Latest Data Entry

Trend Chart Commentary:

We have consistently exceeded our target over the last five years and increased our target appropriately.

2016/17 - During this period we have exceeded our increased target of £42:1 by generating £47.90 in extra income for our customers per pound of income maximisation cost. This is a slight increase on the previous year mainly due to an increase in the amount of extra income gained for our customers and a slight reduction in staff costs within the income maximisation team.

2015/16 - During this period we have met our increased target of £40:1 by generating £45.84 in extra income for our customers per pound of income

maximisation cost.

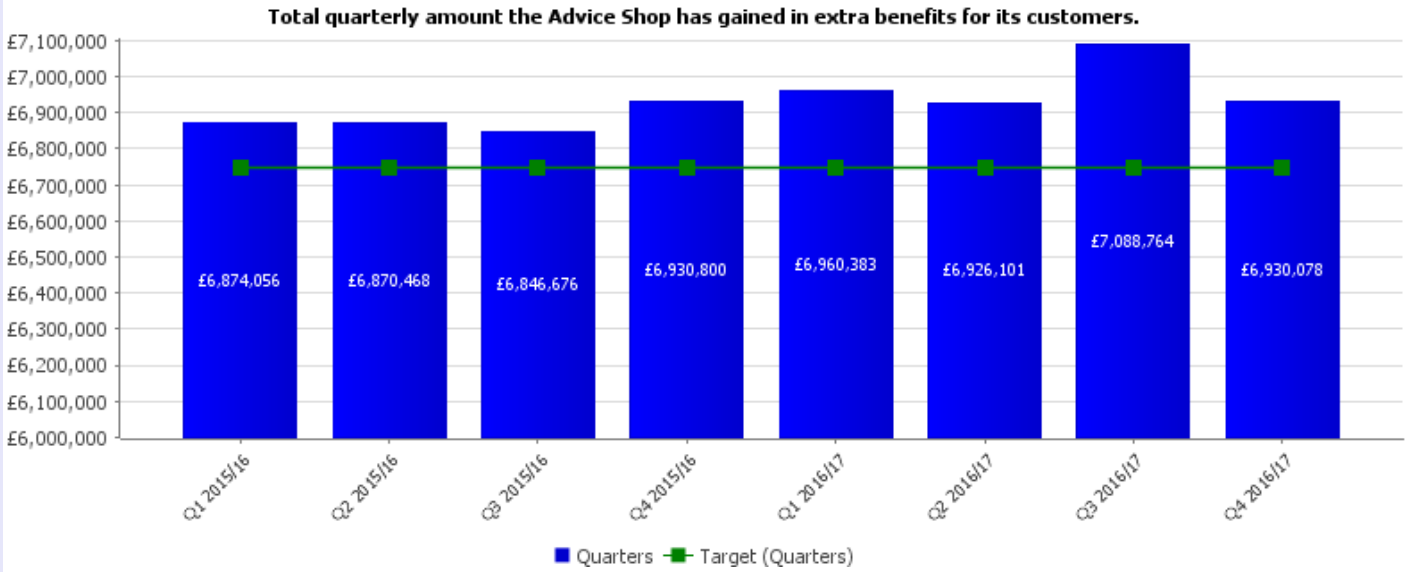
2014/15 - We exceeded our target of £38:1 reaching £42.45:1. There is a slight reduction from the previous year which is caused by a higher increase in staff costs than in income gained.

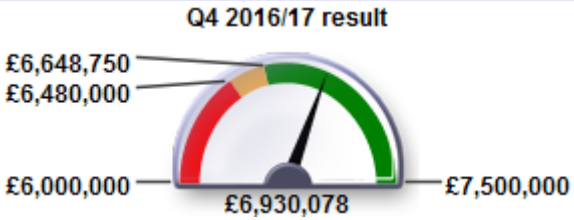
2013/14 - We successfully exceeded our target of £38:1 reaching £42.62:1. There were new and successful campaigns carried within this period which helped us exceed our target in this period.

2012/13 - In this year we exceeded our target of £38:1 reaching £41:1. Reduced direct cost to the Advice Shop budget as a result of moving to Bathgate Partnership Centre accounts for most of the increase in 2012/13.

Target 2017/18 will remain at £42:1 due to Welfare Reforms.

Performance Indicator	**P:FEADS061_9b.1a Total quarterly amount the Advice Shop has gained in extra benefits for its customers.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zAS_PIPublicAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This key performance indicator shows the amount the Advice Shop has gained in extra benefits for its customers during the quarter. This figure includes any successful benefit claims and appeals we help customers with. These figures can vary due to a variety of factors such as the time it takes the Department of Work and Pensions to make decisions and for the Appeals Service to set tribunals but these average out over the year. There are two aspects to a benefit or appeal award. Firstly the weekly award, this is multiplied by 52 to reflect the extra income customers receive over a year. This methodology is accepted and used throughout the UK by Welfare Rights services. The second part is the lump sum or backdates. Certain benefits can be a one off payment, these would not be recorded within the weekly award to ensure the correct amount is recorded.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Chris Nelson





Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	PDSP_Social Policy PPR Public Performance Reporting
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes

Notes on Latest Data Entry

Trend Chart Commentary

Over the last 8 quarters we have managed to exceed our target of £6,750,000. We closely monitor our target on a daily basis and have established partnerships which allow us to target those most in need.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - In this quarter we have exceeded our target reaching £6,930,078. This is similar to the previous quarter and has ensured we have met out yearly target of £27,000,000.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - In this quarter we have exceeded our target reaching £7,088,764. This is slightly higher than the previous quarter and significantly higher than the same period in the previous year where we reached £6.846,676. We have noticed an increase in the number of decisions being made in relation to Personal independence Payment which is the main reason for exceeding our target.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - In this quarter we exceeded our target reaching £6,926,101. This is consistent with the previous quarter and slightly above the same period in the previous year.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - In this quarter we exceeded our target reaching £6,960,383. This is consistent with the previous quarter and slightly above the same period in the previous year.

Quarter 4 2015/16 - In this quarter we met our target reaching £6,930,800. This is slightly below the same period in 2014/15 although still above target. We are experiencing more complex enquiries due to the welfare reform changes.

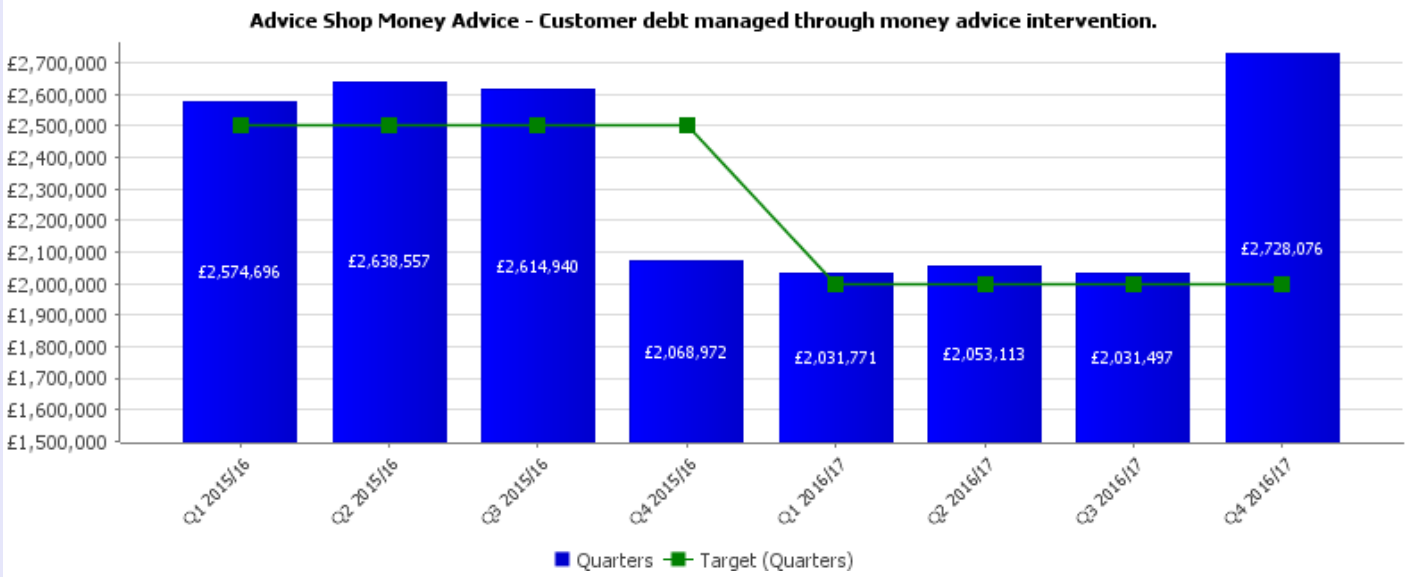
Quarter 3 2015/16 - In this quarter we met our target reaching £6,846,676 in this period. We have consistently met our target through daily monitoring and managing resources appropriately.

Quarter 2 2015/16 - In this quarter we reached £6,870,468 meeting our target of £6.75 million. The Income Maximisation team closely monitor this Key Performance Indicator on a daily basis. In this period we concentrated on obtaining outcomes from customers who were assisted more than 6 months ago. This is a slight decrease from the same period in 2014/15.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - We met our target of £6,750,000 reaching £6,874,056 in this quarter. The comparison is similar to the same period in 2014/15 where we gained £6,873,569 in extra benefits for our customers.

2017/18 Target - Our quarterly target will remain at £6,750,000 due to the ongoing challenges with welfare reforms.

Performance Indicator	**CP:ADS066_9b.1a Advice Shop Money Advice - Customer debt managed through money advice intervention.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	Amount of debt managed on behalf of customers by Advice Shop staff per quarter. Customers come into the Advice Shop with various debt issues that require assistance to be resolved through numerous channels. This may be through arranging repayments, bankruptcy and negotiations. We record the total amount of debt our customers have.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Anne Stevenson



Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	CP5 Minimising poverty, deprivation and promoting equality
	2. We are better educated
	CPPR Corporate Plan Public Performance Reporting
	PDSP_Partnership & Resources
	PPR Public Performance Reporting
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes

Notes on Latest Data Entry

Trend Chart Commentary:

An analysis by our Senior Money Advisor has shown that many of our customers are now approaching us with smaller debts. There has been a reduction in customers receiving large loans and/or mortgages due to the economic change in recent years. As people have less money they are approaching us with lower gross level of debt as they have very limited means to pay off their debt. Recent changes in Scottish Government

legislation relating to debt relief routes has meant that it is more difficult for customers in debt to enter into these arrangement schemes.

2016/17

Quarter 4 - Target of £2,000,000 was exceed with £2,728,076 of customer debt managed for this period. The increase in debt managed is contributed to the recruitment of new advisors to tackle the number of customers presenting with debt issues. More cases were closed this period and debt managed is recorded when cases are closed. This reflects the increase in customer debt managed in this quarter compared to the previous three quarters of 2016/17.

Quarter 3 - Target of £2,000,000 was exceeded with £2,031,497 of customer debt managed. Similar to previous quarter and slightly lower than this time last year. Consistent level of debt being managed for the first three quarters of this financial year.

Quarter 2 - Target of £2,000,000 was exceeded with £2,053,113 of customer debt managed. This is a similar figure to last quarter and is lower than this quarter last year. Year on year, the level of debt that our customers are presenting with is reducing and this reflects the note in quarter one that advises that although number of customers is increasing, the value of debt is reducing.

Quarter 1 - Target of £2,000,000 was exceeded for this quarter with £2,031,771 of customer debt managed. This has reduced in comparison with last years figure and is in indicative of the continuing reduction in the value of debts that our customers are presenting with. A new KPI highlighting the number of customers rather than the debt managed will evidence the continuing high demand on the service. The service is seeing higher numbers of customers but with lower debt levels.

2015/16

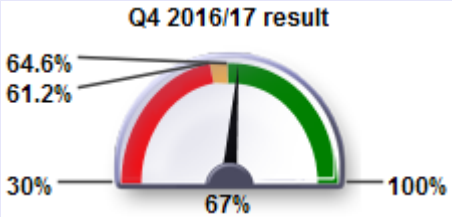
Quarter 4 - Target of £2,500,000 was not met for this quarter with £2,068,972 of customer debt managed. The reduction in debt managed can be attributed to lower debts owed by those customers that we had completed work with this quarter. Similar to previous periods, legislation changes have contributed to customers accessing less credit as creditors are being audited for responsible lending. Government debt solutions are also more difficult to enter into due to the level of evidence required by the Accountant in Bankruptcy.

Quarter 3 - Target was exceeded this quarter by managing customer debt of £2,614,940. This figure is similar to quarters 1 and 2 of this financial year showing a consistent level of debt managed. Slight reduction from previous year which is similar to other quarters this financial year and can be contributed to changes in legislation.

Quarter 2 - Exceeded target this quarter by managing customer debt totalling £2,638557. Compared to this time last year this has reduced slightly. Debt managed can fluctuate between periods depending on the amount of debt that our customers owe to creditors.

Quarter 1 - we exceeded our target this period by reaching £2,574,696. This amount compared to last year at quarter one has reduced by approx £500,000 due to numerous legislative changes in Money Advice services as well as reduced lending from creditors. The target has been reduced to take into account these external influences. **Target**: The target for financial year 2017/18 will remain at £2,000,000 of customer debt managed per quarter. This target reflects recent legal changes and although client numbers are still high, the debt levels that customers have are smaller than previous years. This also reflects the council's corporate debt strategy of prevention at early stages of arrears rather than allowing arrears to accrue to a level that requires recovery action.	

Performance Indicator	**CP:ADS067_9b.1a The percentage of Advice Shop money advice customer debt successfully managed.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	This performance indicator measures the amount of customer debt which is "successfully managed". We look at the amount of debt which has a positive outcome for the customer and creditors against the total amount of debt which the Advice Shop handles. Customers come into the Advice Shop with various debt issues that require assistance to be resolved through numerous channels. This may be through arranging repayments, bankruptcy and negotiations. We record the total amount of debt our customer has as well as the debt we successfully manage. For all the debt which we successfully manage, there is a percentage which we are unable to successfully manage due to non engagement from our customers. These cases are periodically closed after several failed attempts to establish contact with our customers.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Anne Stevenson



Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	
Categories	CP5 Minimising poverty, deprivation and promoting equality
	CPPR Corporate Plan Public Performance Reporting
	PDSP_Partnership & Resources
	PPR Public Performance Reporting

	HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	Yes
	Notes on Latest Data Entry	

Trend Chart Commentary:

The level of debt successfully managed fluctuates depending on number of cases closed per quarter and the debt levels of those cases. Over 2016/17 we successfully managed 74% of all debt. This is a higher percentage than 2015/16 when we managed 68% of debt successfully.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - We successfully managed 67% of our customers debt for this quarter which is 1% below our target of 68%. For this quarter we concluded some cases that actively engaged as well as some non engaging customers.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - We successfully managed 65% of our customers debt for this quarter which is 3% less than our target. Some of our customers who had not engaged were closed in this period therefore not concluding to a successful conclusion.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - We successfully managed 84% of our customers debt for this quarter. A high number of money advice cases are actively engaging and concluding to a successful debt solution option.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - We successfully managed 81% of our customers debt this quarter, this is 13% higher than our target of 68%. The majority of the cases we closed this period were customers who were actively engaging and entering into a successful plan to manage their debt.

Quarter 4 2015/16 - We managed 63% of customers debt successfully which is 5% lower than our 68% target. The difference from last period is that we closed the remainder of the cases that could not provide the evidence required for Government regulated debt solutions and also customers who were no longer in contact.

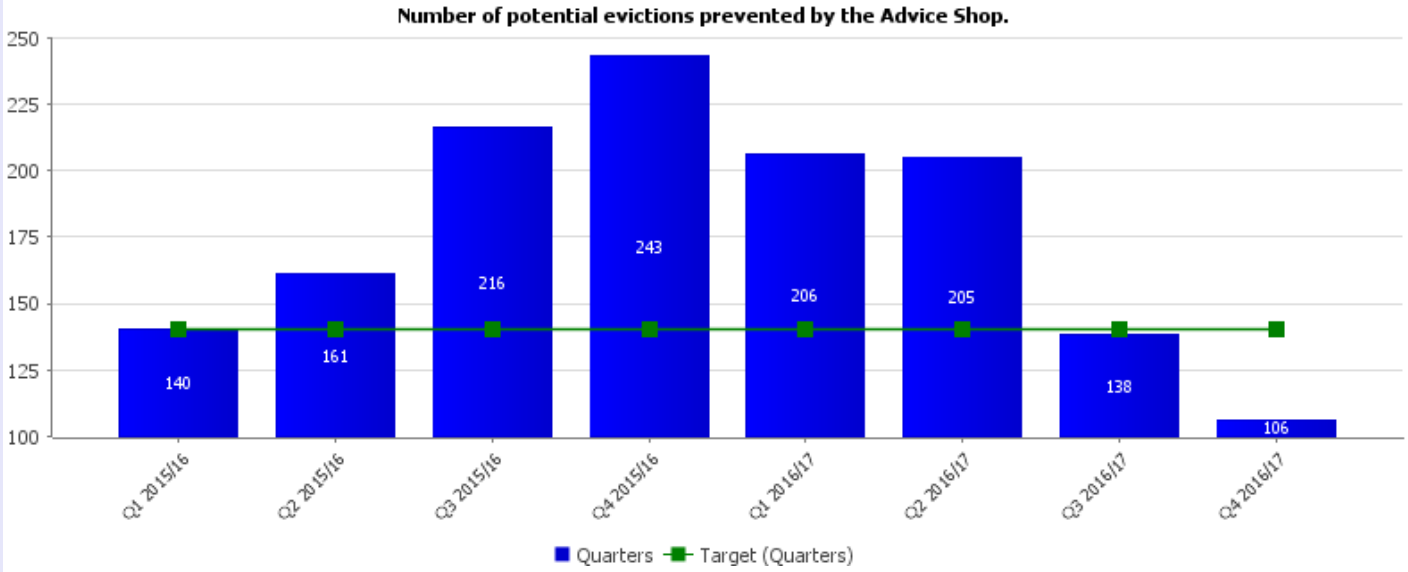
Quarter 3 2015/16 - we exceeded our target of 68% by successfully managing 83% of our customers debt this quarter. This was mainly due to a high number of cases completing government regulated debt solutions. Many of these customers were gathering the extra evidence now required to complete their applications.

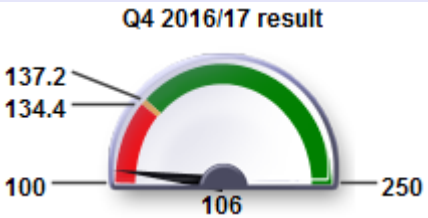
Quarter 2 2015/16 - we managed 55% of debt successfully which is below our 68% target. Cases that were open for a specific period without any further contact were closed in this quarter due to no further action from the customer. This resulted in a decrease of debt management solutions for our customers. More evidence is required for Government debt solutions therefore customers who do not provide this information are more likely to not manage their debt to a successful conclusion.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - we exceeded our increased target of 68% reaching 69% of debt being successfully managed. This is lower than previous

quarters are there were members of staff leaving their position and closing customer cases that were no longer engaging with the service. The target for 2017/18 will remain at 68% per quarter. This reflects the increasing number of customer with low levels of debt who have limited means to successfully repay their debts.	

Performance Indicator	**FEADS068_9b.1b Number of potential evictions prevented by the Advice Shop.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; (R)SOA Admin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	The number of Advice Shop customers who are able to remain in their home after intervention from the Advice Shop to prevent a potential eviction/repossession. Help to achieve this includes income maximisation, debt advice and work with the sheriff court to have the case continued or withdrawn. Therefore the formal eviction process will have been stopped or delayed. This allows the person to remain in their home. The team are externally funded by the Scottish Legal Aid Board to deal with anyone who is at court facing eviction. Customers can be in social housing, private landlord or an owner occupier.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Anne Stevenson





Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	
Categories	7. We live longer, healthier lives. High Level
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	No

Notes on Latest Data Entry

Trend Chart Commentary

This indicator was introduced to monitor the number of customers facing potential formal eviction procedures which were successfully prevented by the intervention of the Advice Shop.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - We prevented 106 evictions in this quarter which is 34 less than our target of 140 per quarter. Court was quiet in January with

many customers not appearing. It is anticipated that this figure may increase in the next quarter however the team is trying to reach customer prior to court to encourage early intervention.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - We prevented 138 evictions this quarter which is 2 less than our target of 140 per quarter. This decrease was expected due to the lead up to Christmas and New Year with less cases calling at court.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - We exceeded our target of 140 by preventing 205 evictions this quarter. The expected decrease in cases calling at court did not materialise as thought with many cases still calling. It is expected that this will reduce next quarter with the lead up to Christmas and New Year.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - We exceeded our target of 140 by preventing 206 evictions. As predicted in quarter 4 of 2015/16, cases calling at court is still high although decreasing slightly. Expected that this will decrease again next quarter as summer holiday period usually quieter.

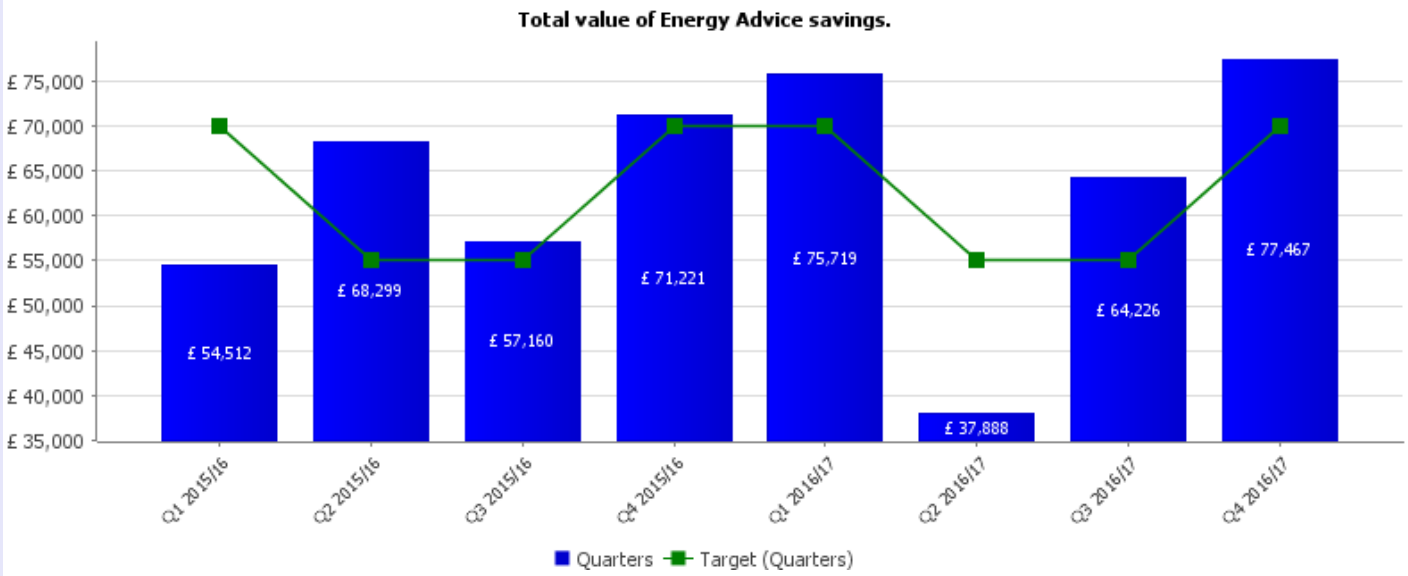
Quarter 4 2015/16 - We exceeded our target of 140 by preventing 243 evictions. Similar to previous quarter, there is a significant increase in the number of evictions being prevented due to the high volume of cases getting heard at court. We expect this trend to continue in Qtr 1 2016-17.

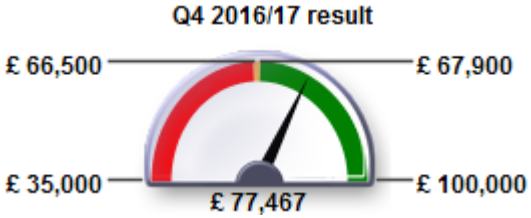
Quarter 3 2015/16 - We exceeded our target of 140 by preventing 216 evictions. This is a significant increase to previous quarters and is predominately because of cases that were sisted at court and not adhering to the agreement made at court being called again. This increase in cases at court is likely to continue for the next quarter.

Quarter 2 2015/16 - In this quarter we exceeded our target by preventing 161 evictions. There has been an increase in the number of cases being sent to court therefore an increase in the need for this service.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - In this quarter we met our target of 140 evictions prevented. The reduction compared to the same period last year reflects the measures put in place with the emphasis on prevention of cases escalating to eviction stage. There was also a targeted campaign this time last year to reduce rent arrears which resulted in particularly high numbers for this quarter.

Performance Indicator	**FEADS071_9b.1a Total value of Energy Advice savings.**	**Responsible Officer(s)**	zADS_PIAdmin; Elaine Nisbet
Description	The total value of Energy Advice savings is a measure of our impact in reducing fuel poverty. This is achieved through advice and guidance on efficient home heating use, fuel switching and reduced supplier tariffs/trust applications. Reduced consumption due to improvement. We use nationally agreed figures (from the Energy Savings Trust) that ascribe a money value to each piece of advice. The target is an accumulative target due to the seasonal differences as more customers require help and advice within the colder months.	**Data Collection Officer(s)**	Nahid Hanif





Gauge Type	Aim to Maximise
Last Update	Q4 2016/17
Status	✔
Categories	8. We make the most efficient and effective use of resources.
	High Level
HOS Approved for public/PDSP display/reporting ?:	No

Notes on Latest Data Entry

Trend Chart Commentary:

We have managed to reach of target in 6 out of the last 8 quarters.

Quarter 4 2016/17 - In this quarter we exceeded our target of £70,000 reaching £77,467. During this quarter with support from the temporary energy advisor there was targeted energy advice to customers with fuel debt and disconnections as a result of the winter weather. There was also targeted advice to customers fitting the criteria for external wall insulation. Overall the annual target of £250,000 has been exceeded by reaching £255,301.

Quarter 3 2016/17 - In this quarter we have exceeded our target of £55,000 reaching £64,226. During this quarter our Energy Advisor returned to work and we also recruited a temporary energy advisor to support the service through the winter period. This has resulted in us exceeding our target and we are now on track to meet our annual target.

Quarter 2 2016/17 - Due to long term sickness absence of our full time dedicated Energy Advisor we were unable to meet our target of £55,000 reaching £37,888. To support reaching our target we have recruited a temporary energy adviser until March '17 and would expect to reach our targets for the remainder of the 2016/17 period.

Quarter 1 2016/17 - In this quarter we exceeded our target of £70,000 by reaching £75,719.36. This a significant improvement on the same period in the previous year. We have had a increased number of customers with energy savings which is the main reason for the increase

Quarter 4 2015/16 - In this quarter we have achieved our target of £70,000. This was due to success of the keeping warm in winter campaign. The work generated in the winter months was closed in this quarter.

Quarter 3 2015/16 - In this quarter we have achieved £57,160 meeting our target of £55,000 for this period. In quarter 2 2015/16 we concentrated of completing work of previous quarters and we expected to be closer to our target due to this.

Quarter 2 2015/16 - We now have a full time Energy Advisor in post, who has concentrated on completing work opened in previous quarters. This has resulted in achieving £68,299 in extra energy savings for our customers meeting our target for this quarter of £55,000. This is slightly higher than the same period in 2014/15.

Quarter 1 2015/16 - Due to the delay in recruitment of a full time dedicated Energy Advisor we were unable to meet our target of £70,000 reaching £54,512. We have now filled our vacant post and would expect to reach our targets for the rest of the 2015/16 period.

2016/17 Target - Our target will remain at £250,000 for this period. Quarter 1 and 4 will be £70,000 and quarter 2 and 3 will remain at £55,000.

Advice shop

Annual Report 2015-16

The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty and to promote inclusion and equality through advice, assistance and advocacy.

Advice Shop customers and partners have told us that accessing advice is easier if it is in their local community. In response, the Advice Shop has set up outreach sessions across West Lothian. Customers have asked for an appointment rather than just dropping in. In 2015/16 there have been 3,100 appointments to support customers to gain over £1.7m in extra income.

For up to date information on where all of the outreach sessions are held go to: **www.westlothian.gov.uk/adviceshop**

Better off West Lothian

westlothian.gov.uk

West Lothian Council

Working with our Partners

Advice shop

Macmillan Benefits Project

The service is for anyone living in West Lothian and for patients attending the Western General Hospital who are affected by cancer including family and carers. Advisors will not only look at income maximisation through benefits which may be available, but will assist with access to Occupational Therapy, Home Safety and travel concessions. Over the last year at the Western General Hospital, the project has supported 589 clients to gain an extra £1.6m income as well as signposting customers to other services to help support them in their cancer journey.

"When someone has cancer or, a family member has had a cancer diagnosis, the shock can throw families into a frightening and confusing situation. People really struggle to cope with the initial news and there are important questions they need answered, such as, what help is available and can they access benefits whilst they are unable to work. The Macmillan advisor is someone they can turn to for financial help. As one of the Macmillan advisors, I am based in Bathgate, however my role involves me working within the Western General Hospital; it is one of Scotland's largest cancer care hospitals. There are information sessions on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Macmillan Information Point within the hospital. It is a morning drop in session and in the afternoon there are ward visits. The project has built up a great relationship with all health care professionals and staff within the hospital. There is a system in place for staff to refer patients to us for a ward visit or to contact them at home if need be. On average we help about 7 – 10 patients and their families each session." ***Macmillan Advisor***

MacMillan @ West Lothian: Information and Support Services

This is a new service which is available to anyone affected by cancer; be that people with a cancer diagnosis, family members, carers or friends and will welcome anyone at any point in their cancer journey. The service will provide emotional support, access to information materials around cancer and its effects and treatment, or simply a listening ear for people. As well as cancer information and emotional support, the service can refer people on to other services including benefits advice and counselling. Trained volunteers will play a key role in the delivery of the drop-in service. The first drop-in point will be in Bathgate Partnership Centre and the project has recruited six volunteers who are currently undertaking training.

Pensioner Income Maximisation Service

Working with West Lothian Social Policy, Carers of West Lothian and NHS Lothian, this service focusses on working with older customers, people affected by dementia and long term conditions. Over this last year, we have worked with 520 customers; the service has introduced a new outreach session with Carers of West Lothian on the first Wednesday of every month. When older people leave hospital, often they will be referred to Social Work for an assessment. The PIMS advisor has been conducting joint visits with Community Care Assistants and this has proved to be very beneficial in relation to benefit entitlement.

"A joint home visit with the Community Care Assistant was arranged. The visit was for a vulnerable, elderly couple to follow up on aids and adaptations that had been put into their home. The referral was only for the wife but, from a benefit perspective, it was immediately apparent that both husband and wife were eligible for a disability benefit. Applications were made for Attendance Allowance for both of them and they were awarded this benefit which made them better off by £110.00 per week. This allowed them to take a taxi to and from the hospital which was a great relief to both of them. If the couple had not been referred by the Community Care Assistant they would not have known that they were entitled to any benefits." ***PIMS Advisor***

Alzheimer West Lothian

More and more people are being diagnosed with Alzheimers or dementia and it is important that people living with dementia, including families and carers, are aware of the financial support available. Over the last year, the advisor has worked with over 100 families and gained almost £250,000 of extra income. On a regular basis, the advisor meets with individuals who attend the Alzheimer Scotland Peer Support Group. Usually, there are six couples attending and the advisor is able to provide information, advice and guidance on a range of topics.

As part of the campaign the advisor has been actively involved in helping Bathgate Partnership Centre become "dementia friendly". All staff are trained in Dementia Awareness and are all Dementia Friends. This involved learning a little about dementia and doing very simple and practical things that can make an enormous difference to people living with the condition.

In partnership with Alzheimer Scotland, an advice session will take place in their offices in Livingston. It will start in April and appointments can be arranged to help support more people to get the help they need.

Ex Offenders Campaign

The project delivers a weekly advice session in HMP Addiewell. The advisor provides a link between prison and the community by working in partnership with other agencies to offer advice on benefits, housing, and debt and energy issues. Prisoners approaching their release date are automatically referred for an appointment six weeks prior to liberation. In the last year there has been a 60% increase in the numbers referred into the project.

"Whilst in prison last year the advisor went beyond the call of duty in keeping my house. Without her I would have lost my house and came out of prison homeless" ***Customer comment***

Young Parents Project

In partnership with Children 1st, and based at the Chill Out Zone in Bathgate, this project works with young parents and children up to the age of eight years. The project aims to improve the outcomes and life chances for families through tackling money worries, maximising income and providing one-to-one support on a long term basis. There is a drop-in session every Friday afternoon with access to telephones and computers, crèche and play activities for the children. In the first year of the project, the money advisor has worked with 40 families to manage their debt, understand the benefits system and to budget effectively.

3 or More Project

Customers, who are referred to the Food bank can only receive three vouchers in any six month period. The project works in partnership with West Lothian Food bank to engage with customers experiencing persistent food poverty. Often customers with complex and enduring financial difficulties exceed this limit while their crisis remains unresolved.

The project aims to alleviate food poverty both in the immediate and longer term by providing an emergency food parcel when visiting customers in their own home.

The advisor will give one to one support to help the customer maximise their income, resolve any outstanding problems and refer them on for additional support. Over the past year, 58 individuals have been supported.

> *I don't know where I would be right now if the Food bank project hadn't been available. I had exhausted all of my vouchers and my crisis grant entitlement. I had nowhere else to turn. The project helped me through a difficult period when I was switching between benefits".* ***Customer comment***

Kinship Care

Sometimes children can no longer stay with their parents and instead live with relatives or friends in kinship care. This can be because of parental drug and alcohol misuse, mental ill health, imprisonment of one or both parents, neglect or bereavement. The advisor works with the family to increase their disposable income particularly in determining calculations to ensure they are better off during the assessment period. This allows families to make informed decisions about accepting the Kinship Care Allowance as they may not always be better off.

The advisor works in partnership with the Social Work Family Placement team, Psychology of Parenting Project, ABE and 'We Kin Care' support group. Over the year, the project has worked with 29 kinship carers.

> *Mr Smith was referred by Social Work Family Placement Team for a financial check. Mr Smith is a kinship carer for his two grandsons aged 10 and 12. He was under assessment for Kinship Care Allowance and wanted to know how accepting the new allowance would affect his financial situation. Overall, taking into account his current income, if he accepted the allowance he would be better off and the amount he received would increase when the younger grandson turns eleven. This information helped Mr Smith to make decisions which affected not only him but also his two young grandsons.."*
> ***Kinship Advisor***

Working to support customers to:

Advice shop

Stay Warm

The number of households experiencing fuel poverty in Scotland is 34.9% or 845,000 and in West Lothian the figure is 29%. Fuel poverty is defined has having to spend more than 10% of your disposable income on fuel in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime. A satisfactory heating regime means that you can maintain a temperature of 21°C in the living room and 18°C in other rooms.

Fuel poverty is caused by a combination of rising energy costs, low disposable household income and poor energy efficiency in the home. The consequences of fuel poverty can be misery, discomfort, ill health and debt. The energy advisor helps with improving energy efficiency, helps customers make informed choices about energy suppliers and helps to assist with income maximisation and fuel debt. Last year we helped customers to save £251,192.

"Mrs Brown, who is an 84 year old lady, contacted the Advice Shop after a friend told her about seeing an article about the Warm Home Discount Scheme in the local newspaper. She had heard of the Warm Home Discount Scheme but was certain she did not qualify as she is not in receipt of Guarantee Pension Credit. She called the Advice Shop to ask for advice. Although Mrs Brown does not receive Guarantee Pension Credit, her annual income is less than £16,190. Her energy supplier is British Gas. Mrs Brown qualifies for the Warm Home Discount under their broader criteria – 'age over 62 with household income less than £16,190' Mrs Brown was able to tell the advisor her British Gas account number, the advisor was able to go online and submit an application on her behalf. Mrs Brown was delighted, saying she has never bothered before as she really thought she didn't qualify so didn't want to bother us." ***Energy Advisor***

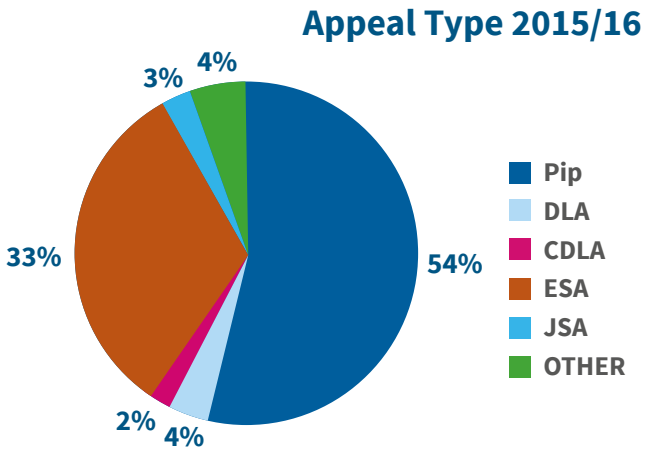
Appeal Decisions which they think are wrong

Customers can decide that a decision about a benefit claim they have made with the Department for Work and Pensions is wrong. If they take this decision then the Advice Shop will help represent them at the appeal hearing. The chart shows the different type of appeals; 54% of the appeals are related to decisions about Personal Independent payment.

Over the year, the service has dealt with 366 appeals which is an increase of 90% on the previous year. The service wins 70% of appeals and has generated £982,602 that people from West Lothian would have lost without the help and assistance from the appeal reps.

Mrs Brown was looking for help to appeal a benefit decision for her 5 year old daughter. Her daughter was previously in receipt of the high rate of care for a limited period. Mrs Brown had completed a renewal claim and the decision was made - nil award. A mandatory reconsideration was completed and the decision remained unchanged.

The service received the appeal papers and noted the conflicting evidence within the report from the school and the nursery. As part of representing the customer at tribunal, we prepared the customer for the type of questions she would be asked on the day, we pointed out the conflicting evidence and prepared a submission evidencing the care and mobility needs of the child. We asked the tribunal to consider making an award or consider adjourning for new evidence from the school as the reports were so conflicting. The tribunal accepted an adjournment.



The Advisor:

- Contacted the head teacher and pointed out the inconsistencies and helped the teacher draft a letter of support.
- Advised the customer to get in touch with the health visitor for a letter of support.
- Updated the submission to include new evidence.

Appeal Decisions which they think are wrong (continued)

The appeal was successful and high rate care and lower rate mobility was awarded. This means that the customer and her child are better off by £310 per week.

"I would never have coped with proceeding to appeal without the support of the Advice Shop, I found the whole thing so stressful and relied upon my representative to guide me through this and they were so helpful contacting the school, helping to try and resolve the issues on my behalf. I felt unable to do this myself as I was so upset with the issues and found it hard to communicate with the school." ***Mrs Brown***

Manage their money

The Advice Shop offers one to one advice for customers who are struggling financially. They may have high levels of debt or are struggling to budget and manage their expenditure. Due to welfare reform, income is being reduced which, for many customers, is leaving them with very little to budget with. We work with families to eradicate debt and explore the most appropriate debt solution route. We work closely with each family to enable them to maintain their ongoing liabilities, prioritise their essential outgoings and budget to maintain a standard of living that is sustainable. Once the crisis is over, we want to prevent the situation from reoccurring. We will support people to become more financially capable. This may include referring to Adult Basic Education where they can join short courses such as 'Cash Confident' and 'More for Less'.

This year the service helped customers manage **£9,897,165** of debt.

Keep their home

"I met Ms Jones at the doors of court on 7 January. Ms Jones' landlord was seeking decree for eviction as she had arrears of £2653.25. The arrears had accrued due to issues with Housing Benefit. A continuation was sought and granted in court until 18 February to allow us to investigate the Housing Benefit and affordable payments of £10.00 per fortnight. After investigation, a late reconsideration request showing "good cause" was submitted to Revenues on 26 January 2016. This requested consideration into all previous decisions. This was accepted by Revenues, and Housing Benefit of £65.58 per week was awarded together with a lump sum payment of £1639.50. There was also a Housing Benefit overpayment being deducted at the rate of £4.60 per week. A request for this to be reduced to 50p to help ease some financial pressures was accepted and reduced for thirteen weeks. After further negotiations with the landlord this case was continued at court on 18 February 2016 until 17 March 2016 to allow for further investigation into Housing Benefit. A further reconsideration of the late reconsideration was submitted to Revenues. This was re-looked at because of Ms Jones vulnerability and given the severe and enduring mental health issues, a further Housing Benefit was awarded and a request was also sent to Revenues asking to look into the current Housing Benefit overpayments which totalled to £1900.00. This request was accepted as an erroneous decision and subsequently written off due to this error. Ms Jones rental account is now in credit and the Summary Cause Summons to remove her from her home was subsequently dismissed in court on 14 April. Ms Jones now has security of tenure without the threat of homelessness hanging over her head. The account is now in credit of £23.23 and Housing Benefit overpayments are no longer being deducted." ***Welfare Rights Officer***

In 2015/16, the service supported **760** customers to keep their home.

Working with our staff to:

Advice shop

Keep in touch with customers …

by using SMS messaging. Since July 2015, the Advice Shop has sent over 1,700 messages to remind customers about appointments, inform them about the changes due to welfare reform and, encouraged customers to engage with the service. All staff have been trained on the system and have access to it whenever they need to contact a customer. Messages are immediate and customers can respond quickly. Each message costs £0.035p to send and has helped us to save on printing and postage costs. Messages which remind customers about their appointments have been particularly successful with only 8% of no shows at appointments.

Update our web pages …

to help customers and partners find information and advice on the services we deliver, to give practical guidance and to answer frequently asked questions. Along with increasing the use of council's Facebook page, more customers are visiting our pages.

Introduce Self Help Guides …

because we want customers to understand better what is happening. It can be challenging to remember all the information and advice and, with this in mind, self-help guides have been developed to support customers to manage their money, appeal benefit decisions which may be wrong, raise awareness of disability benefits and to understand what a sanction is.

Give staff the skills and knowledge …

to be able to offer good, quality, independent advice. Over this past year, staff have had opportunities to attend a wide range of training including Mental Health Awareness training, Employment Support Allowance and the Right to Reside courses. In total we have provided 19 training opportunities and staff have undertaken over 96 hours of training along with opportunities to shadow at Livingston Sherriff Court, HM Tribunal & Court Services social security appeals as well as spending time with some of our partners to gain a better understanding of how we can work together.

Staff are always keen to extend their knowledge to better support customers. Staff have been successful in achieving accreditation for all their hard work: a Senior Advisor has gained a degree in counselling, two Welfare Rights Officers have gained the PDA in Home Point and Housing Law Advice Level 7. A Senior Development Worker has completed the PRINCE2 qualification in Project Management and, lastly, one of the Senior Advisors has completed the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health – Managing Safely.

Support volunteers…

to provide invaluable assistance in supporting our service; they are an integral part of our delivery. Over the year we have recruited and trained 17 new volunteers. Altogether we have worked with 46 volunteers. They have contributed over 2036 hours of volunteering and participated in 141 hours of training. In our annual survey of volunteers, 100% of volunteers rated the training and support they receive as good or excellent. One volunteer commented that "this has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience and I am very pleased that I joined the programme". It is clear that customers value the assistance they receive from our volunteers, one client who had received support from our buddy programme told us 'I suffer from various medical conditions, including low self-esteem and anxiety which makes attending assessments daunting. With a volunteer by my side I felt more confident…he made me feel at ease' We are delighted that the hard work and dedication of our volunteers was recognised this year at the West Lothian Volunteer Awards, where Advice Shop and ABE Volunteers were named West Lothian Volunteer Group of the Year. Not to be outdone, Advice Shop and ABE staff were also recognised at these awards, scooping the Employer Supported Volunteering award for completing a successful garden makeover at Barnardos' Melbourne House in Bathgate.

Advice shop

Fundraise ...

To support the causes which mean a lot to our team.

Raising funds through a Macmillan Coffee morning

transformed the Barnardos garden as part of the volunteering project

Karen, Margaret and Ruth made up bags of toiletries to donate to the Food Bank

Abseiling to raise funds for Barnardos

Win Awards

Volunteers winning the Team of Year Award at the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Award Evening

Staff winning the Employer Supported Volunteer Category at the West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway Award evening.

One of our staff was part of the team which won the Leader Award was which was presented to the Investors in Young People project

Anti-Poverty Strategy

Better Off is the Community Planning Partnership's approach to tackling poverty in West Lothian. The strategy was developed in 2012 and an action plan is developed every year with details of the activities undertaken by the Advice Shop and a wide range of partners to address poverty and mitigate the impact for local residents.

West Lothian Advice Network

The network brings together a range of agencies to develop a more co-ordinated approach to ensure residents have access to high quality advice and information. The network membership includes the Advice Shop, Citizens Advice Bureau, Weslo Housing Management, West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network and the Bridge Community Project.

The Network has produced a guide on benefit sanctions offering practical information and advice to customers and key workers. The guide covers a wide range of information including; avoiding sanctions, understanding how sanctions work and how to appeal an unfair decision.

A Help in Crisis information day aimed at frontline staff was successfully delivered in March 2016. Over 100 people attended the event held at Howden Park Centre to hear presentations about the range of help available to customers in crisis from partners including Scottish Welfare Fund, West Lothian Food bank and the West Lothian Court Advice Project among others.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit was introduced in West Lothian in November 2015. The new benefit combines six existing benefits into one single monthly payment. The Advice Shop is responsible for delivering personal budgeting support for Universal Credit claimants to help those affected by the change to better understand their new benefit and enable them to budget effectively.

We are working closely with the DWP as well as West Lothian Council Housing teams to ensure that referrals are made for support when it is most needed. Advice is offered with a range of issues such as understanding how Universal Credit works, how to calculate income and outgoings, understanding priority bills and how to identify where to cut back on spending.

A series of information briefings were delivered to frontline Council staff and partners and resources have been developed including a desk aid and frequently asked questions list.

Money Week 2015

The fifth annual West Lothian Money Week was delivered in October 2015. A range of events were offered to residents with the aim of addressing key issues such as food and in-work poverty.

A Fun with Food event was held in Whitburn Community Centre in partnership with West Lothian Food bank. Attendees were treated to a live food demonstration and children were offered free soft play whilst parents browsed information stalls. Two successful job fairs were held in Fauldhouse and Craigshill. Over 240 people came along to meet local employers and access support with job searching.

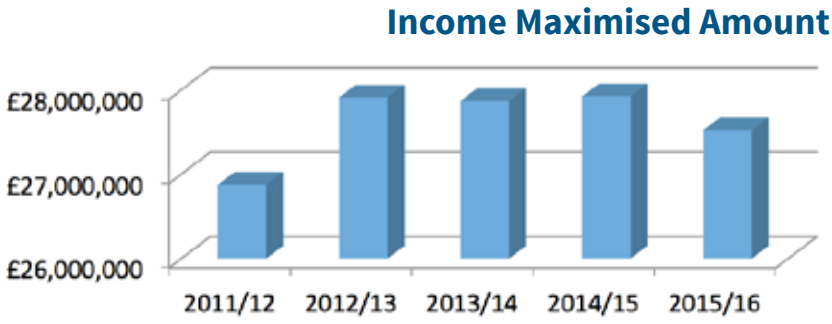
A Five Day Money Makeover toolkit was offered to all Money Week participants and 75 people signed up for the information pack which contained a step by step guide to the five day plan as well as practical tools such as a budgeting sheet, recipe cards and self-help guides.

Facts and Figures

Advice shop

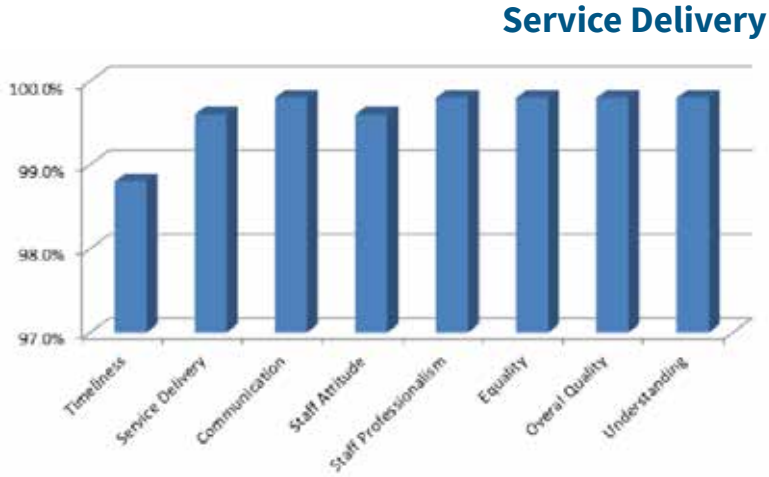
Maxmising Income

Given the impact of Welfare Reforms, we challenged ourselves to maintain our income target of £27,000,000. Through excellent campaign work we have continued to achieve our target; helping the people of West Lothian cope with the difficult benefit changes and increase their income.



Service Delivery

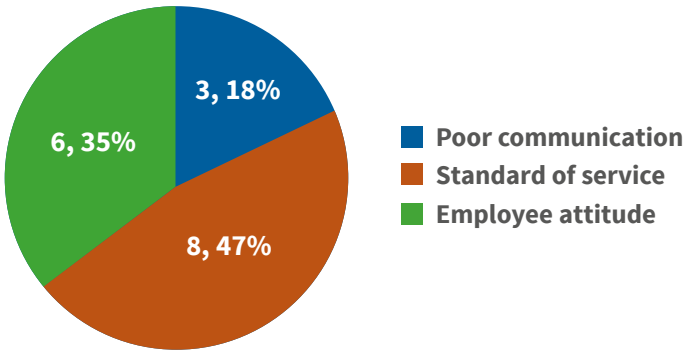
We want to deliver a service which meets our customers' needs and we encourage customers to complete survey cards to let us know how we are doing and make suggestions about improvements. Over the year, results have shown that we consistently work to a high standard.



We don't always get it right!

We closely monitor and analyse complaints to quickly identify any trends and we use complaints to make improvements in our service. In 2014-15 we received 16 complaints and there was an increase of 1 complaint to 17 in 2015-16. There has been an increase in complaints relating to our standard of service.

To improve we made our booking system easier to use and trained staff on the system. Training and coaching sessions have been developed and delivered to help staff be more confident in delivering difficult messages.



How to contact us:

Telephone: 01506 283000
Email: advice.shop@westlothian.gov.uk
Website: www.westlothian.gov.uk/adviceshop
Address:
The Advice Shop,
Bathgate Partnership Centre,
South Bridge Street,
Bathgate,
EH48 1TS

Opening Hours:
Monday-Thursday 8.30 – 5pm
Friday 8.30 – 4 pm

See our website for up-to-date information on all of our outreach sessions.

Advice shop

Information is available in Braille, tape, large print and community languages. Please contact the interpretation and translation service on 01506 280000.

Text phones offer the opportunity for people with a hearing impairment to access the council. The text phone number is 01506 591652. A loop system is also available in all offices.

DATA LABEL: PUBLIC

West Lothian Council

PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

COMPLAINT PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17

REPORT BY DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report to the Performance Committee the council's complaint annual report 2016/17 and provide detailed analysis of council-wide complaints closed during 2016/17.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Performance Committee:

1. Note the corporate and service complaint performance against the standards outlined in the council's complaint handling procedure.
2. Continue to monitor complaint performance and request additional information from services as required.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I.	Council Values	• Focusing on customers' needs • Being honest, open and accountable
II.	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010
III.	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None
IV.	Impact on performance and performance indicators	Will provide a robust approach to monitoring complaints performance information covering all council services
V.	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Indicators support various outcomes in the SOA
VI.	Resources (Financial, Staffing and Property)	From existing resources
VII.	Consideration at PDSP	None
VIII.	Other consultations	None

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) developed and published a model Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP) in 28 March 2012. The model CHP was to ensure a standardised approach in dealing with customer complaints across the local authority sector.

All local authorities were required to adopt the model CHP by 31 March 2013. The SPSO expect that local authorities will make the best use of complaint information to inform service improvement activity.

The SPSO outlined four elements of the model CHP that that should not be amended to ensure a standardised approach across all local authorities. These are:

- The definition of a complaint
- The number of stages
- Timescales at each stage
- The requirement to record, report and publicise complaints information

D.2 Corporate Complaint Performance

Table 1 provides the council's total complaints closed per 1,000 population over the past 5 years. The table shows that there has been an increase in complaints received by the council in 2016/17 when compared to the previous year from 2,330 to 3,414.

Table 1 Complaints closed per 1,000 population

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
West Lothian Population[1]	175,300	175,990	176,140	177,200	178,550
Total number complaints closed	2,166	2,036	2,113	2,330	3,414
Number complaints received per 1,000	12.4	11.5	12.0	13.1	19.1

Table 2 provides a breakdown of complaints closed by service from 2012/13 to 2016/17

Table 2 Complaints closed by service

Service	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Operational Services	742	614	794	819	1,852
Housing, Customer & Building Services	625	725	579	746	1,013
Education Services	288	201	268	287	277
Area Services[2]	227	224	195	235	N/A

[1] Previous years published mid-year estimate used
[2] Areas Services activity has now been disaggregated across Housing, Customer and Building Services, Education Service, Finance and Property Services and Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.

Service	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Finance and Property/ Executive Office	188	210	178	154	179
Planning, Economic Dev. and Regeneration. (PEDR)	42	48	81	70	72
Corporate Services	27	8	11	13	16
Social Policy	27	6	7	6	5
Total	**2,166**	**2,036**	**2,113**	**2,330**	**3,414**

Table 3 breaks down the annual complaints closed by complaint category over a 5 year period.

Table 3 Complaints by category covering period 2012/13 - 2016/17

Complaint Category	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Standard of Service	1,088	1,065	1,003	1,008	1,652
Policy Related	275	272	452	468	578
Employee Attitude	324	299	290	330	324
Poor Communication	264	242	233	295	369
Waiting Time	181	142	127	210	463
Missed Appointments	34	13	8	19	28
Not Categorised	0	3	0	0	0
Total Complaints	**2,166**	**2,036**	**2,113**	**2,330**	**3,414**

The current service level complaint performance varies across the council and is linked to the complexity and quantity of complaints received. Housing, Customer and Building Services (HCBS) and Operational Services are the main complaint generators by service, accounting for 83.9% (2,865) of all recorded complaints (3,414) during 2016/17.

Further information on the main complaint categories is set out below:

- Standard of Service

  The main contributors in Standard of Service complaints are HCBS (371) and Operational Services (958) which account for 65.7% (1,329) of all recorded complaints in the category. The equivalent quarters in 2015/16, HCBS (334) and Operational Services (328) had a combined total of 662 complaints categorised as Standard of Service.

  Of the 958 Operational Services Standard of Service complaints, Waste Service received a total of 707. These complaints continue to range from: missed container collections, issues relating to the customer container take out service and the provision of replacement containers (all colours).

- Policy

  The increase in Policy Related complaints is attributable to an increase in

Operational Services Policy complaints from the equivalent quarters in 2015/16. Operational Services received 379 Policy Related complaints in 2016/17 against a total of 254 Policy Related complaints in 2015/16 The main contributors to Policy Related complaints were HCBS (120) and Operational Services (379) accounting for 86.3% of all recorded complaints in this category.

The Operational Services complaints were in relation to 140 litre container replacement programme, changes to container collection dates and times, the bulky uplift criteria, container contamination policy and the community recycling centres.

- Waiting Time

  The main contributors of Waiting Time complaints are HCBS (203) and Operational Services (243) which account for 96.3% (446). The equivalent quarter in 2015/16, HCBS (93) and Operational Services (44) had a combined total of 137 complaints categorised as Waiting Time.

  A large number of Operational Services waiting time complaints were linked to the time taken to empty missed containers, repeat container collections that have been missed and the waiting time for customers to receive a replacement container.

  HCBS main contributor to waiting time complaints was Building Services who generated 127 complaints. These complaints were generally linked the time the customer was expected to wait for a repair to be carried out or issues about repeat repairs that required additional work to be scheduled.

- Poor Communication

  77.8% (287) of all Poor Communication complaints are generated by HCBS (178) and Operational Services (109). HCBS had the largest increase in the Poor Communication complaints when compared to the previous year from 123 to 178.

- Employee Attitude

  The increase in Employee Attitude complaints have been driven by Operational Services (159) and HCBS (118) which account for 85.5% (277) of all recorded complaints in this category. During 2015/16, Operational Services (132) and HCBS (81) had a combined total of 213 complaints categorised as Employee Attitude.

Appendix 1 to the report provides the council wide performance against the SPSO defined measures for 2016/17.

A full breakdown of the council's complaint performance including trend and, where appropriate, benchmarking information is contained in appendix 2 of this report.

D.3 Summary of Service Complaint Performance

The Corporate Complaint Steering Board identified four high level indicators that provided a summary of complaint handling performance.

The four indicators are:

1. Total complaints closed
2. Complaints closed within 5 working days
3. Complaints closed within 20 working days
4. Complaints part upheld/upheld

Table 4 provides a summary of service performance against these 4 key indicators.

Table 4 Quarter 1- 4: 2015/16 and 2016/17 service performance summary

Service[3]	Total Complaints		Complaints Closed Within 5 Working Days		Complaints Closed Within 20 Working Days		Complaints Part Upheld/Upheld	
	2015/16	2016/17	2015/16	2016/17	2015/16	2016/17	2015/16	2016/17
Area Services	235	N/A	90.6%	N/A	100%	N/A	62.6%	N/A
Corporate Services	13	16	60%	73.3%	100%	100%	30.8%	43.8%
Education Service	287	277	82%	82.1%	85.1%	88.0%	38.7%	40.5%
Exec Office	59	30	-	100%	89.9%	82.1%	15.3%	23.4%
Finance and Property Services	95	149	88.5%	95.7%	100%	81.5%	34.7%	29.5%
HCBS	746	1,013	84.4%	90.9%	89.8%	90.3%	52.9%	53.9%
Op. Services	819	1,852	83.7%	83.4%	83.0%	93.7%	71.6%	68.7%
PEDR	70	72	88.3%	83.9%	100%	62.5%	30%	37.1%
Social Policy	6	5	40%	60%	-	-	16.7%	40%
Total	**2,330**	**3,414**	**84.7%**	**85.6%**	**88.5%**	**89.2%**	**56.1%**	**59.2%**

A target of 85% has been set for the percentage of complaints which must be dealt with within timescale. Across the council, 59.2% of all complaints received in 2016/17 have been upheld/ part upheld.

Table 5 provides a service trend summary of upheld/ part upheld complaints as a percentage of complaints received by quarter covering 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Table 5 2015/16 and 2016/17 Service upheld/ part-upheld complaint performance

Service	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17
Area Services	44.7%	63.9%	75.0%	68.1%	-	-	-	-
Corporate Services	0%	33.3%	0%	30.8%	40%	80%	0%	20%
Education Services	33.3%	41%	46.4%	38.7%	29.8%	44.3%	46.9%	46.9%
Exec Office	15.8%	16.7%	16.7%	15.3%	21.4%	50%	18.2%	0%

[3] Service reorganisation in April 2016 affects comparative complaint trends. Areas Services activity has now been disaggregated across Housing Customer and Building Services, Education Service and Finance and Property Services and Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.

Service	Q1 2015/16	Q2 2015/16	Q3 2015/16	Q4 2015/16	Q1 2016/17	Q2 2016/17	Q3 2016/17	Q4 2016/17
Finance and Property Services	42.1%	40.9%	30.4%	34.7%	31.6%	26.3%	31.7%	29.5%
HCBS	53.4%	60.1%	50.9%	52.9%	61.6%	54.2%	46.9%	51.4%
Operational Services	79.0%	68.2%	70.6%	71.6%	70.3%	63.8%	66.2%	73.1%
PEDR	33.3%	46.2%	17.6%	30%	33.3%	40%	33.3%	55.5%
Social Policy	0%	0%	-	16.7%	100%	-	50%	0%
Total	**54.3%**	**59%**	**55.4%**	**56.1%**	**61.4%**	**56.7%**	**55.2%**	**59.2%**

Appendix 3 to the report provides information on complaints that were escalated to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman by customers covering the period 2016/17. A large number of these escalated complaints resulted in a decision by the Ombudsman not to progress, not to investigate or were not upheld.

Over this time frame, only one part of a complex complaint was upheld. This recommendation by the SPSO has been implemented across all areas of the council.

Table 6 provides indicative ratios for the number of complaints against the specific customer groups for Education Services, Housing, Customer and Building Services and Operation Services.

Table 6: Ratio of Complaints to Customer Group (for main generators of complaints)

Service	Base unit (2016/17)	2016/17 complaint volume	Complaint ratio
Education Services	30,000 pupils	277	1 complaint for every 108 pupils
HCBS	13,169 council houses	1,013	1 complaint for 13 council houses
Operational Services	76,659 households	1,852	1 complaint for every 41 households

E. CONCLUSION

In 2016/17 the council received 3,414 complaints and this represents an increase on the number of complaints received in 2015/16. This increase was primarily linked to the 126% increase in complaints closed by Operational Services and an increase of 36% by Housing, Customer and Building Services.

The service changes carried out over 2016/17 in Waste Services has led to a range of complaints linked to the 140 litre bin replacement programme, routing changes and the waiting time to provide additional/ replacement bins to customers. Operational Services have implemented various corrective actions over the course of 2016/17 to manage the demand that is currently being placed on the service.

The council has shown a year on year improvement in the processing of stage 1 and stage 2 complaints and has generally maintained customer satisfaction performance relating to complaint handling. It should be noted that the council performance results exceed the Scottish national average benchmark figures for key SPSO measures.

Services will continue to monitor complaints on a regular basis and use this information to develop and improve service delivery.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

1. WLC Complaints Handling Procedure

Appendices/Attachments: 2

Appendix 1 Corporate Complaint Performance 2016-17
Appendix 2 West Lothian Council Annual Complaint Performance Report 2016/17
Appendix 3 SPSO investigations and recommendations Q1-Q4 2016/17

Contact Person: Joe Murray
E mail: joe.murray@westlothian.gov.uk Phone 01506 281893

Graeme Struthers
Depute Chief Executive
12 June 2017

West Lothian Council

CMT: Council Wide Complaints Performance for FY 2016/2017

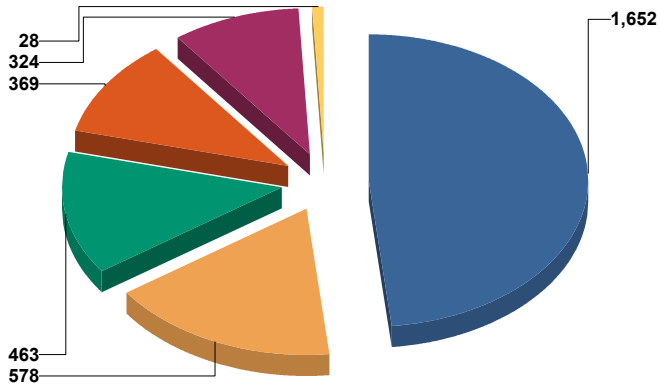
Report generated: **06/04/2017**

Period: 01/04/2016 to 31/03/2017

This report summarises complaints closed within the period above for all services within Corporate Services. For the purpose of this report all timescales are based on working days and therefore excludes Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays in the calculations.

	SPSO Performance Indicator	Number	%	
1	Total number of complaints	3414		
2	Complaints closed at Stage 1	2831	82.9%	
	Complaints closed at Stage 2	535	15.7%	
	Complaints closed at Stage 2 after escalation	48	1.4%	
3	Complaints UPHELD at Stage 1	994	35.1%	
	Complaints NOT UPHELD at Stage 1	1097	38.7%	
	Complaints PART UPHELD at Stage 1	740	26.1%	
	Complaints UPHELD at Stage 2	125	23.4%	
	Complaints NOT UPHELD at Stage 2	276	51.6%	
	Complaints PART UPHELD at Stage 2	134	25.0%	
	Escalated complaints UPHELD at Stage 2	13	27.1%	
	Excalated complaints NOT UPHELD at Stage 2	23	47.9%	
	Escalated complaints PART UPHELD at Stage 2	12	25.0%	
4	Average working days to respond to a Stage 1 complaint	3.8	Days:	10786
	Average working days to respond to a Stage 2 complaint	11.4	Days:	6096
	Average working days to respond to a Stage 2 after escalation	10.0	Days:	478
5	Complaints closed at Stage 1 within 5 working days	2422	85.6%	
	Complaints closed at Stage 2 within 20 working days	477	89.2%	
	Complaints closed at Stage 2 within 20 working days after escalation	46	95.8%	
6	Complaints closed at Stage 1 where an extension has been authorised	33	1.2%	
	Complaints closed at Stage 2 where an extension has been authorised	7	1.3%	

Number of Complaints by Reason



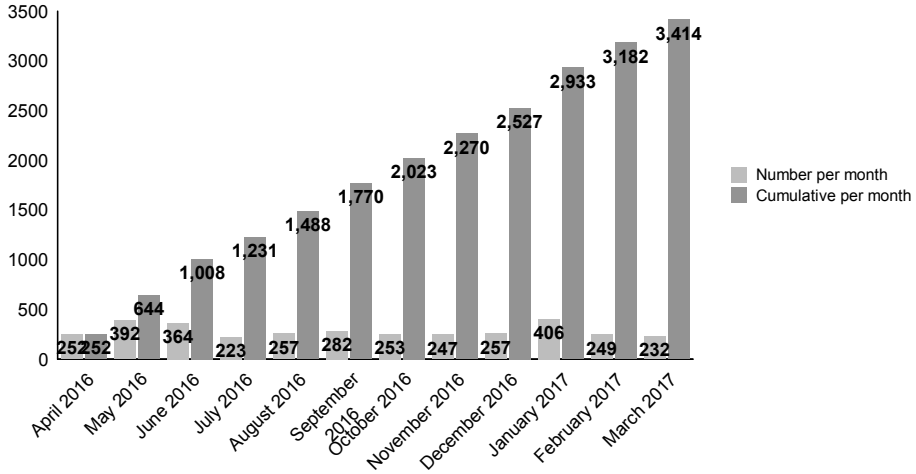
Standard of Service	48.4%
Policy Related	16.9%
Waiting Time	13.6%
Poor Communication	10.8%
Employee Attitude	9.5%
Missed Appointment	0.8%
Total:	100.0%

NB: The totals below include complaints resolved at Stage 1 and Stage 2 as well as complaints closed at Stage 1 then re-opened and handled as Stage 2 (escalated).

Percentage of all complaints resolved within timeline:	**86.3%**	**(2945)**
Percentage of all complaints UPHELD:	**33.2%**	**(1132)**
Percentage of all complaints NOT UPHELD:	**40.9%**	**(1396)**
Percentage of all complaints PART UPHELD:	**26.0%**	**(886)**
Percentage with another or no outcome selected:	**0.0%**	**(0)**

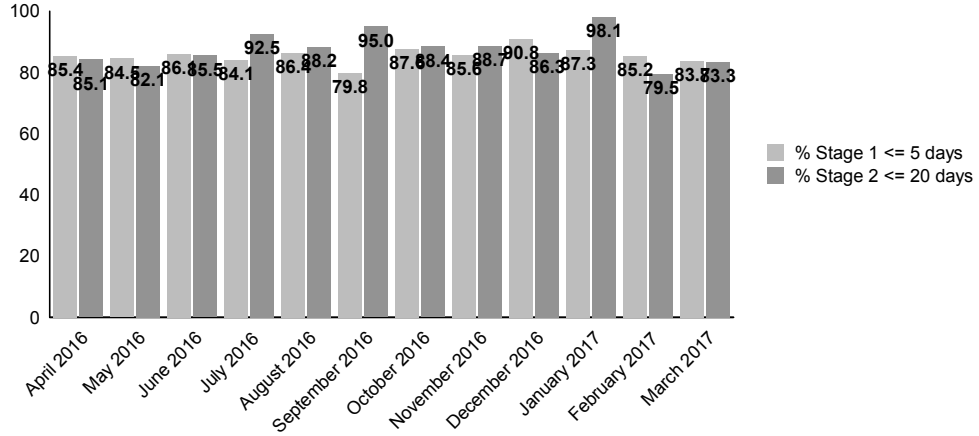
Complaints Closed 2016/2017

Number and cumulative per month



% Complaints closed within Timeline

% Stage 1 within 5 & Stage 2 within 20 working days by month



Stage 2 figures include complaints escalated from Stage 1 having been closed then re-opened

% of Total complaints Upheld & Part Upheld by month 2016/2017

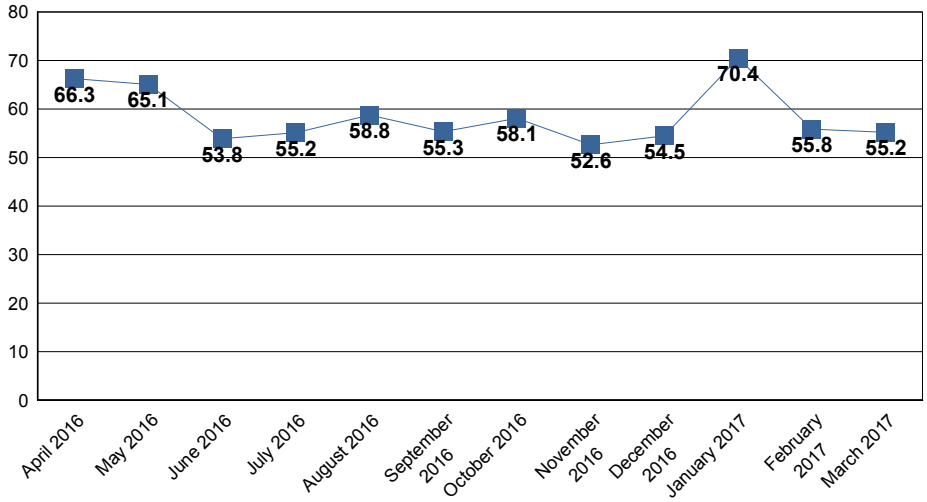


Table showing % of complaints closed within SLA at Stage 1 and Stage 2 cumulative by month

Month/Year	% Stage 1 Closed within 5 Days per month (cumulative)	% Stage 2 Closed within 20 Days per month (cumulative)
April 2016	85.4%	85.1%
May 2016	84.8%	85.4%
June 2016	85.3%	85.4%
July 2016	85.1%	88.2%
August 2016	85.3%	88.9%
September 2016	84.4%	89.7%
October 2016	84.8%	90.1%
November 2016	84.9%	90.2%
December 2016	85.5%	90.0%
January 2017	85.7%	90.8%
February 2017	85.7%	90.2%
March 2017	85.6%	89.7%

NB - the Stage 2 cumulative figure includes escalated complaints (closed at Stage 1 then reopened as Stage 2).

Summary of Secondary Categorisation (Service reason for complaint)

		STAGE 1			STAGE 2			Escalated		
	Total	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld	Upheld	Part Upheld	Not Upheld
Corporate Services	**16**	**5**	**2**	**8**			**1**			
Blue Badge- standard of service	1	1								
Failure to reply	1			1						
Inaccurate advice/ information	2	1		1						
Incomplete/ missing website information	1		1							
Policy related general	3	1	1	1						
Standard of service general	3			2			1			
Tender award process	1			1						
Unprofessional conduct	2			2						
Waiting time general	2	2								
Education	**277**	**39**	**34**	**111**	**8**	**30**	**54**		**1**	
Access/ parking	1			1						
Access/Parking	2	1		1						
Bullying - Pupil - Pupil	36	1	4	14		3	14			
Bullying - Pupil - Teacher	1						1			
Catering/ bar service	1	1								
Catering/Bar Service	3			3						
Charges	1			1						
Child Protection	11		1	6			4			
Composite Classes	1						1			
Curriculum	19	1	1	13	1	3				
Data Protection	8	3	1	1	1	1	1			
Disabled Parking	1	1								
Discipline	13		1	4	1	1	6			
Employee attitude general	3	1		2						
Exclusion	3		1				2			
Facility Closed	1			1						
Head Teacher	24	2	3	7		2	10			
Head Teacher & Staff	36	6	7	5		13	5			
Health & Safety	14	3	2	7	2					
Inaccurate advice/ information	1		1							

Nursery Placement	1			1					
Office Staff	15	6	1	8					
Playground Supervisor	2	1		1					
Policy Related General	2			2					
Poor Communiation General	1	1							
Pupil Placement	19	1	5	8		1	4		
Road Safety	3	1		2					
School Dress	3	1		2					
School Letting	4	1		2	1				
Special Needs	18	2	2	4	1	5	4		
Standard of service general	8		1	5	1			1	
Teacher Attitude	18	4	3	9		1	1		
Transport	3	1		1			1		
Executive Office	**30**		**1**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**22**		
Area Services	1						1		
Claim/information processed incorrectly	1					1			
Corporate Services	3			1	1		1		
Cross Service	3					1	2		
Customer standards not met	1						1		
Education Services	1						1		
Eligibility	1						1		
Employee attitude general	1						1		
Finance and Estates Services	2						2		
HCBS	1					1			
Inaccurate advice/ information	1		1						
Operational Services	6				1		5		
Planning and Econ. Dev.	1						1		
Policy related general	2						2		
Social Policy	2						2		
Standard of service general	1					1			
Unreasonable delays	1						1		
Waiting time general	1						1		
Finance & Property Servic	**149**	**24**	**10**	**83**	**3**	**6**	**18**	**1**	**4**
Claim/information processed incorrectly	43	12	2	26			1		2
Delay in processing claim/information	11			10					1
Driving/ parking issues	1			1					

Employee attitude general	10	1	2	7						
Inaccurate advice/ information	1			1						
Incorrect or conflicting advice	4	1		1			2			
Policy related general	3			1			1		1	
Poor communication general	35	4	4	20	1	2	3			1
Recovery of debt	2			2						
Response time	4	1		3						
Standard of service general	34	5	2	11	1	4	11			
Third party supplier	1				1					
HC&BS	**1013**	**218**	**145**	**316**	**91**	**72**	**137**	**11**	**9**	**14**
Appointment cancelled at short notice	1		1							
Awaiting materials	11	4	2	2	1	1			1	
Blue Badge- policy	1			1						
Call not answered	2			2						
Customer call back	1			1						
Customer standards not met	62	8	7	31	4	3	6	1	2	
Damages to property	19	3	7	6	1		2			
Delay in processing claim/information	1					1				
Discrimination	1						1			
Driving/ parking issues	20	7	6	3		1	2	1		
Eligibility	2						2			
Employee attitude general	65	16	18	21	2	3	4			1
Failed service standard timescales	1	1								
Failed timescales	10	3	1	3	2		1			
Failed to reply	7	4			1		2			
Health & Safety	7	2	3	1			1			
Held in queue	22	20	1	1						
Inaccurate advice/ information	3	2	1							
Incorrect or conflicting advice	25	6	6	7	1	3	2			
Lack of communication	54	15	7	14	4	5	6	2	1	
Licensing - standard of service	1			1						
Missed appointment general	20	6	1	9	4					
No action / Ineffective action taken	55	7	4	13	4	7	19		1	
Policy related general	98	7	9	54	2	3	22			1
Poor communication general	101	18	14	35	13	7	10	2		2

Procedure not followed	3	1	1	1						
Refusing customer request	5	1		2			2			
Staff conduct/ attitude	31	5	9	5	4	2	6			
Standard of property/accommodation	44	7	3	14	4	7	9			
Standard of service general	114	31	19	29	10	9	13	1	1	1
Standard of workmanship	17	2	7	2	3	2	1			
Third party supplier	4		1		1		1			1
Unreasonable delays	15		1	3	3	3	3	2		
Unresolved repair after visit	33	4	6	6	6	6	4			1
Untidy work	8	2		3	1		2			
Waiting time general	148	36	10	46	20	9	15	2	3	7
Z-unknown	1						1			
Operational Services	**1852**	**691**	**541**	**541**	**19**	**22**	**38**			
A Not Known - Please Select	1	1								
Access Issues	61	25	26	10						
Accessibility Issues	50	7	21	18		1	3			
Appointment Failed	1	1								
Assisted Bin Collections	55	27	22	6						
Awaiting Bin Stock Delivery	13	7	2	1	2	1				
Bin Capacity/ Size	49	7	6	29	1		6			
Bin Collection Issues Domestic	545	253	224	53	6	8	1			
Bin Collection Issues Trade	24	8	11	5						
Bin Contamination Issues	35	7	9	18			1			
Bin Deliveries/ Requests	115	72	21	19	1	2				
Bin/ Bulky Pick-Up & Returns	78	34	28	14	2					
Bin/ Bulky Presentation Issues	27	8	7	12						
Breach of Policy	1					1				
Bulky Uplift Missed	11	6	3	2						
Collection Dates/ Routes	26	15	3	7		1				
Complaint Handling Procedure	1		1							
Council Policy & Legislation	129	11	14	94	1		9			
Damage to Property	36	15	9	10		1	1			
Eligibility	1			1						
Environmental Concerns	35	5	14	16						
Expectations Not Met	43	13	7	21			2			

External 3rd Party	53	18	3	31			1			
Failed Service SLA Timescales	3	3								
Failed to Reply	12	4	2	5	1					
Food Recycling	20	16	2	1	1					
Glass Recycling	4	2	1	1						
Grass Left on Paths	15	12	2	1						
Grass Not Cut/ Missed	12	6	1	4			1			
Health & Safety	12	2	2	7			1			
Incorrect Conflicting Advice	3	2	1							
Lack of Communication	29	16	6	4	1		2			
Noise Nuisance	6	1		5						
Parking Issues	14	4	3	4			3			
Poor Customer Service	13	3	6	4						
Poor or Agressive Driving	26	9	9	8						
Private Property not WLC	1			1						
Recycling & Calendars	7	2	3	2						
Road Works	45	4	10	27	2	2				
Road/ Path Defects	29	5	10	12		1	1			
Service Standards	56	15	12	29						
Severe Weather Event	1		1							
Staff Conduct / Attitude	71	24	18	21	1	4	3			
Staff Supervision	1	1								
Standard of Workmanship	21	5	8	6			2			
Street Lighting Faults	11	4	1	6						
Unreasonable Delays	11	3	4	4						
Vehicle Breakdown	1			1						
Weather Related Delays	2		1	1						
Website Content Missing/Errors	6	3		3						
Winter Maintenance Policies	30	5	7	17			1			
Planning Econ Dev Regen	**72**	**15**	**7**	**34**	**2**		**6**	**2**	**1**	**5**
Charges	1			1						
Employee attitude general	1									1
Failure to reply	2			2						
Lack of communication	7	1	1	2			1	1	1	
Pest Control- standard of service	5			5						

Planning and Econ. Dev.	1		1					
Planning application- delay in processing	3	2		1				
Policy related general	10			5		3		2
Poor communication general	14	4	4	5	1			
Procedure not followed	4	1				1	1	1
Standard of service general	21	4	1	13	1	1		1
Waiting time general	3	3						
Social Policy	**5**	**2**		**3**				
Employee attitude general	2	1		1				
Failed to send response to client in letter form	1			1				
Lack of communication	1	1						
Poor communication general	1			1				

NB - the categorisation "Z_unknown" relates to cases that were completed prior to the inclusion of the secondary category field.

Open Complaint Cases by Service

The table below provides the number of complaint cases open by Service and month/year created (to the end of the reporting period). Note that month/year is based on the Stage 1 or Stage 2 task creation date.

	Total	2016		2017
		October	December	March
Total	46	1	1	44
Corporate Services	3	0	0	3
Education	8	0	1	7
Executive Office	1	0	0	1
Finance & Property Services	2	0	0	2
Housing Customer & Building Services	14	1	0	13
Operational Services	5	0	0	5
Planning Economic Development & Regenerati	3	0	0	3
Social Policy	10	0	0	10

Data Label: PUBLIC

West Lothian Council
Annual Complaint Performance Report 2016/17

Contents

1. Overview 2
1.1. Introduction 2
1.2. Corporate Complaints Procedure 2
2. Complaint Performance Statistics 3
2.1. Indicator 1: Complaints closed per 1,000 population 3
2.2. Indicator 2: Closed complaints 5
2.3. Indicator 3: Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld 6
2.4. Indicator 4: Average times 7
2.5. Indicator 5: Performance against timescales 8
2.6. Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension is authorised 8
2.7. Indicator 7: Customer satisfaction 9
2.8. Indicator 8: Learning from complaints 10
3. 2016/17 Complaint Summary 13

1. Overview

1.1. Introduction

This is the council's annual complaints performance report which provides information on customer complaints received and closed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2017.

The council always aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to our community, but recognise that there are times when things go wrong and fail to meet the expectations of our customer.

The council's complaints procedure provides our customers with a clear and structured way to provide feedback on their dissatisfaction with council services in a range of easily accessible ways. The council welcomes feedback and it provides information that helps services learn from complaints and to modify and improve the way services are delivered.

The indicators covered in this report were created to provide a useful tool that the council and the public can use to judge objectively how well complaints are being handled and how it informs service improvement activity.

1.2. Corporate Complaints Procedure

The Corporate Complaints Procedure applies to all complaints against the council, with the exception of those which are described as Social Care statutory complaints.

There are many factors that affect the number and complexity of complaints received by the council such as the standard of service that is being delivered, the attitude of our employees, the service response time to customer requests, missed appointments and poor communication.

The council's complaint procedure has 2 stages in its process which are outlined below:

- Stage 1 complaints could mean immediate action to resolve the problem or complaints which are *resolved in no more than five working days*.
- Stage 2 deals with two types of complaints: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation. Stage 2 complaints should be resolved *in no more than 20 days.*
- After the council has fully investigated the complaint, and if the customer is still not satisfied with the decision or the way the council dealt with the complaint, then it can be referred onto the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO).

The council has put in place clear governance arrangements for complaints. The Corporate Complaint Steering Board is an officer group that monitors the implementation

of the corporate complaint procedure and the corresponding performance and reporting activity. The board ensures that the council is compliant with the complaint procedure requirements. This is chaired by a Depute Chief Executive and the membership consists of council Heads of Service.

Complaint performance is reported on a quarterly basis to both the council's Corporate Management Team and the council's Performance Committee. All complaint performance statistics are reported to the public and are available on the council's website.

2. Complaint Performance Statistics

Statistics on complaints are based on 8 key performance indicators devised by the SPSO in conjunction with all 32 Scottish councils.

Complaints are recorded and tracked using the council's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System which enables the production of the complaints performance information.

The number of complaints the council closed in 2016/17 was 3,414. This is an increase from the number closed in the previous year. The council will continue to analysis complaints to help inform service improvement, identify training opportunities for our staff and help priorities our activities to meet the changing needs of our community. Complaint benchmark data for 2016/17 is not yet available for other Local Authorities. Where applicable, this report has included the 2015/16 Scottish Local Authority national average for a range of performance indicators for comparative information.

2.1. Indicator 1: Complaints closed per 1,000 population

This indicator records the total number of complaints received by the council. In 2016/17, this calculation was modified and it is the sum of the number of complaints closed at stage one, (frontline resolution), the number of complaints closed directly at stage two (investigation) and the number complaints closed at stage two after escalation. To allow for a fair comparison across all 32 councils in Scotland, the figure of complaints per 1,000 of population is used. The council received 3,430 complaints from 1 April 2016 to 31 April 2017. This is equivalent to 19.2 received complaints per 1,000 population. Of the total complaints received in 2016/17 (3,430), 3,414 were closed in this period.

Table 1 provides the council's total complaints close per 1,000 population over the past 5 years. The table shows that there has been an increase in complaints closed by the council in 2016/17 when compared to the previous year from 2,330 to 3,414.

Table 1: Complaints closed per 1,000 population

Measure	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
West Lothian Population[1]	175,300	175,990	176,140	177,200	178,550
Total number of complaints closed	2,166	2,036	2,113	2,330	3,414
Number of complaints closed per 1,000	12.4	11.5	12.0	13.1	19.1

In 2015/16, the Scottish Local Authority average for the number complaints closed per 1,000 population was 13.81. Table 2 provides a breakdown of complaints closed by service from 2012/13 to 2016/17.

Table 2: Complaints received by service

Service	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Operational Services	742	614	794	819	1,852
Housing, Customer & Building Services	625	725	579	746	1,013
Education Service	288	201	268	287	277
Area Services[2]	227	224	195	235	N/A
Finance and Property/ Executive Office	188	210	178	154	179
Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration	42	48	81	70	72
Corporate Services	27	8	11	13	16
Social Policy	27	6	7	6	5
Total	**2,166**	**2,036**	**2,113**	**2,330**	**3,414**

All complaints received by the council are grouped into 6 categories. The categorisation allows the service to group complaints by theme and helps the service to identify areas that require improvement actions.

Table 3 breaks down all council complaints closed by complaint category from 2012/13 to 2016/17.

[1] Previous years published mid-year estimate used

[2] Areas Services activity has now been disaggregated across Housing Customer and Building Services, Education Service and Finance and Property Services and Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.

Table 3: Complaints received by category

Category	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Standard of Service	1,088	1,065	1,003	1,008	1,652
Policy Related	275	272	452	468	578
Waiting Time	181	142	127	210	463
Poor Communication	264	242	233	295	369
Employee Attitude	324	299	290	330	324
Missed Appointments	34	13	8	19	28
Not Categorised	0	3	0	0	0
Total Complaints	**2,166**	**2,036**	**2,113**	**2,330**	**3,414**

2.2. Indicator 2: Closed complaints

This indicator provides information on the number of complaints closed at stage one and stage two and stage two escalated complaints as a percentage of all complaints closed. Table 4 provides the performance information for this indicator.

The term "closed" refers to a complaint that has had a response sent to the customer and at the time no further action is required (regardless at which stage it is processed and whether any further escalation takes place).

Table 4: Closed complaints

Closed complaints	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Number complaints closed at stage one (5 days) as % of all complaints	69% (1405)	76% (1606)	73.7% (1718)	82.9% (2831)	84.5%
Number complaints closed at stage two (20 days) as % of all complaints	31% (631)	24% (507)	24.6% (572)	15.7% (535)	13.5%
Number complaints closed at stage two (20 days) after escalation as % of all complaints[3]	7% (146)	0.8% (17)	1.7% (40)	1.4% (48)	N/A

[3] From 2015/16, the escalated stage 2 complaint figure was not included in stage 2 complaints closed total for the council.

2.3. Indicator 3: Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

The council reviews all complaints and each customer is contacted to explain whether their complaint has been upheld, partially upheld or not upheld and why.

This indicator measures the number and percentage of complaints which were upheld, partially upheld or not upheld recorded at each stage. The results can be seen in Tables 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5: Upheld complaints

Complaints upheld	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one (5 days)	32.0%	33.1%	32.8%	35.11%	60.9%
Number complaints upheld at stage two as % of complaints closed at stage two (20 days)	23.2%	14.6%	18.0%	23.4%	51.5%
Number escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two (20 days)	20.5%	11.76%	20.0%	27.1%	N/A

Table 6: Partially upheld complaints

Complaints partially upheld	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Number of complaints partially upheld at stage one (5 days) as % of all complaints closed at stage one	18.2%	23.8%	28.2%	26.14%	12.7%
Number complaints partially upheld at stage two (20 days) as % of complaints closed at stage two	23.6%	18.3%	23.8%	25.0%	14.3%
Number escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two (20 days) as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	17.1%	47.06%	30.0%	25.0%	N/A

Table 7: Not upheld complaints

Complaints not upheld	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Number of complaints not upheld at stage one (5 days) as % of all complaints closed at stage one	33.5%	36.4%	39.0%	38.75%	25.2%
Number complaints not upheld at stage two (20 days) as % of complaints closed at stage two	48.3%	64.1%	58.2%	51.6%	32.9%
Number escalated complaints not upheld at stage two (20 days) as % of escalated complaints closed at stage two	38.4%	41.18%	50.0%	47.9%	54.6%

Overall, the council upheld/ part upheld 2,018 (59.2%) complaints from a total of 3,414 complaints closed in 2016/17. Variances in the total for these indicators in 2013/14 and 2014/15 were attributable to fields which were not populated in the Customer Relationship Management system which generated the performance information. This was addressed through improved monitoring arrangement and officer training in complaint handling and use of the CRM system.

2.4. Indicator 4: Average times

Indicator 4 represents the average time in working days to close complaints at stage one and at stage two of the council's Complaint Handling Procedure (CHP). Indicator 4 performance can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Average times

Average times	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one (5 day resolution target)	7.9	7.0	4.0	3.8	7.5
Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two (20 day resolution target)	15.1	13.8	12.5	11.4	23.3
Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation (20 day resolution target)	11.2	14.7	9.1	10.0	N/A

2.5. Indicator 5: Performance against timescales

The council's Complaint Handling Procedure requires complaints to be closed within 5 working days at stage one and 20 working days at stage two. This indicator measures the percentage of complaints which were closed in full at each stage within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days. Indicator 5 performance can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9: Performance against timescales

Performance against timescales	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
Number complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as % of stage one complaints	71.9%	78.0%	84.7%	85.6%	63.1%
Number complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of stage two complaints	82.6%	85.8%	88.5%	89.2%	71.6%
Number escalated complaints closed within 20 working days as % of escalated stage two complaints	73.3%	76.5%	90.0%	95.8%	N/A

2.6. Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension is authorised

The council always aims to respond to complaints as quickly as possible. There are, however, times when a complaint is particularly complex and it is not feasible to fully investigate the issues within the prescribed timescales. In these situations the council can agree with a complainant to extend the timescale for closing the complaint.

This indicator provides the percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the 5 or 20 working day timeline has been authorised. Indicator 6 performance can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10: Number of cases where an extension is authorised

Number of cases where an extension is authorised	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Scottish LA average 2015/16
% of complaints at stage one (5 days) where extension was authorised	7.0%	1.1%	1.3%	1.2%	3.4%
% of complaints at stage two (20 days) where extension was authorised	1.9%	2.4%	2.4%	1.3%	6.3%

2.7. Indicator 7: Customer satisfaction

This indicator provides information on the levels of customer satisfaction with the complaint handling procedure and process. Indicator 7 performance can be seen in Table 11. A sample of complainants are contacted by the council's Customer Service Centre on a monthly basis to gather this satisfaction information.

Table 11: Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Percentage of customers who agreed that they were satisfied with the length of time it took to deal with their complaint.	64.2%	68.6%	75.5%	64.8%
Percentage of customers who agreed that they were satisfied with the outcome of their upheld complaint.	72.3%	74.3%	68.2%	69.7%
Percentage of customers who agreed that they were satisfied with the way their complaint was handled.	67.9%	76.2%	75.5%	70.3%
Percentage of customers who agreed that they found it easy to complain to the council.	83.0%	88.6%	85.5%	80.7%

2.8. Indicator 8: Learning from complaints

The council has a clear commitment to listen to our customers and act on their feedback. Learning from complaints is a continuous process that helps the council to resolve common complaints and further improve the services that are provided. **Some examples** of actions that have been taken are highlighted below.

	Complaint Area/ Complaint Theme	Complaints Analysis	Service Improvement Action(s)
1.	**Corporate Services:** Standard of Service	Customer complained that they were initially refused an automatic Blue Badge since they did not have the required Personal Independence Payment points.	Scottish Transport guidance states that anyone who requested a mandatory reconsideration of a decision to remove the mobility component of Personal Independence Payment when previously in receipt of a fixed term award of the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance should still be eligible for an automatic Blue Badge for 1 year. The Blue Badge Administration Team guidance documentation was updated to ensure that the correct process is followed when a customer is going through a mandatory reconsideration of a PIP decision when applying for a Blue Badge.
2.	**Education Services:** Standard of Service	Pupil fell on rough ground when path improvement works were underway.	Fencing around site had been removed due to concerns about high winds. Fence reinstated and apology given to pupil and family.
3.	**Education Services:** Poor Communication	Complaint that customer had tried to call staff several times but calls had not been returned.	Following a restructure, new procedures for tracking enquiries has been implemented. All prospective learners will have the opportunity to discuss their learning needs and to be referred or signposted to the appropriate service.

	Complaint Area/ Complaint Theme	Complaints Analysis	Service Improvement Action(s)
4.	**Education Services:** Standard of Service	Complaint that online school payment system was not working, and that customer had e-mailed several times and did not receive a reply.	Issues with the system were raised with supplier and have been resolved. Review carried out on out-of-office messages to ensure customers are signposted to other appropriate employees to deal with their request.
5.	**Finance and Property Services:** Standard of Service	Adviser sent customer form to Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) with no supporting evidence. This should have been agreed with the customer in advance.	Procedures updated to ensure customers agree with the content of the form before being sent to DWP.
6.	**Finance and Property Services:** Standard of Service	A customer requested CCTV footage. However, this was lost due a replacement system being installed before the incident which had the incorrect settings.	The CCTV settings have been changed and a review is ongoing to ensure any new CCTV system is set to 28 days.
7.	**Finance and Property Services:** Standard of Service	A customer complained after her Council Tax was closed in error following a household change.	The error was rectified. The complaint was discussed with the member of staff who had made the error and further training/ instruction was given.
8.	**Housing, Customer and Building Services:** Policy Related	Conflicting advice about the council's Right to Buy Policy was given to customer.	Additional training was carried out. Comprehensive documentation has been issued to all housing teams outlining the Right To Buy rules and entitlement.
9.	**Housing, Customer and Building Services:** Missed Appointment	Staff failed to turn up to an appointment to repair a boundary fence.	Procedure change to ensure if appointments cannot be kept, customers are notified and are rearranged. Improving communication with customers has been incorporated into the Housing, Customer and Building Services Complaint Handling Training programme which was delivered in Quarter 2 2016/17.

	Complaint Area/ Complaint Theme	Complaints Analysis	Service Improvement Action(s)
10.	**Housing, Customer and Building Services:** Waiting Time	Customer complaints about the length of time for their call to be answered.	Additional staff have been recruited and a full review of current shift patterns has been carried out. This has resulted in the realignment of staff resource to meet the peak call time demands over the course of the working day.
11.	**Operational Services:** Employee Attitude	Complaint regarding the school crossing patrol.	The guide was met with and the training reiterated. The role was detailed to ensure the individual understood that all persons were to be assisted when crossing the road.
12.	**Operational Services:** Standard of Service	Complaints relating to bins being missed on assisted bin collection service.	The assisted collection service process has been fully reviewed to ensure that the current customer list held on the service database is accurate. This will ensure that the service is targeted to those in need.
13.	**Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.** Waiting Time	Customer dissatisfied about the waiting time to an email from a planning officer in relation to a planning permission application.	Procedures have been refined to ensure customers are kept informed of the status of their application.
14.	**Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration.** Standard of Service	Customer complained that drawings for a planning application were not available online which prevented informed comment to be made about the application	Planning staff have been provided with additional training to highlight how to compress files which are received in different formats.
15.	**Social Policy**	Social Policy statutory complaint improvement actions are linked to their statutory complaints process and are not covered in this report.	

3. 2016/17 Complaint Summary

In 2016/17 the council closed 3,414 complaints and this represents an increase of 1,084 from the 2015/16 figure of 2,330.

The number of complaints closed across the council service areas varies significantly with 54.2% of all complaints being recorded against Operational Services to 0.15% in Social Policy. However it should be noted that the majority of Social Policy complaints are channelled through the council's statutory social work complaints process and are not covered in this report.

Of the seven service areas that deliver the council's activities and functions, one has shown a reduction in customer complaints, three have remained relatively static and three have had an increase in the number of complaints closed compared to the previous year. Education Services have experienced the largest reduction in complaints with a 3.5% reduction. The two services that have shown the largest rise in complaints when compared to the previous year were Operational Services and Housing Customer and Building Services with a 126% and 36% increase respectively.

The council's performance relating to complaint handling has improved with 82.9% of all complaints received being resolved at Stage 1 (Frontline Resolution), 15.7% of complaints being resolved at Stage 2 (Investigation) with the remaining 1.4% of complaints being resolved at Stage 2 (Escalation). The average times taken by the council to resolve both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints were 3.8 days and 11.4 days respectively. The majority of complaints were responded to within timescales: 85.6% at Stage 1 (5 day target) and 89.2% at Stage 2 (20 day target).

The percentage of complaints that were upheld/ part upheld across the council in 2016/17 was 59.2% which represents an increase of 3.1% from the 2015/16 figure which was 56.1%. During 2016/17, 40 complaints were dealt with where a request was made to extend the review timescales.

The general increase in complaints can linked to Waste Services who implemented multiple changes to key service activities over 2016/17. These changes included the rollout of the 140 litre grey wheeled bin for landfill material and removing all of the existing 240l and 360l bins, implementing Waste Service vehicle route optimisation for grey, blue and food waste collections and a review of the assisted takeout service.

The service changes resulted in various complaints ranging from missed bin collections, replacement bins not being delivered on time and the assisted take out service missing customer bins. It should be noted that moving to a four bin service has

increased the number of bin collections carried out by Waste Services over a four week period. Over a calendar year, Waste Service carries out over eight million collections which include residential bin collections, commercial waste collections and bulky uplifts.

In 2016/17, the council has shown improved performance across the majority of indicators relating to complaint handling. Customer satisfaction across the four key customer perception complaint indicators has shown an increase in one indicator and three have shown a reduction compared to the previous year. The indicator that has shown an increase in customer satisfaction related to customers who were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, increasing from 68.2% to 69.7%. 80.7% of customers surveyed said that they found it easy to submit a complaint to the council, which is a reduction of 4.8% from 2015/16.

In addition a number of improvements have been made to existing services as a result of complaint analysis which ranged from service redesign to small scale alterations to existing practice.

Overall, due to major service redesign in Waste Services, there has been a large increase in the number of complaints received by the council. The service is actively reviewing these complaints and has identified additional service improvements.

In relation to the council's complaint processing performance, this has shown a general improvement across the various key indicators. Customer satisfaction relating to complaint handling has been maintained and complaint driven service improvement continues to be identified based on robust complaint analysis.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Decision Summary Q1-Q4 2016/17 (Decisions received from SPSO April - March 2016/17)

Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
Education Services	Not investigated	1. Inappropriate video in school. 2. Poor communication by Depute head teacher.	Council complaints process to be completed. Formal written response to be provided.
Education Services	Not progressed	1. Failure to provide adequate additional support for learning or for special needs.	Alternative channel of appeal to the Additional Support Needs Tribunal for Scotland
Education Services	Not progressed	1. Bullying issue and lack of response from school.	Formal written response to be provided to the customer to address the stage 2 complaint
Education Services	Not progressed	1. Teacher attitude.	Education setting up meeting with pupil, parent/ carer and Head Teacher.
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. Unreasonable works carried out to play area.	No obligation for the council to notify customer of playpark upgrade.
Planning,Economic Development and Regeneration	Not progressed	1. High Hedge in neighbour's property- council failure to act.	Council acted reasonably.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Decision Summary Q1-Q4 2016/17 (Decisions received from SPSO April - March 2016/17)

Service	Outcome	Complaint	SPSO Recommendation
Corporate Services	Not to investigate	1. Unreasonably delayed and/or failed to provide you with information you requested; 2. Did not deal with your subsequent complaint in an appropriate and timely manner.	1. It appears to me that a further investigation now would not serve any purpose or provide you with an outcome or any explanations over and above the ones you have already achieved by your own efforts.
Education Services	1 upheld 5 not upheld	1. The Head Teacher at your son's school wrote to your husband alleging that you had spoken rudely and aggressively to a member of staff (not upheld); 2. When you complained, the Council did not reasonably investigate arid respond to your complaint about the allegations that had been made **(upheld**); 3. The Council unreasonably failed to provide you with accurate information, in relation to the views of staff members, during the meeting (not upheld); 4. The Council unreasonably failed to provide you with accurate information in relation to the availability of nursery provision. (not upheld); 5. When you complained the Council did not reasonably investigate your complaint (not upheld); and 6. The Council's handling of your complaint about the amended documents provided in response to your Subject Access Request, was unreasonable (not upheld).	1. That the Council formally apologise to you for the handling of your complaint; and 2. That the Council, in view of the legal advice reconsider their position for future cases on the admissibility of material presented in a complaint which has been obtained covertly.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Decision Summary Q1-Q4 2016/17 (Decisions received from SPSO April - March 2016/17)

Service	Outcome	Complaint	SPSO Recommendation
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. West Lothian Council are unreasonably refusing to allow you to pay your Council Tax over 12 months other than by direct debit.	1. My review of the evidence you provided has led me to conclude that your complaint has been investigated and responded to appropriately.
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. Spoke to you in an unreasonable manner when you tried to make an application for a Crisis Grant.	1. I had concerns that your complaint response did not include any information to the complainant about how they could progress there complaint further, either to the next stage in the complaint process, or to the SPSO.
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. You have said that you seek compensation for loss of holidays, stress, calls, sleepless nights and worries or to be rehoused in a new-build property.	1. As I understand it, the decision whether to pay compensation is a discretionary decision that the Council are entitled to make.
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. The Council have not taken reasonable action in relation to reports of antisocial behaviour that you have made regarding your neighbours, who are Council tenants.	1. As noted in our antisocial behaviour and neighbour nuisance leaflet we cannot recommend that a council evict disruptive neighbours.
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. Your complaint is concerning works to the road outside your property that were not completed correctly, resulting in water draining onto your driveway. The council upheld your complaints in this respect but you were dissatisfied that they were yet to ensure the remedial works were carried out.	1. The council have assured me that they are currently taking reasonable steps to ensure that all the works required are completed by 25 September 2016.
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. The council unreasonably granted permission of the B9080 to be fully closed between 0600 and 1530 for one day.	1. The council have discretion to agree to the temporary closure of roads.
Planning,Economic Development and Regeneration	Not progressed	1. The council unreasonably did not engage appropriately with the Community Council regarding the Local Development Plan.	1. The Community Council is not a party we can accept a complaint from, i.e. not a member of the public, according to the terms of our Act. Therefore, we cannot consider this matter further,

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Service	Outcome	Complaint	SPSO Recommendation
Planning,Economic Development and Regeneration	Not progressed	1. High Hedge in neighbour's property- council failure to act.	1. Council acted reasonably.

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Decision Summary Q1-Q4 2016/17 (Decisions received from SPSO April - March 2016/17)

Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
Chief Exec Office	Not progressed	1. The council's actions when asked to assist the charity's committee. 2. The handling and investigation of the complaint	1. No recommendation
Education Services/ Social Policy	Not upheld	1. The Council acted unreasonably by failing to have an appropriate policy/procedure in place in relation to allegations of sexual nature, including sexual bullying, in schools;	1. No recommendation
	Not upheld	2. the Council acted unreasonably by failing to conduct a timely, full and proper investigation into the incidents in question	2. No recommendation
	Not upheld	3. the Council acted unreasonably by failing to have in place an appropriate risk assessment on sexual bullying/assault in schools	3. While the Council explained they were satisfied that appropriate measures were put in place to minimise contact between your daughter and the other pupil I consider that, given the serious nature of the allegation, the Council should have ensured that they documented the measures they were putting in place during the investigation and after the investigation was completed to manage the situation and I will draw this to the Council's attention.
	Not upheld	4. the Council acted unreasonably by failing to follow their behaviour policy in relation to the other pupil involved	4. No recommendation
	Not upheld	5. the Social Work Department acted unreasonably by failing to evidence how they adhered to child protection policy in their handling of this matter	5. No recommendation

Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
	Not upheld Not upheld	6. the Council when responding to the complaint, acted unreasonably by failing to respond to your specific points. 7. the Social Work Department acted unreasonably by failing to adequately inform you of the investigation process at the point of initial contact	6. No recommendation 7. No recommendation
Education Services	Not progressed	1. The council did not reasonably deal with a situation which arose after a group of pupils including your son accessed inappropriate material on a school computer.	1. No recommendation
Education Services	Not upheld	1. Have not made reasonable arrangements to keep you informed about your children's education and progress.	1. To be clear, there is no evidence you requested anything other than to see your children's workbooks, a request which would have been reasonably easy for the school to accommodate. Any inaccuracy in responding to complaints is unhelpful and I note that staff compiling responses to complaints should always take care to reflect the facts according to the evidence.
Education Services	Not progressed	1. Pupil told he could not take part in an exchange trip.	1. Issue a letter of apology
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. A Council employee inappropriately laughed at your circumstances whilst you were waiting for your call to be transferred	1. No recommendation
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. A compensation claim you made to the council. You said facia fitted by the council had damaged your computer. You made a claim to the councils' insurers.	1. No recommendation

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Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. The Council have unreasonably decided that they will fit a wet electric heating system in your property.	1. No recommendation
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. That the council failed to deal with your complaint about the behaviour of one of their supervisors within a reasonable period of time. 2. That the council's handling of your complaint fell below a reasonable standard.	1. No recommendation
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. The complaint relates to parking in the street where your parents live. The council are unreasonably allowing people to park in a turning area, where your parents were refused permission for a disabled bay.	1. No recommendation
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. That an application for free school- transport has not been treated reasonably, or fairly.	1. No recommendation
Planning, Economic Development and Regeneration	Not progressed	1. The council unreasonably failed to ensure that accurate Information regarding land ownership was included in the application form and failed to take action against the applicant for submitting a false declaration, 2. Planning officers provided factually inaccurate information and misled the planning committee, and 3. Unreasonably failed to prepare a sufficiently detailed minute of the development management committee	1. No recommendation
Social Policy	Not progressed	1. Has unreasonably refused to release information held which concerns you.	1. No recommendation

Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) Decision Summary Q1-Q4 2016/17 (Decisions received from SPSO April - March 2016/17)

Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
Education Services	Not upheld Not upheld	1. Failed to communicate reasonably in respect of an assault and in relation to the return of the pupil concerned to the school 2. Failed to put reasonably supportive measures in place for your son following an assault by another pupil	1. No recommendation
Education Services	Not progressed	1. The Council's exclusion of the pupil from the primary school was unreasonable. 2. The Council's offer of a phased return to school after the pupil's exclusion was unreasonable.	1. The Council has to communicate that a parent has a statutory right to appeal an exclusion in parental/ carer exclusion correspondence.
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. Carpets provided through the Scottish Welfare Fund scheme were of poor standard and have become damaged after a short time.	1. No recommendation
Finance and Property Services	Not upheld Not upheld	1. Unreasonably refused to suspend debt collection proceedings to allow you to provide evidence of your entitlement to a single person's discount for your Council tax; 2. Unreasonably refused to refund the full amount of the fees incurred by you	1. No recommendation
Finance and Property Services	Not progressed	1. Money was taken from the customer's bank account in error and without prior warning.	1. No recommendation
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. Failed to reasonably action your repair request in line with their obligations.	1. The stage 2 response letter to the customer should be in line with the SPSO model complaints handling procedure guidance. The response omitted a summary of the complaint, the investigation and it did not signpost the customer to the SPSO if they were dissatisfied with the outcome of the complaint.

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Service	Outcome	Customer Complaint(s)	SPSO Recommendation
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. The complaint was about the council's handling of the complaint of anti-social behaviour by neighbours, their failure to proceed with the issuing of an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO) and their failure to evict the neighbour.	1. No recommendation
Housing Customer and Building Services	Not progressed	1. The council did not assist the customer in plastering or painting the living room ceiling. The council said that it was the tenant's responsibility to decorate. The customer said he found it difficult to decorate the ceiling.	1. No recommendation
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. The council have failed to ensure that there is a safe walking route for your son to walk to school unaccompanied; and 2. The council's school transport policy assumes that children are accompanied by a parent.	1. No recommendation
Operational Services	Not progressed	1. The council installed a disabled persons' parking bay contrary to the council guidelines.	1. No recommendation