



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute  
Valuation Joint Board*

# Customer Complaints Monitoring Report

## Annual Report 2017/18

This report covers the twelve month period from 1st April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. Appendix 1 contains the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman's Performance Indicators.

### What is a Complaint?

Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board's definition of a complaint is:

'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Joint Board's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Joint Board.'

A complaint may relate to:

- Failure to provide a service
- Failure to achieve standards or quality of service promised by the Joint Board
- Dissatisfaction with Joint Board policies or the way they are being applied or administered
- Disagreement with a decision where the customer cannot use another procedure (for example an appeal) to resolve the matter
- The Joint Board's failure to follow the appropriate administrative process.
- Failure, negligence or delays in responding to customers' inquiries or requests
- Unhelpful or insensitive treatment by, or attitude of, a member of staff
- Malice, bias or unfair discrimination
- Inadequate or incomplete provision of information and/or advice
- Failure to take account of relevant matters in coming to a decision

This list does not cover everything.

A complaint is **not**:

- A routine first-time request for a service
- A request for compensation only
- An issue that is in court or has already been heard by a court or a tribunal
- A disagreement with a decision where a statutory right of appeal exists, for example in relation to council tax or non-domestic rating appeals or Electoral Registration objections
- An attempt to reopen a previously concluded complaint or to have a complaint reconsidered where we have already given our final decision.

## **Complaints Received During 2017/18**

There were a total of 15 Complaints received during 2017/18. This number is in line with last year. Ten complaints related to our Electoral Registration function, two related to council tax one to non-domestic valuation, one was regarding our website and one related to the conduct of a member of staff.

2017/18 saw Local Government Elections along with a snap General Election, past experience has shown that electoral events tend to give rise to a number of complaints, this year the complaints around the elections were relatively low with only five of the Electoral complaints relating to processes directly attributable to the elections. In each of these instances there was no fault on the part of ERO and no process changes required to be implemented. The remaining complaints about the Electoral Registration function were mainly regarding the steps required to be undertaken by the ERO and again no process changes could be implemented.

The two complaints relating to Council tax both concerned the provision of estimated bandings in advance of completion of the dwellings. After reviewing our procedures estimates of banding are no longer being provided verbally and are only provided in writing after suitable authorisation.

The complaint about our website focused on options available to contact us. This has resulted in a change, where details on how to contact us, in person, by mail, telephone, textphone, fax and email are now all prominently displayed.

## **Resolution of Complaints**

Most complaints were resolved at the frontline resolution stage. With the majority resolved either on the day of receipt or the day after. Five complaints were escalated to the investigation stage after frontline resolution had been attempted and two complaints were escalated directly to the investigation stage.

## **Referral to the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman**

No complaints were referred to the Ombudsman

## **Conclusion**

The number of complaints was broadly in line with 16/17. A number of the complaints received have resulted in changes to our procedures and training for staff. We view this learning from complaints as a valuable resource.

R Nicol

30<sup>th</sup> May 2018

# Appendix 1

## SPSO Performance Indicators

### **Indicator 1: Complaints Received per 1000 of population.**

0.053

### **Indicator 2: Closed complaints.**

The number of complaints closed at stage one as a percentage of all complaints : 53%

The number of complaints closed at stage two as a percentage of all complaints: 13%

The number of complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation as a percentage of all complaints: 33%

### **Indicator 3: Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld.**

The number of complaints upheld at stage one as % of all complaints closed at stage one: 25%

The number of complaints not upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one: 75%

The number of complaints partially upheld at stage one as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage one: 0%

The number of complaints upheld at stage two as % of all complaints closed at stage two: 0%

The number of complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two: 100%

The number of complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed at stage two: 0%

The number of escalated complaints upheld at stage two as % of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 20%

The number of escalated complaints not upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 60%

The number of escalated complaints partially upheld at stage two as a percentage of all escalated complaints closed at stage two: 20%

**Indicator 4: Average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.**

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage one: 2 days

Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage two: 18 days

Average time in working days to respond to complaints after escalation: 4 days

**Indicator 5: Percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of 5 and 20 working days.**

The number of complaints closed at stage one within 5 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

The number of complaints closed at stage two within 20 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

The number of escalated complaints within 20 working days as % of total number of stage one complaints: 100%

**Indicator 6: Number of cases where an extension was authorised.**

The number of complaints closed at stage one where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage one: 0%

The number of complaints closed at stage two where extension was authorised, as % all complaints at stage two: 0%

**Indicator 7: Customer satisfaction**

The statutory functions undertaken by the Assessor and Electoral Registration Officer are covered by a number of different appeal mechanisms, such as Non Domestic Valuation and Council Tax Appeals and some aspects of Electoral Registration. Representations under these are quite rightly not recorded as complaints. The resolution of these appeals can be confrontational or adversarial, despite this our staff have scored consistently highly for their professionalism and knowledge in our Customer Satisfaction Survey. The relatively low number of customer complaints does not lend itself to an analysis solely of these.

**Indicator 8: Learning from Complaints**

Reports of the number and type of complaints received are submitted to the management team at each meeting, normally held every 4 to 6 weeks with any trends being identified. The learning from our complaints has resulted in some changes to our processes including no longer supplying verbal estimates of Banding for Council Tax.