

Learning from Complaints 2024/25

Quarter 1

Complaints submitted	15
Complaints upheld	15
Complaints partially upheld	0
Complaints not upheld	0

A complaint was received from a ratepayer in relation to the visibility of their R2023 proposal on the SAA website. Upon investigation it was discovered that there was an error in the coding of the Boards software application which is used to extract data for upload to the SAA Portal. The issue was 2 proposals had been submitted for this particular subject. An explanation was provided and the complaint was upheld at Stage 1 resolution. The coding bug was fixed to avoid any repeat.

A complaint was received from a ratepayer payer concerning the handling of the removal from her property from Council Tax and re-entering of the subject on the roll. It was accepted that we used the wrong date. To remedy the matter the taxpayer was invited to submit a proposal. Noted there is a formal appeals process for such matters but the complaint centred on how the situation was handled. The complaint was upheld at Stage 1.

A complaint was received in relation to conduct of valuation staff onsite to undertake an inspection of a dwelling for a sold house re-banding exercise. The primary issued raised was raised about the availability / visibility of formal staff ID. This complaint was upheld at stage 1. As a result of this complaint, and another complaint surrounding identification of staff in the previous financial year, the Board have introduced an ID badge policy and procedure.

Twelve complaints were submitted in relation to backdated council tax band increases following material increase and sales of dwellings. Following the restructure of the valuation teams a “root and branch” review was undertaken of the sold house banding re-appraisal process. A backlog of sold house surveys was highlighted in East and West Dunbartonshire council areas which Some of these surveys will result in backdated band increases. Legislation dictates that the date of first sale following alteration must be used in such circumstances. 1 complaint was upheld at Stage 1 resolution the other progressed to stage 2 where it was upheld.

Complaint responses acknowledged that a number of factors contributed including;

- Insufficient management reporting and monitoring of work streams over a number of years contributed to backlog of outstanding survey cases.
- This backlog was made worse by the inability to operate at full functionality during periods of Office closure and restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- A training issue with former staff members has been identified. A misinterpretation of the correct application of the law in relation to effective date of band increase has been identified.

- This was exacerbated by an unprecedented high turnover of management and experienced staff at all levels of the valuation team in a relatively short period of time.

To ensure there is no repeat of backdated increases going forward the following have been implemented;

- Introduction of Legislative and procedural Sold House Guidance for all staff. This was approved and communicated to all valuation staff.
- Training sessions on sold houses and Council Tax banding reports for valuation teams.
- 2024/25 internal KPI target for sold houses introduced - 75% within 6 months and 100% within 1 year of notification.
- Targeted project to facilitate the clearance of existing backlog.
- Introduction on Monthly team meetings which include statistic reviews to increase individual and team accountability.
- Reviewing processes for raising surveys following notification from planning, building and ROS currently in progress.

Quarter 2

Complaints submitted	10
Complaints upheld	6
Complaints partially upheld	0
Complaints not upheld	4

Three complaints were submitted in relation non-receipt of postal ballot packs. Postal Ballot Packs are issued by the Returning Officer for the election. The Board have no remit in relation to the timing or sending of postal ballot packs. There was no indication of unacceptable standards of service from the Board, and therefore these complaints could not be upheld and were resolved at Stage 1.

A complaint was received from a person who thought they should be registered to vote, but weren't. No details were able to be provided by the person as to when they registered. The complaint could not be upheld, and was closed at Stage 1.

A further six complaints were received in relation to backdated council tax band increases following material increase and sales of dwellings.

Two of these sought compensation. They were advised matters relating to compensation claims are excluded from the complaint's procedure. Any such claim made would be a separate matter. The Board has no defined process for dealing with compensation claims. Mitigations are already in place to minimise the risk of such events reoccurring (as covered in Quarter 1). The six complaints were upheld, and all were resolved at Stage 1.

Quarter 3

Complaints submitted	4
Complaints upheld	1
Complaints partially upheld	1
Complaints not upheld	2

A complaint was received in relation to a deletion of a SCU entry and reinstatement on the List. Complaint concerned the time taken to reinstate the entry to the Roll. The time taken was not unreasonable, and the complaint was not upheld. Resolved at Stage 1.

A complaint was received in relation to a non-domestic Valuation Roll entry where the Assessor had been advised of a change to the property, but not acted on the information provided. The time taken for the alteration to be made to the Valuation Roll was out with the standard expected by the Joint Board. The matter was brought to a resolution following a stage 2 investigation, and a full apology being given. The complaint was upheld.

A complaint about the time taken to respond to an enquiry around a Civil Penalty Notice was received. The time complained about was two weeks. The level of service provided was not out with the expectations of the Board in this instance. The complaint was not upheld, and was resolved at Stage 1.

The final complaint related to the process for collecting Electoral Registration Canvass information for 'establishments'. Requests are routed to a single person living in the property to provide a return in relation to the property as a whole. The complainer found this inappropriate. The complaint was partially upheld and resolved at Stage 1.

Quarter 4

Complaints submitted	5
Complaints upheld	3
Complaints partially upheld	0
Complaints not upheld	2

A further complaint in relation to a delayed Council Tax band increase was received. The complaint was upheld and closed at Stage 2.

A complaint was received in relation to the time taken to respond to an email. The time taken was considered unreasonable, and an apology issued. The complaint was upheld at Stage 1.

A complaint was received in relation to non-response to an email. No evidence could be found of the email having been received. The matter in question had been responded to some time before the alleged missing email was sent. The complaint was closed at Stage 1, having not been upheld.

A complaint was received that credit reference agencies had advised a person that they weren't on the Electoral Register. Having checked, the person is properly registered and the agencies were searching the wrong address. Complaint not upheld, and closed at Stage 1.

The final complaint was in relation to an enquiry that had been made almost five years ago, and had not been brought to a resolution. The enquiry had been passed through numerous former members of staff, none of whom had actioned it appropriately. The complaint was upheld at Stage 1, and an apology issued.

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Depute Assessor & ERO
21 May 2025