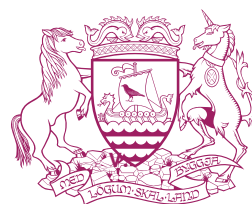


Feedback Monitoring Report 2017/18



Shetland Islands Council
shetland.gov.uk/comments_complaints

Introduction



Feedback- both positive and negative should be a focal point for staff development and systematic improvement within any organisation. I wish to establish an organisation with a feedback-friendly culture as part of my aim to ensure the Council is putting its customers first but also reflecting on current performance and striving to be the best it can be.

- Our Values and Behaviours -

By adopting our Values and Behaviours framework I have provided myself and all staff a shared set of values, and behaviours to ensure we work optimally.

Excellent Service, Taking Personal Responsibility and Working Well Together.

How do we know if we are delivering Excellent Service, putting our customers first, taking personal responsibility and working well together if the people who access our services don't have the opportunity to provide feedback?

A feedback-friendly culture is one that allows the benefits of feedback to enrich the entire workplace. An environment in which all feedback is encouraged and appreciated increases the meaning and acceptability of feedback and its perceived usefulness among all staff. We value our satisfied and unhappy customer's views equally. Their feedback on our services is the greatest source of learning. We aim to resolve problems quickly and put our customers at the centre of our services.

I have implemented a Learning Board at our Corporate Management Team so that we can begin to create an environment that encourages learning by exploring feedback. Complaints are seen as suggestions of areas for improvement rather than seen as criticism of staff or the Council. Paying attention to our Customer feedback is a way of gathering different perspectives, encourages creative problem solving and ensures Continuous Improvement. The positive manner in which feedback received by CMT can create opportunities to improve or celebrate the performance of individuals, services and the overall Council. This is an attitude and approach which, over time will, I hope, support our organisational and individual growth and wellbeing.

Maggie Sandison
Shetland Islands Council
Chief Executive



Summary

Local authorities in Scotland have adopted the Model Complaints Handling Procedure produced by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) to ensure there is a standardised approach across all Scottish councils and implement a consistent process for customers to follow which makes it simpler to complain, ensure staff and customer confidence in complaints handling and encourage bodies to make the best use of lessons from complaints.

The Indicators within this report have been produced by the SPSO in consultation with local authority stakeholders and Audit Scotland.

The points below are key to a successful complaints process, we should:

- **Identify service failures and take appropriate action**
- **Identify where services need to improve**
- **Identify poor complaints handling practice and put it right**
- **Examine good practice and understand how we might repeat it in other areas**
- **Identify trends in complaints and proactively address any issues**

Source: SIC Complaints Handling Procedure

“Handled well, complaints provide a low cost and important source of feedback and learning for organisations to help drive improvement and restore a positive relationship with customers who feel let down by poor service. Handled badly, they erode public confidence and trust in public services.”

Source: Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO)

Our Values



Excellent Service
Taking Personal Responsibility
Working Well Together

“Excellent service is at the heart of everything we do. We provide excellent service by taking personal responsibility and working well together.”

We’re asking everyone to keep our new values in mind when working with our customers and with each other – excellent service, taking personal responsibility and working well together.

There is no doubt that putting our customers first (whether colleagues or members of the public) will improve the experience they have when they interact with us.

- Taking personal responsibility

by empowering staff to have confidence in handling complaints as soon as they are received. Often, complaints can be de-escalated at frontline by calm and polite staff.

- Working well together

by passing on complaints to the relevant service to be investigated, and ensuring complaints are then followed up and closed within timescales.

- Excellent Service

by dealing with complaints in a calm, polite and professional way, by passing on information and following up on complaints within timescales we can provide an excellent service.



Shetland Partnership Plan

The Shetland Partnership brings together public, private and voluntary sectors, community councils and Shetland Charitable Trust to oversee and deliver the community plan.

There are FOUR main areas of change:

Participation, People, Place and Money

“Shetland is a place where everyone is able to thrive; living well in strong, resilient communities; and where people and communities are able to help plan and deliver solutions to future challenges”

Participation – people participate and influence decisions on service and use of resources.

- 59% of people in Shetland are satisfied with local services (health care, schools and public transport)

Indicators of change: Satisfaction with public services

People are encouraged to make complaints about the standard of service they receive. This allows us to learn from the feedback we receive and change the way we deliver our services.

OUR PLAN 2016 2020

“This plan sets out how we, as Shetland Islands Council, will work together with other members of the Shetland Partnership, to achieve some of the things set out in the community plan over the next four years”

Excellent standards of customer care is one of our 20 things we aim to achieve by 2020.

indicator

Complaints received per 1,000 population

01

This indicator allows us to track our progress against previous years, and compare ourselves to other authorities.

During 2017-18, we recorded **106** complaints from the public. Using the population estimate of 23,080 that gives a value of:

4.6

complaints
per 1000 population



The number of complaints has remained the same since last year. From last year, we now know more services are recording complaints however it is possible that in other areas complaints recording has deteriorated, especially those complaints that are dealt with right away.

We are looking into why we are different; whether it is to do with levels of customer satisfaction or different approaches to recording complaints.

Comparing us to other councils similar in size for 2017/18:

- Shetland	106 complaints
- Orkney	72 complaints
- Western Isles	64 complaints

1- Source: National Records of Scotland

<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/population-estimates/mid-17/mid-year-pop-est-17-publication-revised.pdf>

indicator

Closed Complaints

02

This indicator allows us to monitor what proportion of our complaints are dealt with “at front-line” (Stage 1). Dealing with complaints quickly and efficiently is a priority for the Council and the Scottish Ombudsman. **The proportion of Stage 1 complaints should be high.**

Stage 1

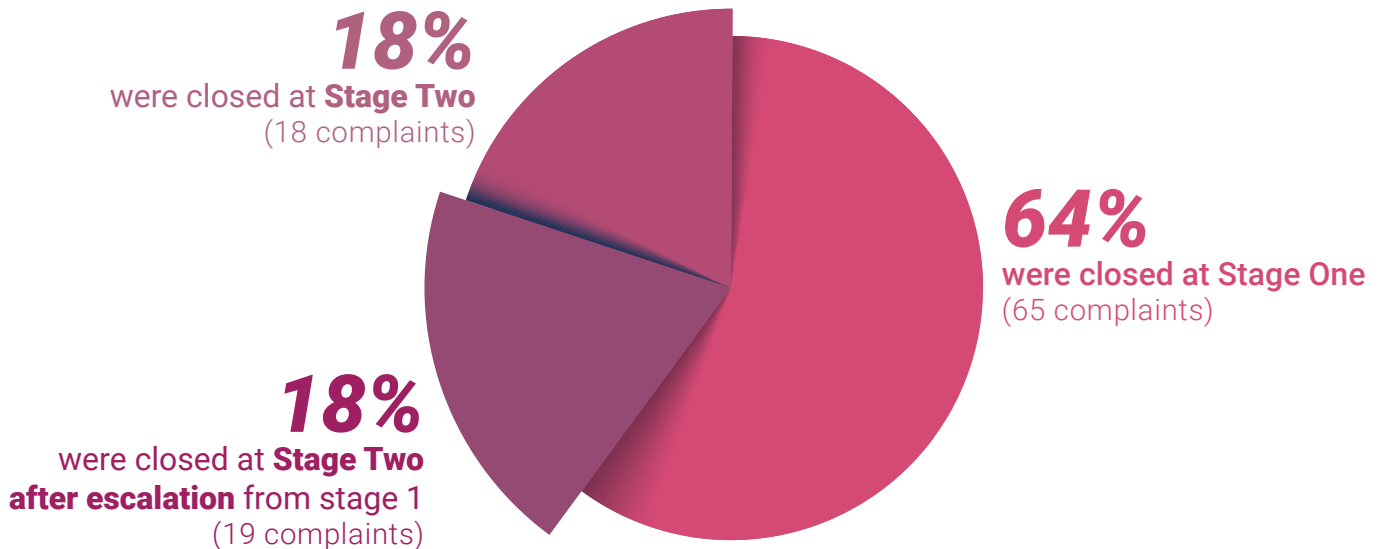
complaints are usually straightforward issues that can be resolved requiring little or no investigation

Stage 2

complaints are issues where it is apparent that an investigation should take place to establish the cause of the issue

Stage 2 “after escalation”

complaints where the issue has not been resolved to the customer’s satisfaction at Stage 1 and have therefore been escalated to a more thorough (Stage 2) investigation



The proportion of complaints dealt with in Stage 1 has dropped from 68% last year to 64% this year. Although this is not a significantly high drop in numbers, it may be due to the number of “simple” complaints not recorded.

It is also important to recognise that often people “don’t want to complain”, they are just looking for a service.

indicator

03

Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

This indicator allows us to monitor what proportion of our complaints were upheld, or partially upheld.

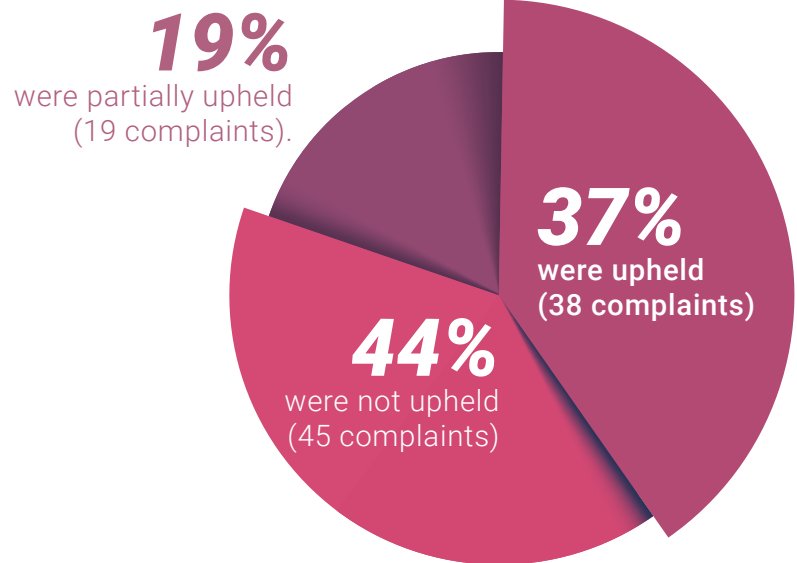
To decide whether a complaint is upheld (or not), we use the following guidance:

- Has the Council failed to follow its own guidance, policies, or procedures? If so, the complaint would be classed as “upheld”
- If the Council has followed its own guidance, policies, procedures and treated the customer well ; the complaint would be “not upheld”

Outcome of all complaints combined (Stage 1 + Stage 2 + Stage 2 escalated):

Outcome of all complaints combined

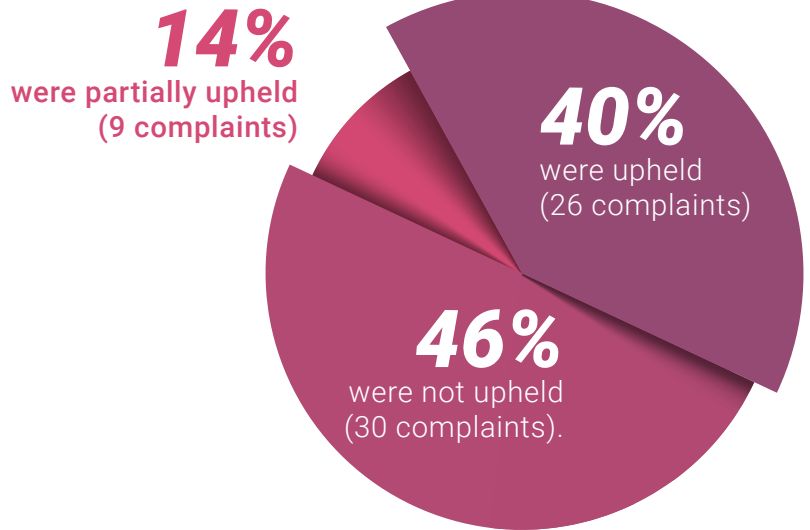
(Stage 1 + Stage 2 + Stage 2 escalated)



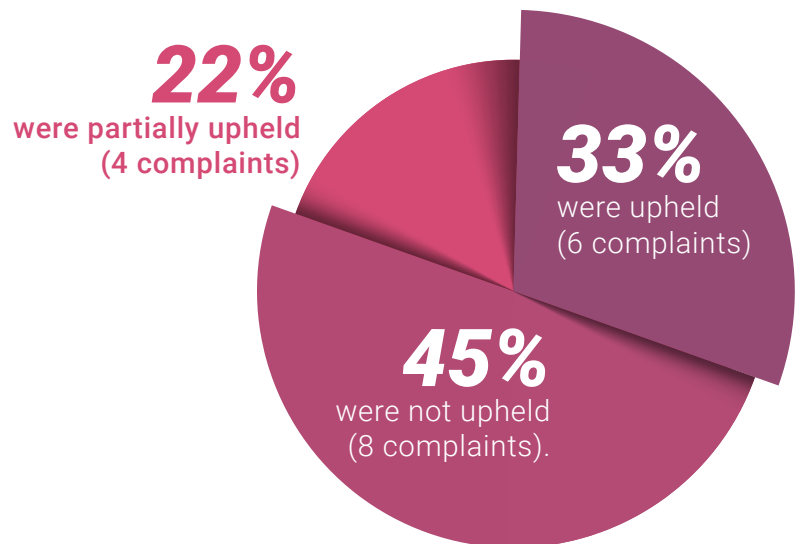
Complaints sometimes have more than one element to them, especially more serious complaints. This often results in a decision of “partially upheld” when one or more elements of service were not delivered to an acceptable standard, but others were.

We learn from these complaints. Where complaints are upheld (or partially upheld), we investigate the “root cause” and consider actions to improve performance and minimise the likelihood of similar events in the future.

Outcome of Stage One complaints

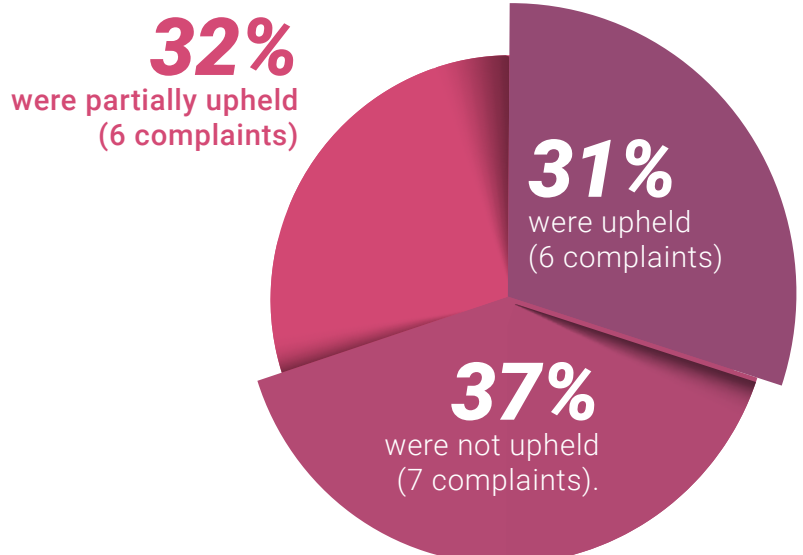


Outcome of Stage Two complaints



Outcome of Stage Two complaints

escalated from Stage 1



indicator

04

Average Times

This shows how long, on average, we're taking to deal with complaints. The target for Stage 1 complaints is 5 days, and the target for Stage 2 complaints is 20 days. This allows us time to fully investigate the more serious, Stage 2, complaints.

There are occasions when a 5-day time extension can be granted. This should only be done in order to gather more information, resulting in a more accurate investigation. Extensions should be agreed with the person making the complaint.

The indicator is measured in working days, and should be as low as possible, while not compromising the quality of the investigation.

Average time in working days to close complaints

Stage One
9.7 days



Target 5 days

Stage Two
18.2 days



Target 20 days

Stage Two escalated complaints

The average time to close complaints after escalation was **39.6** days. This has a target maximum of 25 days (5 days for Stage 1 plus 20 days for Stage 2).



Even with the possible lack of recording of "simple" complaints (which would take our average response time down), it is clear from this data that we are taking too long to deal with Stage 1 complaints which should be dealt with in 5 days. There may also be some confusion around when to escalate from Stage 1 to Stage 2.

Our performance handling Stage 1 complaints has shown significant improvement from last year's stage 1 average of 24.2 days.

Our performance handling Stage 2 complaints has deteriorated from last year (10.5 days to 18.2). However, our Stage 2 escalated performance has improved from 139.5 days to 39.6. This improvement is mainly due to not allowing complaints to go for long periods of time without being resolved.

The average response times are distorted by a few highly complex cases involving different services which has taken longer than the target timescales.

indicator

05

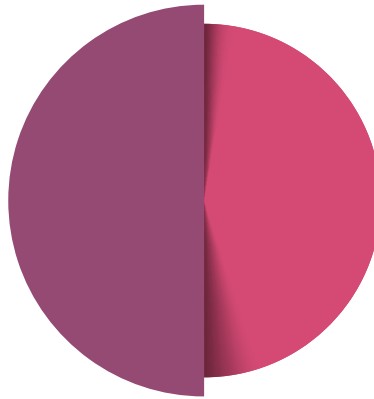
Performance against Targets

This indicator shows the proportion of complaints closed within the agreed deadlines.

Ideally, we'd be closing all our complaints within the national guidelines. However, sometimes it's prudent to continue the work to identify causes and solutions beyond the deadline date. Obviously, these cases should be in the minority. **The following indicators should be as high as possible.**

49%

of Stage One complaints were closed within 5 days

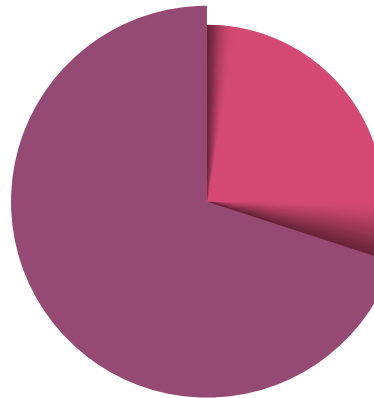


51%

Outwith Target

72%

of Stage Two complaints were closed within 20 days

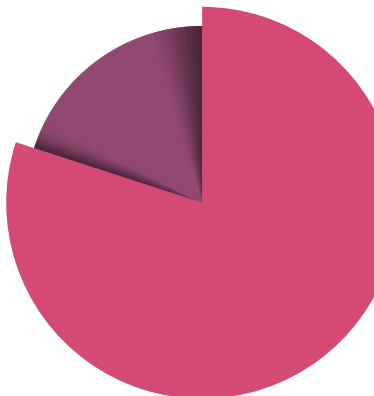


28%

Outwith Target

16%

of Stage Two escalated complaints were closed within target - 20/25 days -



84%

Outwith Target



Disappointingly our figures have deteriorated for each of the target areas compared to last year's figures. It is clear from the data that we are taking too long to close complaints.

We monitor progress regularly, monthly reports are sent to all Directors and quarterly performance information are presented to all Service Committees as part of our Performance Cycle of meetings.

indicator

06

Cases where an extension was granted

Extensions are granted where a short, but necessary, extension is needed to ensure we deal with the complaint properly. Extensions can only be approved by a Senior Officer, and only when the customer agrees. E.g. when we are waiting for information from an external source, such as a contractor.

This indicator shows the proportion of complaints that fulfilled the criteria to be granted an extension by a Senior Officer. **These figures should be low**, but extensions are often necessary to avoid further issues.



8%

 (5 in 65)

Stage one complaints had an extension applied

11%

 (2 in 18)

Stage two complaints had an extension applied

26%

 (5 in 19)

Stage two escalated complaints had an extension applied



The proportion of complaints with extensions is low, as it should be. However, there may have been opportunities to extend Stage 1 complaints and remain within target.

indicator Customer satisfaction

07

We have many methods for collecting feedback on our service delivery. Many Services, such as Housing, send regular follow-up surveys after customer contacts. You can find this information [here](#)

Housing feedback received from the 364 tenants who completed a satisfaction survey for 2017/2018 repairs showed 91.2% were satisfied, very close to the Scottish average at 92.1%. You can view the full Housing Service report Card 2017/18 [here](#)

**Tenants
satisfied
with
repairs
services**

2017/2018	91.21%
2016/2017	88.55%
2015/2016	82.70%
2014/2015	84.75%
2013/2014	84.75%

**Library service
user survey
returned a 96%
satisfaction rate**

2017/2018	96%
2016/2017	93%

We completed a Customer First Survey in 2017. You can find the results here <http://www.shetland.gov.uk/Customer-First/default.asp>

We asked...

1. 68% commented they had no cause to complain in the last 12 months
2. 72% said we always or nearly always provide a helpful and friendly service

Areas for improvement...

1. 56% felt we were poor or very poor at learning from customer feedback
2. 49% said they had either sometimes, seldom or never encountered a responsive service where we were able to resolve problems

We also created a Customer First Strategy and New Customer Charter

We're putting **YOU FIRST**

We will:

- Respond promptly when you contact us
- Resolve issues as quickly as possible
- Be polite, helpful and professional at all times
- Treat everyone with equity and fairness
- Communicate clearly, avoiding jargon
- Maintain confidentiality, ensuring only those who need to see your information do so
- Take responsibility and rectify any mistakes we make
- Use your views to help us improve the way we do things



Our new customer charter

www.shetland.gov.uk

Shetland Islands Council

Local Government Benchmarking Framework figures show that all our services assessed had satisfaction levels higher than the national averages. These are shown below:

Local schools:	88.3% (Scotland 72.3%)
Social Care:	85.5% (Scotland 80%)
Refuse collection:	92% (Scotland 78.7%)
Street cleanliness:	71.7% (Scotland 69.7%)
Local libraries:	83% (Scotland 73%)
Local parks and open spaces:	91.7% (Scotland 85.7%)
Local museums and galleries:	90% (Scotland 70%)
Local leisure facilities:	90.3% (Scotland 72.7%)

All above national average

More indicators and information can be found at <http://scotland.mylocalcouncil.info/>

93% (1006/1079)

of Freedom of Information requests repoded ON TIME

90.5% (38/42)

of Environmental Information Requests responded ON TIME

Compliments

In 2017-18, 8 compliments were recorded on our central system. We know this is a low number and does not reflect the number of compliments we actually received.

We know that in other areas feedback is collected using various methods, our aim is to improve the capture of all feedback in future years.

indicator

08

Learning from complaints

The positive value of customer complaints

Customer Complaints can be positive! We should embrace all the feedback we receive to gain a better understanding of our customers reasons for complaining then engage with our staff on ways to improve.

One of the most important aspects of the Complaints Handling Process is to learn from the feedback we receive from our customers

Staff should be encouraged to see the opportunities that feedback provides for gathering valuable information, allowing the identification of failures so that we can then learn from those to make improvements.

This will be a key focus of the “Performance Management & Reporting” of the Business Transformation Programme 2016-20 Phase Two and closely links to the Customer First Strategy and Charter.

The Corporate Management Team receives a monthly complaints monitoring report which helps maintain an awareness of complaints issues and performance against targets, however going forward, to further enhance the importance of good complaints handling and reporting, complaints will be discussed as part of a group on a regular basis, and learning points from each complaint should be shared with staff.

Complaints are also reported by Directors to elected members on a quarterly basis as part of the Performance Reporting cycle.

Learning Board

The Learning Board was set up as part of the Council’s Customer First project. CMT (Corporate Management Team) sits as the Learning Board every six weeks and the purpose of the new Learning Board is to extract learning from all

customer interactions, share positive feedback, learn from negative experiences, understand what is driving the difference between good and poor engagement, and make improvements where we can.

CASE STUDIES

Children's Services



Unhealthy choices in the tuck shop

Complaint about the unhealthy content of the Anderson High School Halls of Residence tuck shop following a photo being on Shetland News. Complainant was ensured that the halls were moving towards more fruit based items and fresh fruit is always available for the children.

- *What have we learned?*

A review of the foods available to children was undertaken to ensure there is a range of fruit based items, and that fresh fruit is available.

Helen Budge
Director Children's Service

Community Health and Social Care Services

Confusion around Self Directed Support Payments

Complainant was advised to apply for direct payments, the award was paid for some time then payments stopped. Complainant was informed that the payments had been withdrawn as they were being used incorrectly.

- *What have we learned?*

Grant offer letters to be much more specific about what payments can be used for. Review assessment and allocation procedures have been carried out. It would be helpful if there was easy read information about the Direct Payments Scheme.

Simon Bokor Ingram
Director Community Health and Social Care



Infrastructure Services



Poor signage

Complainant (recently moved to Shetland) visited the dump to find out about when the rubbish was collected, what was required eg black bags, wheelie bins, nets etc. She was met with unhelpful staff who would not sell her a bin as it was after 4pm (bins sold between 10am and 4pm) and they could not tell her what day her rubbish would be collected.

- *What have we learned?*

Signage at the dump to be improved for opening hours and access to various services and relevant information provided to staff so that they have the information and can pass it on to the public. Staff also reminded about treating the public respectfully.

John Smith

Director Infrastructure Service

Development Services

Garage site rental charges

Tenants complained that rent charges for garage sites had increased significantly but they had not been notified of this increase.

- *What have we learned?*

To ensure that future increases are better explained in the notification letters issued.

Neil Grant

Director Development Service



Corporate Services



Complaints Handling Process

A parent requested school transport for their child and a reassessment of the route to their school. There were delays in handling the request for a variety of reasons. These included staff absences and the availability of technical equipment.

- *What have we learned?*

1 - That changes were required to our policies and procedures.

A clear process and procedure was developed for dealing with requests made for a Road Safety Audit to be reviewed or a route re-assessed. This has provided greater clarity of the roles and expectations of each service area.

2 - That it is important to keep in touch with the individual making the complaint.

3 - That some staff required training on the Complaints Handling Procedure.

Christine Ferguson

Director Corporate Service

Looking ahead

Simon Bokor Ingram

Director Community Health and Social Care

Complaints are reported quarterly to the Integration Joint Board, and within the Directorate we seek out themes and trends to look at where services may need support; further training or perhaps very specific interventions. During the year we have focused on the dental service, and have worked with independent provision to ensure that all patients can register with a dentist. The adult learning disability service is moving forward with a project looking at how we can better meet the needs of those people requiring respite care. There are a number of redesign projects underway that include areas for mental health, primary care and adult social care that aim to improve outcomes for individuals.

Christine Ferguson

Director Corporate Services

Complaints handling is an important activity for the Council. We must address people's concerns and learn from our mistakes.

Listening to the public, whether it be a complaint, a comment or a compliment; helps us to improve our services and our performance; putting the community at the heart of everything we do.

We have now implemented a Customer First Strategy and Charter to help us to achieve greater consistency in customer service standards across the Council.

John Smith

Director Infrastructure Services

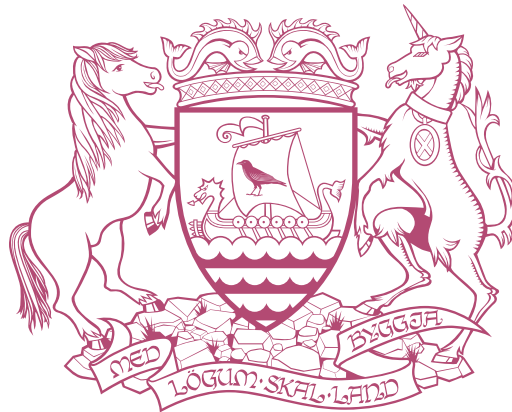
We provide a diverse range of frontline services every day that affect people across the whole of Shetland, Picking up the bins, running the ferries, looking after the roads etc. etc. are all very important to peoples everyday lives. We are trying hard to support front line staff to resolve as many enquiries, suggestions and complaints as they possible can, make sure that anything they can't immediately resolve goes up the line and is dealt with properly and learn from all of that.

When you are changing things, like the new recycling service, or working on future changes, like air and ferry services, then it is very important to look ahead on how those changes can be best communicated. We know that making changes will increase the number of questions we get, we know that some of these will be from people dissatisfied or unsure about those changes.

It is particularly important we try to anticipate and plan for that so we make things as smooth as possible and learn quickly from and alongside our customers. Frequently asked questions, adverts, flyers, meeting, web pages, other social media can all help with this but the key comes back to Customer Focus and the Council Values.

To leave feedback on Council services, visit:
www.shetland.gov.uk/feedback/

You can find our quarterly monitoring online:
www.shetland.gov.uk/comments_complaints/



www.shetland.gov.uk



MONITOR PLEASE **GREAT**
REVIEW **UNDERSTANDING**
CERTAINLY RIGHT **SATISFIED** THANKS
SMILE **HELPFUL** POSITIVE **CALM**
HELP QUICKLY **FANTASTIC**