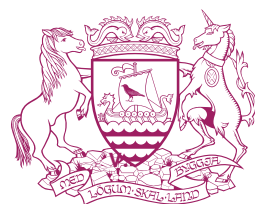


Feedback Monitoring Report 2018/19



Shetland Islands Council
shetland.gov.uk/comments_complaints

Introduction



This report sets out the Council's annual performance on complaints handling.

You will see from the data that we receive a very small number of complaints compared to the number of customer contacts and the wide range of services delivered to our community.

Our aim is to give a positive outcome at first point of contact and our customer feedback system gives us information about when that has and hasn't happened.

So, despite the numbers being small, every single complaint is an opportunity for the Council to reflect and learn. We find that how the Council delivers for customers is as important as what it delivers.

The feedback we receive from reviewing complaints and compliments is critical in continually developing and improving our services to ensure we are meeting our 'Customer First' commitments. Feedback helps us to understand our customers' expectations and perceptions of our services, so we can deliver more responsive and effective services.

The Council's Values are:

Excellent service
Taking personal responsibility
Working well together

Our Learning Board's review of customer feedback and complaints seeks to identify when we get excellent service right so that we can share and celebrate success across the organisation. However, no matter how much we prepare and plan, things don't always go as we intend them to, so we also need to understand why errors happen so everyone can learn lessons from these. In reviewing complaints it does show that when we don't live our values and take personal responsibility and/or work well together, our customer outcomes are negative and we fail to deliver excellent service for our community. We value our satisfied and unhappy customers' views equally as their feedback on our services is the greatest source of learning.

Maggie Sandison
Chief Executive
Shetland Islands Council



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, in that 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

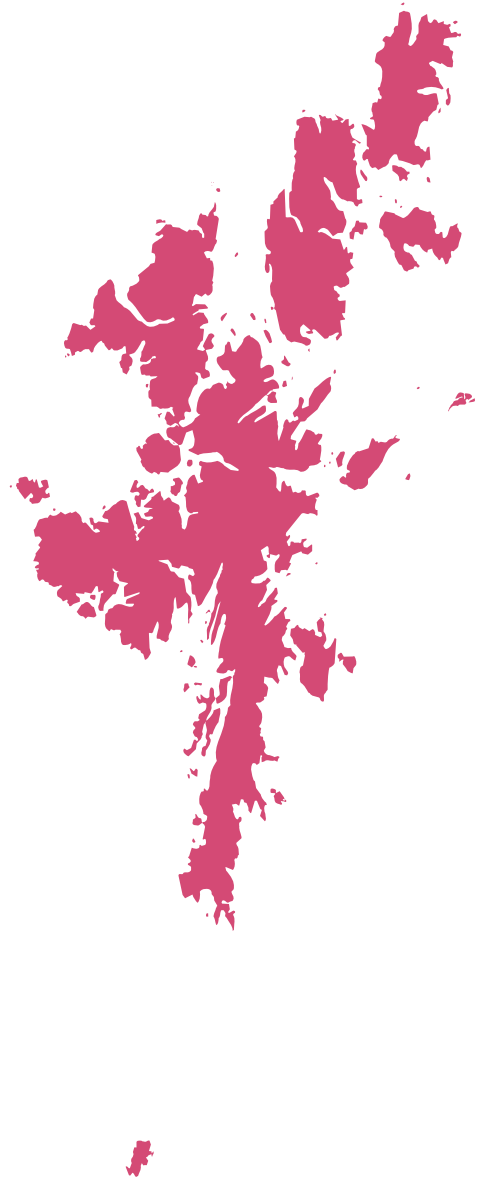
01

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

During 2018-19, we recorded **82** complaints from the public. Using the population estimate of 22,990 that gives a value of:

3.6

complaints
per 1,000
population



The number of complaints is 25% less than last year. It is difficult to know why we have received fewer complaints: perhaps services are getting better at resolving feedback at an early stage resulting in fewer complaints logged or perhaps recording has deteriorated in some areas.

Comparing us to other councils similar in size for 2018/19:

Shetland	82 complaints
Orkney	101 complaints
Western Isles	72 complaints

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"

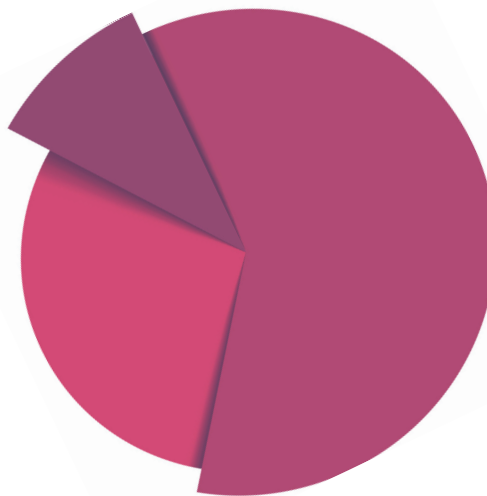
complaints where the issue has not been resolved to the customer's satisfaction at Stage 1 and have therefore been escalated to a more thorough (Stage 2) investigation

10%

were closed at **Stage Two**
(9 complaints)

18%

were closed at **Stage Two after escalation** from stage 1
(21 complaints)



65%

were closed at **Stage One**
(55 complaints)



The proportion of complaints dealt with at Stage 1 has remained the same as last year. The proportion of complaints dealt with at stage 2 has dropped from 18% last year to 10% this year. This may indicate that we are getting better at dealing

with complaints at the Frontline (Stage 1) without the need for further investigation.

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.

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

Outcome of all complaints combined

(Stage 1 + Stage 2 + Stage 2 escalated)

33%
were partially upheld
(28 complaints)

28%
were upheld
(24 complaints)

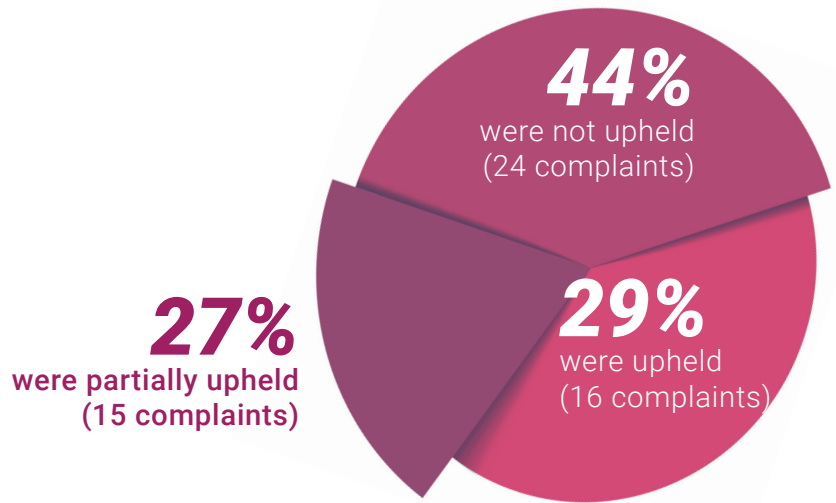
39%
were not upheld
(33 complaints)



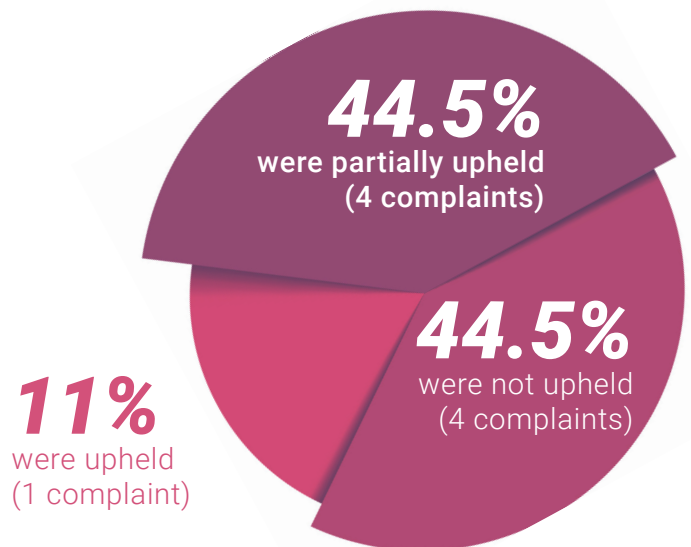
Complaints sometimes have more than one element to them, especially more serious complaints. This often results in a decision of 'partially upheld' when one or more elements of service were not delivered to an acceptable standard, but others were.

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.

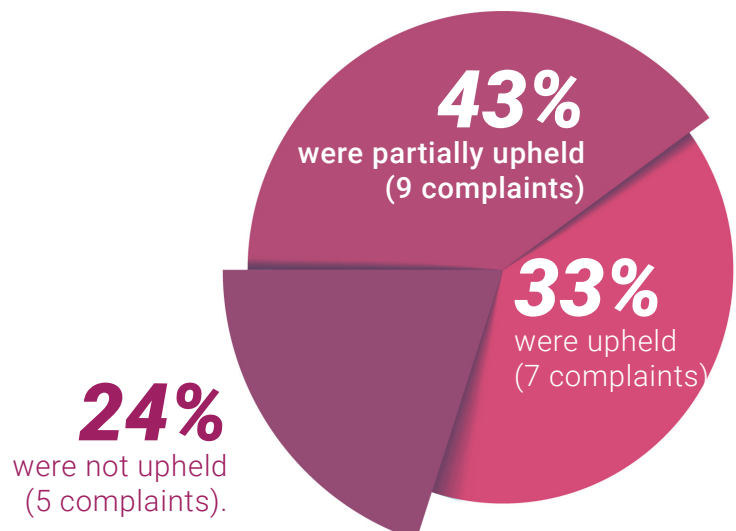
Outcome of Stage One complaints



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
12.7 days



Target 5 days

Stage Two
35.6 days



Target 20 days

Stage Two escalated complaints

The average time to close complaints after escalation was **37** 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 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 deteriorated from 9.7 days last year to 12.7 days this year.

Our performance handling Stage 2 complaints has shown significant deterioration from 18.2 days last year to 35.6 days this year.

Stage 2 escalated performance has improved slightly from 39.6 to 37 days.

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

indicator

05

Performance against Targets

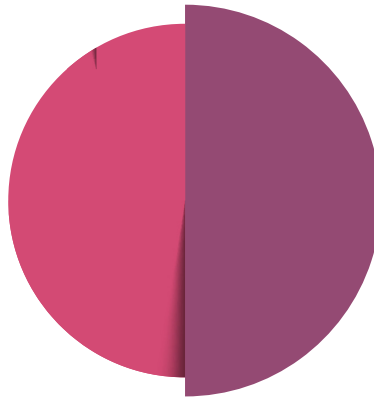
This indicator shows the proportion of complaints closed within the agreed deadlines.

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.

42%

of Stage One complaints were closed within 5 days

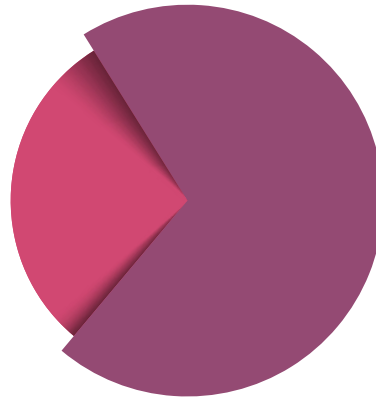


58%

Outwith target

33%

of Stage Two complaints were closed within 20 days

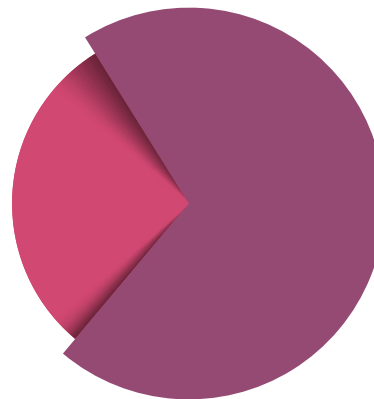


67%

Outwith target

38%

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



62%

Outwith target



Disappointingly our Stage 2 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 Stage 2 complaints within the target timescales.

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. For example, 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.



7% (4 in 55)
Stage One complaints
had an extension applied

33% (3 in 9)
Stage Two complaints
had an extension applied

24% (5 in 21)
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.

From the Housing Service Tenant Satisfaction Survey, 78.8% of tenants said they were satisfied with the overall service provided, compared to the Scottish average of 90.1%

Satisfaction with repairs still remains high at 95.1% compared with the Scottish average of 91.7%

You can find more Housing information at www.shetland.gov.uk/housing

Tenants satisfied with repairs services

2018/2019	95.01%
2017/2018	91.21%
2016/2017	88.55%

Adult Learning Learner Feedback Summary 2018-2019

A total of 107 forms were returned for the 2018-2019 class programme. From the learner evaluation forms received and answers completed:

- 99%** thought the room and facilities were suitable
- 95%** thought the time and duration of the course was suitable
- 100%** thought the tutor knew the subject well
- 99%** thought there was ample opportunity to ask questions
- 100%** found the tutor to be helpful and supportive

Library service user survey returned a 93% satisfaction rate

2018/2019	93%
2017/2018	96%
2016/2017	93%

"Superb staff - no request is ever too much trouble. Always the most up to date reading. Also excellent presence on social media"

"Using computers - I need to at least once a week and staff are a great help. Couldn't manage without this"

"Being able to spend time there without spending money and the way the staff are friendly but don't intrude"

You can view more library performance at [Shetland Library Service](#)

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:	86.4%	(Scotland 71.8%)
Refuse collection:	90.3%	(Scotland 76.3%)
Street cleanliness:	73.7%	(Scotland 66.3%)
Local libraries:	82.4%	(Scotland 72.3%)
Local parks and open spaces:	91.1%	(Scotland 84.8%)
Local museums and galleries:	90.6%	(Scotland 69.3%)
Local leisure facilities:	89%	(Scotland 71.4%)

All above national average

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

Freedom of Information requests responded ON TIME

2018/2019 **94%** (1139/1215)

2017/2018 **93%** (1006/1079)

Compliments

In 2018-19, 6 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 will 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. The Corporate Management Team sits as the Learning Board every six weeks 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

Learning Board outcomes are recorded and shared internally with managers and team leaders in their quarterly bulletin, and also with Council Members through their monthly e-newsletter.

CASE STUDIES

Children's Services



Helen Budge
Director Children's Services

School Concerns

A parent had concerns with a decision to apply Child Protection Procedures to their child, the school's lack of information about the development of their child's Co-ordinated Support Plan (CSP), the lack of communication, and appropriate reporting of incidents concerning their child in school from school staff.

What have we learned?

The school and Children's Social Work will continue to refer carefully to the Shetland Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures in relation to any future potential child protection issues, involving children with additional support needs, including Section 7 of the Procedures, 'Child Protection in Special Circumstances' and as part of the current work, updating Shetland Islands Council's Inclusive Education Policy and timescales around CSP processes will be made clearer for parents and carers.

Community Health and Social Care Services

Alarm System

Family concerns after a customer residing in residential care had left the alarmed building and staff were unaware until a member of the public brought the customer back to the unit. Unfortunately, the staff member who responded to the incident did not immediately notify family or managers and as a result there was a delay in formal reporting and notification. Staff have been reminded of their responsibilities in this regard to reduce the risk of similar human error in the future.

What have we learned?

More robust and up-to-date information required prior to each respite admission. Remind all social care staff of the importance of following systems which are in place to support risk. Reporting incidents to senior staff in a more timely manner.



Jo Robinson
Director Community Health and Social Care Services

Infrastructure Services



John Smith
Director Infrastructure Services

Commercial Street Re-flagging

Complainant unhappy with proposed works to reflag North Commercial Street being undertaken during the spring and summer months as they were concerned that their businesses would be negatively affected. The works were originally programmed for the previous year but were delayed to allow new businesses 12 months to establish. The nature of the works meant that current methods could not be undertaken in wet and/or winter weather.

What have we learned?

Communication and consultation were the key to successfully answering the fears raised. A liaison officer was appointed to be in daily contact with the businesses to relay information to them and be able to hear and answer their fears.

Development Services

Mutual Exchange

A tenant complained about the condition of their property and repairs required. On investigation the tenant had undertaken a mutual exchange (swapped houses with another tenant) but had not fully understood the tenant's responsibilities of an exchange and how that differed from an allocation. This was clarified to the tenant in writing. Repairs were completed within timescales.

What have we learned?

As a result of regular complaint monitoring, our Management Team reviewed and amended the Mutual Exchange Policy and the published information on exchanges on our website. Also ensuring that staff teams were aware.



Neil Grant
Director Development Services

Corporate Services



Christine Ferguson
Director Corporate Services

Days in handling complaints

A number of complaints handled by Corporate Services in 2018/19 were partially upheld due to a failure to provide either a timely service or a timely response to the complaint. The causes of the delay were two fold; first a lack of resource in the Council's Legal Services Team to do the work due to vacant posts and second the complexity of the complaint leading to lengthy correspondence with the complainant and other services across the Council.

What have we learned?

The dissatisfaction expressed by complainants regarding the delay was in part due to the lack of any response or communication regarding the progress being made with handling the complaint or any indication of when the issue would be addressed or the service provided.

This does not sit well with our Customer First commitments to our customers and staff have been reminded of the need to keep customers informed regarding any issues raised and to escalate issues to more senior members of staff when there are difficulties in meeting timescales and customers' expectations.

Looking ahead

Christine Ferguson Director Corporate Services

The way that Council services are provided is changing. People expect to be able to access comprehensive information and services electronically and to be more in control of how services are provided.

What's next?

All areas of the Council are working to continuously improve service provision to meet the needs and aspirations of the community. We need to keep in touch with communities to have a better understanding of their expectations and ideas for how services can be improved. Responding to complaints and learning from issues raised with us is an important part of that dialogue.

Helen Budge Director Children's Services

As we provide statutory services to the children, young people and their families across Shetland we value the feedback from those we provide services to on a daily basis. Complaints are a very important part of how we can learn and develop our services to improve how we work to best meet the needs of children and young people and help them reach their potential.

What's next?

There are improvements being implemented which have resulted from complaints. We will continue to strive to provide excellent services by working well together with our service users and continuing to take personal responsibility looking ahead.

John Smith Director Infrastructure Services

Picking up the bins, running the ferries, looking after the roads along with many other front-line services across Shetland remain very important to people's everyday lives. Those services have to keep going, day in, day out. They also have to think about how they need to change as the world around us changes, new technologies become available, new issues and ideas emerge.

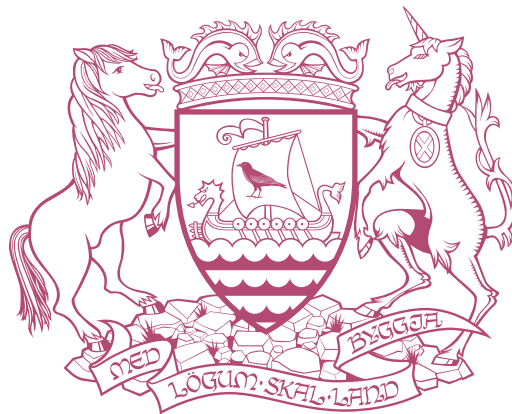
What's next?

Carbon reduction is an area we have been working on for some time but know in future years will require additional work. It is becoming an increasingly important matter for everyone, inside and outside the Council and an area where progress and success can only be achieved in partnerships.

Communication with staff, service users and communities is key to find out how we can best co-operate. We know that making changes will increase the number of questions we get, some of these will be from people dissatisfied or unsure about those changes. It will be very important to keep the pledges we have made in Customer First and the Council Values at the forefront of our thinking and actions.

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



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