

CABINET MEETING: 28 SEPTEMBER 2022

CARDIFF COUNCIL ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2021 - 22

**FINANCE, MODERNISATION AND PERFORMANCE
(COUNCILLOR CHRIS WEAVER)**

AGENDA ITEM: 7

Reason for this Report

1. To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022. The statistics for corporate complaints are set out by service area.

Background

2. Complaints provide valuable information about how we are performing and what our customers think about our services. Most people who complain tell us what we have done wrong and how we can do better; we use this information to improve our services, strengthen our relationships with customers and make better use of our resources. Publishing this annual report demonstrates the Council's commitment to transparency and a positive approach to dealing with and learning from complaints.
3. The Council's complaints procedure reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints. This was further supported by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Complaints Managers record information about the number of complaints they have received and how quickly they acknowledged and responded to the complaints. This information is submitted to the Corporate Complaints Team at the end of each quarter. The Corporate Complaints Team use this information to ensure that the complaints policy is being adhered to. Meanwhile, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales captures detailed information regarding complaints against the Council which is included in his annual report.

Complaints

4. A total of 3,633 (Corporate) complaints were recorded during 2021/22. This is an 43.2% increase from the previous year, when 2,537 complaints were recorded.

Compliments

5. As an organization, we receive many positive comments about our staff and the services we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important to capture as knowing where things are perhaps not working. We therefore keep a record of the compliments we receive as well as the complaints. Good practice and learning can then be circulated across the Council.
6. A total of 1,487 compliments were recorded during 2021/22. This is an 22.2% decrease from the previous year, when 1,912 compliments were recorded.

Ombudsman Complaints

7. Recommendations in Ombudsman reports and observations about our strengths and weaknesses help us improve our processes. The Ombudsman closed 159 cases involving Cardiff Council in 2021/22 compared to 100 cases in 2020/21. In her annual letter to the Council, the Ombudsman has remarked that it is likely that complaints about “public services in general, were suppressed during the pandemic, and we are now starting to see the expected ‘rebound’ effect”.
8. Of the 159 cases closed by the Ombudsman, 40 were referred back to the Council as premature (defined as when the council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). 50 cases were closed by the Ombudsman after initial consideration and with no further action required by the Council (no evidence of maladministration or service failure). A further 39 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council to settle the complaint and 24 cases were out of the Ombudsman’s jurisdiction. Of the 159 cases involving Cardiff Council, just 6 were accepted for further investigation by the Ombudsman during 2021/22.

Reason for Recommendations

9. To enable Cabinet to have corporate overview of the complaints and compliments process during 2021/22 and to note the information contained within the report.

Financial Implications

10. This report has no direct financial implications. Any financial implications of future changes made to improve processes and learn from complaints will need to be met from existing resources.

Legal Implications

11. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

HR Implications

12. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

Property Implications

13. There are no property implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of the report.

SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Isabelle Bignall Chief Digital Officer
	22 September 2022

The following appendix is attached:

Appendix A –Cardiff Council Annual Complaints & Compliments Report 2021-22