

Aberdeenshire Council Complaints performance report Q4 January – March 2016

Aberdeenshire Council is publishing its performance of complaints handling to provide assurance in relation to our performance, to deliver continuous improvement and to assist in benchmarking between local authorities. Reporting of complaints is monitored by Audit Scotland in conjunction with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and in line with the principles of the Best Value arrangements.

The Council's Complaints Procedure and the performance indicators below adhere to the requirements set out by the SPSO's Model Complaints Handling Procedure.

The Council aims to resolve complaints quickly and close to where the service is provided:

- Front Line stage (Stage one) complaints could mean immediate action to resolve the problem or complaints which are resolved in no more than five working days.
- Investigation stage (Stage two) deals with two types of complaints: those that have not been resolved at Stage 1 and those that are complex and require detailed investigation.
- After the Council has fully investigated the complaint, and if the customer is still not satisfied with the decision or the way the Council dealt with the complaint, then it can be referred onto the SPSO.

Our Complaints Performance

We will publish complaints performance information quarterly and annually.

The following complaints management performance information outlines the Council's performance for the third quarter of 2015/16 between 1 January and 31 March 2016.

How many customer complaints did we receive?

- We received and closed **486** customer complaints.
- **300** (62%) complaints were handled at stage one
- **186** (38%) complaints were handled at stage two.

What was the outcome of stage one complaints?

- We upheld **81** (27%) stage one complaints.
- We partially upheld **17** (6%) stage one complaints.
- We did not uphold **202** (67%) stage one complaints.

What was the outcome of stage two complaints?

- We upheld **35** (19%) stage two complaints
- We partially upheld **17** (9%) stage two complaints
- We did not uphold **134** (72%) stage two complaints.

Our timescales – Stage One Complaints

We aim to respond to stage one complaints within 5 working days.

- We closed **254** (85%) stage one complaints within 5 working days.
- The average time to respond to stage one complaints was **3.76** working days.

Our timescales – Stage Two Complaints

We aim to respond to stage two complaints within 20 working days.

- We closed **170** (91%) stage two complaints within 20 working days
- The average time to respond to stage two complaints was **17.41** working days

Why Customers Complained

The highest volume of complaints handled related to:

- Complaints about the Housing service (**130** complaints)
Most complaints regards: Service standards including length of time for repair and delayed provision of service
- Complaints about the Waste service (**92** complaints)
Most complaints regards: Missed Refuse & Recycling Collections
- Complaints about Roads & Landscape (**84** complaints)
Most complaints regards: Traffic Management and Road Safety
- Complaints about Education & Children's services (**68** complaints)
Most complaints regards: Disagreements with schools handling and communication of issues

We will publish more detail on why customers complain and on complaint trends in our Annual report for 2015/2016.

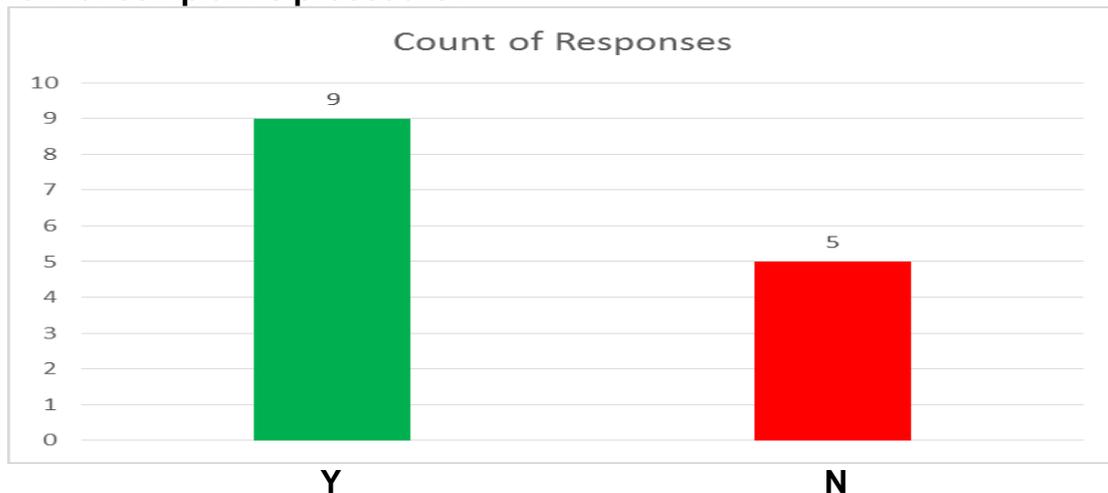
Customer Satisfaction with our Complaints Procedure

We welcome feedback from customers on our complaints procedure. You can give us feedback about our complaints procedure by phone, face to face, in writing or on-line.

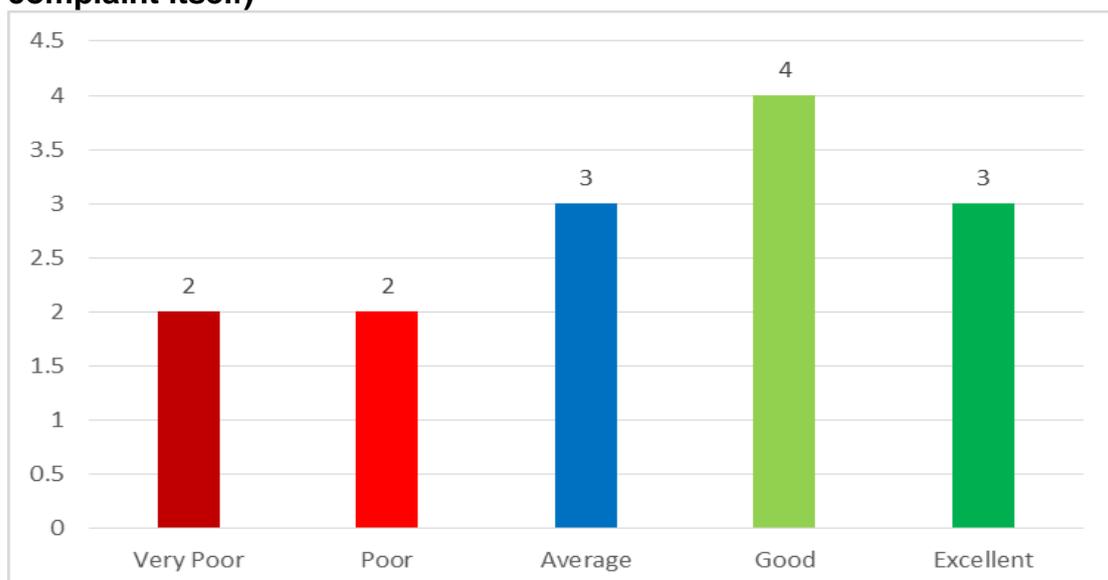
We asked the complainants we responded to by email, 5 questions to help us review the complaints handling process itself, rather than the outcome of the complaint. The following graphs show data collected starting from January – March 2016. A total of **14** surveys.

Please note – On analysis we continue to find that, although we ask complainants to rate their experience with the way in which their complaint was handled and not about the complaint itself, this is not always understood or adhered to and this reflects in the comments and results.

Q1: Before you contacted us, were you aware that the council had a formal complaints procedure?



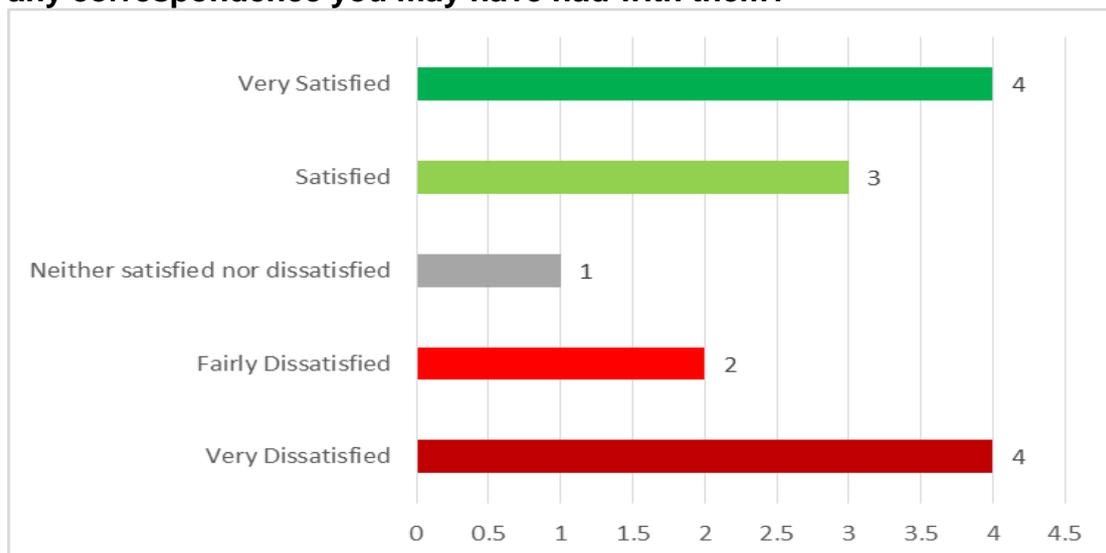
Q2: Aberdeenshire council is committed to providing excellent customer services, how would you rate your overall experience of the complaints procedure? (Please note: we are asking you to rate your experience with the way in which your complaint was handled and not about the complaint itself)



Q3: Were you satisfied with how easy it was to make a complaint?



Q4: How satisfied were you with the service provided by the Officer in any correspondence you may have had with them?



Q5: Can you suggest any improvements we could make to this service/other comments?

- Not if you carry on like this. I was impressed.
- Communicate with the people responsible for gritting our streets and pavements to make sure the job gets done.
- A clear protocol on who handles the complaint and how.
- Construct the Council website to reflect a straight forward procedure, which identifies an individual with the ability to resolve complaints with expedience and satisfaction.
- My complaint was dealt with politely, quickly and efficiently. Correspondence was to the point, polite and informative.