

1. Directorate and Services

Diagram of Directorate and Service Framework



Brief description of Directorate and Service Framework

There are: 2 Key Services, with 18 Service Departments. Head of service for Education and Lifelong Learning - Keri Cole. Head of service for Head of Education Planning, Strategy and Resource - Sue Richards.

2. Number of complaints by stage type, service, and targets met

Summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	2	1	50%
Stage 2	2	2	100%
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	1	1	100%
Totals	5	4	80%

Summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Catering	1	0	0%
Administration	1	1	100%
Totals	2	1	50%

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Scrutiny Meeting	1	1	100%
School Admissions	1	1	100%
Totals	2	2	100%

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Administration	1	1	100%
Totals	1	1	100%

How the complaints were received

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	0	0	0
Email	1	2	0
Letter	1	0	1
On-line	0	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Totals	2	2	1

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Education Customer Service and Complaints officer on a dedicated database.

Where target response times were not met, it has been identified that this was due to the relevant dept. making numerous attempts to contact parent for further information to assist with the investigation (email, telephone, and voicemail). Parent failed to make contact and as a result, the response was issued after 11 working days, not the standard 10-day response timescale for a Stage 1 complaint.

3. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

Schools have their own complaints policy/process that must be dealt with by the school. However, the L.A may provide advice and guidance on the School based policy but direct complainants back to the school for response.

All governing bodies are required by law to have a procedure in place for dealing with complaints from parents, pupils, members of staff, governors, members of the local community and others in relation to matters for which the governing body has statutory responsibility.

- Catering – Lack of school meals
- Scrutiny meeting – Role of LA officers attending
- School admissions – Notification to new school following successful transfer request
- Administration – Disagreed with the outcome of a Stage C school-based complaint

4. Number by Category (Commissioner Case Type)

Complaints by Commissioner Case Type, for prescribed Categories

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	0
2 Decision Making	1
3 Delay in Service Provision	0
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	0
5a Following Council Policies	0
5b Following relevant Legislation	0
6 Accessibility of Services	1
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	0
8 Quality of Work	0
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	2
11 Combination of categories	1
Totals	5

5. Number by Outcome and lessons learned comments

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Catering	0	1
Scrutiny function	0	1
Schools Admission	1	0
Administration	0	2
Totals	1	4

Stage 1 Complaint - Category 6 Accessibility of Services. (No access to school meal provision).

Complaint received from parent regarding school running out of meals at lunch time. The parent explained that the child received free school meals but because the of school ran out of meals for a period of 3 days, the parent has now provided a packed lunch. The Parent states she is aware that her child is not the only one going hungry due to food shortages.

In response the Cook In Charge confirmed the kitchen has never ran out of food, and could it be that the child may not have liked the food choices remaining.

The Cook/team of catering staff always encourage pupils to approach them first thing in the morning so they can pre-order the choice for that day, which allows the staff to prepare and store these items until the pupil approaches the counter for service. The investigating officer apologised if the child was not aware of this.

The deadline for our response was 24th September. The catering dept. made numerous attempts to contact parent for further information to assist with the investigation (email, telephone, and voicemail) but were unsuccessful and so the final response was then issued on 27th September.

Actions - While there was no further action taken with this complaint, staff have been reminded of the importance to adhere to the response timescales, and the importance of notifying the complainant if we expect to exceed these.

Monitoring - Ensure all responses are sent via the Education Complaints Officer. This enables an improved/centralised monitoring of timescales.

Stage 2 Complaint (Scrutiny Meeting) Category 2 Decision Making

A complaint was received regarding the role and participation of officers at a Scrutiny meeting. In summary the complainant was concerned that the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee were unduly influenced by officers at the meeting and an incorrect statement regarding a planning issue was made by an officer.

The complaint was investigated by a senior officer within the council who was not present at the meeting but was able to view the recording of the meeting in its entirety. The investigation found that there was a full and frank debate about all aspects of the proposals with detailed questions raised by members and full responses provided. Both members and officers were permitted to speak at various stages during the debate and in relation to the motions proposed.

Having regard to all of the circumstances, the review concluded that the participation of officers at the meeting did not go beyond their role and they gave clarity on the processes and procedures followed on the proposals under discussion up to that point in time. This was clarified by reference to the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules set out in the constitution. The review also concluded that the advice given on a planning matter was not incorrect. The complaint was not upheld.

Stage 2 Complaint – Category 11 Combination of categories. Late application by parents and human error as staff failed to email school confirming placement.

Unfortunately, this child's application form was received after the closing date for school placement. All places available were allocated in the first round of admissions. As such, the child's name was not included on this list of children allocated a place.

The family appealed and the hearing took place during the summer holidays, schools are unfortunately not available for contact during this time. Emails are sent to schools during the holidays advising of any further pupils, however, they will not open these until the first day of term. Schools then normally make contact with parents to arrange a start date. In this child's case, an

email was not sent due to human error, however, when the family arrived at the school with their child, contact was made with the admissions team and the matter was resolved quickly, with the school admitting the child immediately.

This was an unusual case as the admissions officer originally dealing with the case was on maternity leave. The officer responsible for taking over the case was unaware the new school had not been notified of the placement and as result, this caused confusion when the child attended her new school in September.

Actions - The admission team has taken note of this human error and staff have been reminded that there must always be an effective line of communication to ensure instances like this do not happen again.

Monitoring - Handover meetings are undertaken when staff take a planned period of leave. Workload is discussed and officers are informed of any outstanding cases that require action/follow-up.

Stage 1/2 Complaint - Category 10 Compliance with Complaints procedure.

The complainant made a request for an independent investigation into the decision of a school's complaint committee (members from the Governing Body) and LA complaints staff following a Stage C hearing (final process of a school-based complaint).

Stage 1 - Parent unhappy with the outcome reached by governors following a Stage C hearing. Parent made a request for the LA to investigate.

The complaints officer at the time addressed the points raised within the correspondence but explained that the LA was unable to proceed with the request to conduct an independent review of the governor's decision as there is no appeal to the Governing Body's decision; Welsh Government circular 011/2012 Complaints procedure for school governing bodies Wales, page 31 paragraph 6.20: 'the governing body complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints. The complaint was upheld on the grounds that the complaints officer carried out an appropriate investigation within the realms of their responsibility as an Education Officer and in line with the Welsh Government procedure details stated above 'the governing body complaints committee is the final arbiter of complaints'.

Stage 2 – Parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the Stage 1 complaint and wished to progress to Stage 2 on the grounds that the LA failed to intervene with the complaint against the complaints committee. Decision was not upheld on the grounds that all local authority officers have responded to the parent appropriately and within their remit.

**Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language
Complaints that relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics**

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Age	0	0	0
Disability	0	0	0
Gender Reassignment	0	0	0
Marriage and Civil Partnership	0	0	0
Pregnancy and Maternity	0	0	0
Race	0	0	0
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	0	0	0
Sex	0	0	0
Sexual Orientation	0	0	0
Welsh Language	0	0	0
Totals	0	0	0

No specific characteristics links have been identified for this reporting period

6. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

No complaints were referred to the Ombudsman for the April to September period.