

Corporate Services

1. Number of complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference.

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	13	12	92.30%
Stage 2	5	4	80%
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	2	2	100%
Totals	20	18	

Table showing how the complaints were received.

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Telephone	2	0	0
Email	7	4	2
Letter	0	0	0
On-line	3	0	0
Contact Centre	0	0	0
Other	1	1	0
Totals	13	5	2

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type.

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Customer Services	4	3	75%
Corporate Finance	8	7	87.50%
Other – Combined	1	1	100%
Totals	13	11	

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Legal Services	3	3	100%
Corporate Finance	1	1	100%
Other – Combined	1	0	
Totals	5	4	

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Corporate Finance	1	1	100%
Other - Combined	1	1	100%
Totals	2	2	

Corporate Services complaints which are not Corporate Finance comprises of 3 for Legal Services which all dealt with as stage 2, and 4 complaints for Customer Services which 3 were dealt with as stage 1 and 1 stage 2.

The target was met on all complaints for Legal Services and Customer Services
 In relation to Corporate Finance one target date was not met for a stage 1 due to a combination of cost of Living payments taking priority, other urgent service delivery pressures and staff taking annual leave. There was also 1 stage 2 target date missed due to the number of responses being collated and other work pressures which led to an overall delay in all responses being received on time.

2. Key complaints - Identified by Type or Theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

There have been no trends identified within corporate services and the complaints cover a range of issues including the following:-

Customer Services – Switchboard not answering the telephone for a long period, Officers not being available to speak to staff at main reception, Officers not answering their phones or returning calls when messages have been left, The criteria for qualifying for blue badges and also vehicles parked in the disabled bays and not displaying blue badge in council car park.

Legal Services – Disability discrimination complaint dealt with on behalf of the Economy and Environment Directorate where correspondence had not been sent as requested in a specific format, Dissatisfaction about FOI appeal and delay in responding to respond to the complaint, alleged Misinterpretation of Legal deeds resulting in grant being delayed.

There were no particular themes, of repetitive or pertinent complaints received in relation to Corporate Finance. For this period, the Council Tax Section received the most complaints x 10, Housing Benefits x 1, Accountancy x 1 and Other - Combined x 1.

3. Number by of Complaints by Category

Table showing 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	4
3 Delay in Service Provision	6
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	0
5a Following Council Policies	
5b Following relevant Legislation	3
6 Accessibility of Services	2
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	3
8 Quality of Work	1
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	0
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	0
11 Combination of categories	1
Totals	20

4. Number of Complaints by Outcome and Lessons Learned

Table showing number of complaints Upheld and Not Upheld

Service	Upheld	Not Upheld
Customer Services	1	3
Corporate Finance	7	6
Legal services	1	2
Totals	9	11

The following table shows examples of lessons learned, with comments on key findings, resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

Nature of Complaint	Lessons Learned	Category
Stage 1: Council Tax – Complaint re communications received from CCBC resulting in a Court Summons being issued against the complainant, causing distress, impacting their credit rating and reputational damage. In addition experienced poor service in trying to contact the Council due to phone line issues and calls being dropped.	Despite staff being given written instructions by a Team Leader about the recovery action being taken during September which included court summonses being issued on 26/09/22, this council tax payer was wrongly advised they had until the end of September to pay their overdue monthly instalments to avoid further action and have their account reset to bill stage and their future monthly instalment plan reinstated. The Team Leader has reminded staff of the importance of digesting and understanding all instructions issued about work deadlines that may impact our customers. In mitigation, the Team has been dealing with Cost-of-Living Support payments to over 66,000 households alongside their full-time roles this year.	7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information
Stage 1: Accountancy - Complainant being issued with a cheque on 2 separate occasions with the surname excluded. Was not able to pay cheque into her bank account because of this and had previously advised the Authority of this exclusion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of software updates to ensure that they have been applied correctly. 2. Ensure staff review the cheques produced to ensure they are correct prior to issue. 	8 Quality of work
Stage 1: Combined (Customer Services/CTax) – Complainant sent cheque for April’s CT payment and there was a delay in processing this. This happened before and 2 months cheques went through together. No one appears to be answering his calls when querying these issues and all he	<p>There were no lessons to be learned on the CTAX issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone lines were very busy at the time. We apologised and to avoid holding the line, we suggested he call back later in the day when we tend to receive fewer calls. • If he were to continue to post us cheque payments, we asked him to send future payments on or before the due date which is the 15th of each month to allow more time for his cheques to be processed before our reminder 	7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information

<p>gets is a text messages saying he has not paid. Complainant angry with the whole service and sick of excuses why his calls are not answered.</p>	<p>letters are issued just over 2 weeks later. As an alternative to overcome the problem of him receiving his pension towards the end of each month we suggested a DD on the 25th of each month which was subsequently set up and is ongoing at this time.</p>	
<p>Stage 1: Council Tax – Complaint re incorrect advice given and Court Summons being issued incorrectly regarding non payment of council tax</p>	<p>Despite staff being given written instructions by a Team Leader about the recovery action being taken during September which included court summonses being issued on 26/09/22, this council tax payer was wrongly advised they had until the end of September to pay their overdue monthly instalments to avoid further action and have their account reset to bill stage and their future monthly instalment plan reinstated. The Team Leader has reminded staff of the importance of digesting and understanding all instructions issued about work deadlines that may impact our customers. In mitigation, the Team has been dealing with Cost-of-Living Support payments to over 66,000 households alongside their full-time roles this year.</p>	<p>7 Clarity/ Accuracy/ Timeliness of information</p>
<p>Stage 1 & escalated to Stage 2: Council Tax - CTax refund not given After many conversations between complainant and section the refund was never mentioned until 'by chance'. Complainant asked why we never refunded this (over 10 months ago). The section never contacted or refunded her. Complainant feels this appears to be somewhat fraudulent as we have always had contact details, we should have at least posted a cheque.</p> <p>Never received any communication at address in question from section regarding how to claim the refund, would have acted on it immediately and claimed it straight away. In addition, colleague also advised on phone that we did not have her details so no attempt was made to contact her and credit was just 'sat' on account. Complainant feels this is completely contradictory</p>	<p>Complaint upheld but compensation not justifiable as Adjustment Notice was issued in Feb 2022 advising tax payer how to claim a refund.</p>	<p>3 Delay in Service Provision</p>

to the explanation given by the Finance Manager.		
Stage 1: Council Tax - Complaint made due to the time they have had to wait to be granted a decision on the section 13a application that was made on the 31st of October 2022.	No lessons learned. As explained in the Stage 1 response, the delay in reaching a determination was caused partly by the need to exhaust all other ways of reducing the amount of council tax payable, and more importantly, by officers having to prioritise the WG Cost of Living Support and Winter Fuel Payment Schemes which involved tens of thousands of households with the Council's area against the backdrop of ever increasing workloads caused by various WG and UK Government initiatives and the cost of living crisis in general.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Stage 1: Customer Services – Complaint was concerning Main Switchboard not answering the telephone for a long period.	A Thorough investigation and testing was undertaken both internally and with telephony supplier but were not able to identify, what happened, it appears this was an isolated incident caused by a blip on the system. Our queues are also constantly monitored by managers to ensure calls are being dealt with efficiently.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Stage 2: Legal Services – Complaint about the correspondence being dealt with as a FOI appeal rather than a formal complaint	To improve on the checks and balances already in place to support the process and compliance with timeframes.	2 Decision Making

5. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

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

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

Service Area	Date received	Decision
Benefits	06/04/22 went into junk emails received then on 31/05/22	Early Resolution – Apologise and confirm junk emails will be monitored in future.
Council Tax	14/10/22	Not Investigating
Council Tax	01/02/23	Early Resolution – The Council will write to the complainant within 30 working days, and provide a detailed summary of the current outstanding Council Tax balance, and the amounts going forward
Council Tax	10/02/23	Not Investigating
Legal Services	17/2/23	Early Resolution – To apologise within 4 weeks for failing to advise that it has no powers to investigate the concerns about elected members and for failing to promptly signpost Complainant to the Ombudsman

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