

**COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD
OCTOBER 2005 – MARCH 2006**

ITEM

LEAD OFFICER:	Jane Salt
REPORT AUTHOR:	Marissa Joyce
SUMMARY:	<p>The Council has had a written procedure for the resolution of customers formal complaints since 1992, with revisions in 1995, 1997 and 2000. The procedure was based on the Local Government Ombudsman's published recommendations for best practice on local authority complaints procedures.</p> <p>However, it was becoming apparent from our Customer satisfaction surveys that not all complaints and indeed comments and compliments received were being recorded. Therefore, the Complaints Procedure and method of recording this valuable feedback was changed in October 2005. Whilst it is not possible for one person to deal with all the complaints that come into the Council, the Customer Relations Officer's role was developed to allow all departments to feedback to a central Officer who could then compile and analyse the data with a view to spotting recurrent themes and enable speedy corrective action to be taken. This would then inform training and development in Copeland Direct and customer service across the Authority. The Customer Relations Officer also liaises with and supports departments when dealing with complaints, encouraging them to see Customer comments, compliments and complaints as a positive way of receiving customer feedback and an opportunity to improve customer services through the lessons learnt.</p> <p>In the second half of the year there were 106 complaints recorded compared to 67 in the first half-year. However, 31 complaints relate to Leisure Services, which prior to the change in procedure would not have been recorded centrally.</p> <p>£25 has been paid and £330.00 has been written off to compensate for distress and/or inconvenience.</p> <p>For further details see appendix.</p> <p>Please note these figures do not include anonymous complaints, complaints about Councillors, complaints about a Policy or initial requests for a service.</p>

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
<p>CUSTOMER SERVICES</p> <p>Landlord complaining about the poor service by Revs and Bens. Apology, system problem which was corrected.</p> <p>Alleging we hadn't responded to his letter. Checked and no outstanding correspondence so we wrote requesting further information.</p> <p>Complainant received an incorrect business Rates Bill, discussed it with the Chief Exec who requested immediate action, which the department failed to act upon.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes</p> <p>No, the complainant didn't respond to our letter</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Unknown</p> <p>Yes, £25 paid in compensation</p>	<p>45</p>

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>Cllr contacted Customer Services Manager re a complaint he'd received about staff attitude at reception re refusal to let him speak to a Benefits Officer, or offer a private room. Principles of Copeland Direct explained to him and apology given</p>	√		<p>Yes, review the way Benefits enquiries are dealt with at reception.</p>	Yes	
<p>Complaining recovery action taken when account paid in full. We found the payments had been made to the old number, system error.</p>	√		<p>Yes, fix found.</p>	No	
<p>Complained waited 3 months for a benefit rent refund. We were awaiting a fix from Academy. Cheque issued immediately.</p>	√		<p>Yes, workaround found whilst awaiting fix from Academy (subsequently received)</p>	Yes.	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(Cust Services cont'd) Unhappy with Officer attitude. Apologised and discussed with the Officer.</p> <p>Payment not credited to C tax account and Recovery action taken. Apology issued.</p> <p>Unhappy with the wording on standard C Tax reminder. Apology and letters reviewed.</p> <p>Delay in crediting payment led to reminder being issued. Apology.</p> <p>Complaining we hadn't recorded his pension increase. Apology, conversion error.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, Customer Service training need.</p> <p>Yes, Finance to check system to cancel invoices.</p> <p>Yes, wording changed.</p> <p>Yes, changes to procedure.</p> <p>Yes, conversion error amended.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No, although nothing further we could do.</p> <p>Yes</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(Cust Services cont'd) Complaint about Salary deduction not posted to C Tax account.</p> <p>Delay in actioning e-mail received via Copeland Direct. Apology.</p> <p>Customer commented that we should train out of hours rather than close on Wed am.</p> <p>Unhappy with the wording on overpayment letter re a deceased person. Apology</p> <p>Complaining details omitted from assessment letter. Apology for clerical error</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, account not marked correctly.</p> <p>Yes, will be noted for new version of Contact Central.</p> <p>Head of Service advised.</p> <p>Yes, wording changed to sympathise.</p> <p>No, clerical error.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(Cust Services cont'd) Delay in actioning policy change re reduction in discount for second homes led to a revised bill for 2 years.</p> <p>10-month delay in notifying him of need to pay Ctax. He went to the press. Apology and offer to pay in instalments with this years bill.</p> <p>Complaint Ctax paid refunded and then we asked for more. Apology, but date of sale of property changed, hence further bill issued.</p> <p>Delay in responding to a letter requesting definition of unfurnished. Apology clerical error.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, £330.00 for 2004/05 increase written off.</p> <p>Yes, reminded staff of procedures on benefit reviews.</p> <p>No</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No, although he should have been aware he had something to pay.</p> <p>No, but his dispute should be with his buyer not the Council.</p> <p>Yes</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(Cust Services cont'd) Complaining 2 years bills received at same time. Apology 2005/06 bill was suppressed.</p> <p>Complaining not responsible for the Business Rates debt we are recovering. We asked for proof otherwise which he couldn't supply.</p> <p>23 separate complaints about the delay in processing a Benefit claim or change of circumstances. All were fast tracked and complainants notified.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, check suppressions regularly.</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes, Recovery Plan implemented and Process Improvement Team consulted.</p>	<p>Yes, agreed to pay in monthly instalments with this year's bill.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Varied.</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
<p>FINANCE AND BUSINESS</p> <p>Complaining unable to contact Fraud section after 4pm. Apology.</p> <p>Complaining received a final demand when invoice had been paid.</p> <p>Neighbours from adjacent buildings to Copeland Centre complaining about noise nuisance from kids on car park skateboarding etc.</p> <p>Complaint to Audit that Councils financial systems are not robust.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, office to be manned during office hours. Fraud hotline to be installed shortly (11/05)</p> <p>Yes, review procedure for updating external batches to Sundry debtors.</p> <p>Yes, held a meeting with residents and addressed their concerns.</p> <p>Yes, already picked up for the Audit review in January and the draft Cash receipting audit report.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	<p>10</p>

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
(Finance cont'd) Complaining not able to use travel tokens to buy petrol. Explained for public transport only.	√		No	Yes	
Complaining she can't use the old tokens and requested we re-imburse her.	√		No	No, but we explained the tokens are very old and unable to do anymore.	
Complaining tokens not issued in Lowca, requested this be reviewed.	√		Agreed we will review for next year.	Yes	
Complaining hadn't received a replacement bus pass and that she had to pay £5. Nowcard said waiting to be done.	√		No	No, slammed the phone down on us but we were unable to do anymore.	
Finance took a complaint from someone held for 25 mins whilst trying to get through to Copeland Direct.	√		No, but apologised and Cust Service Manager explained very short staffed that particular day	Yes	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
<p>(Finance cont'd) Millom resident complaining that Barrow station wouldn't accept the vouchers towards a railcard. We explained that Barrow isn't in Copeland so she needs to go to a station within Copeland.</p>	√		No	Yes	2
<p>LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC</p> <p>Complaint we are not keeping copies of LDNPA Modification orders for footpaths</p>	√		No	No, although we agreed to keep them on file in future we are not legally required to do so.	
<p>Complaint we were taking too long to deal with a Parish Boundary review.</p>	√		No, we were aware of the delay, but it's a resource issue.	Yes, Officer asked to make it a priority	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
POLICY AND PERFORMANCE					2
Involvement in a complaint about Access to the Copeland Centre for wheelchair users	√		Yes, a temporary measure of a sign and buzzer on the main door for assistance until funds allow a major remodelling of the entrance.	Yes	
Complaint about the incorrect number published in Local Pages	√		Yes, contacted the paper to publish correct number	Yes	
REGENERATION					4
Complaint unable to access the Harbour Gallery at the Beacon due to a private room booking.	√		No	Yes, free tickets issued to compensate.	
Complaint to Planning about flooding on new build.	√		No	No, but referred back to his Solicitor for negligence on search.	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
(Regen cont'd) Complaint from Lamplugh Parish council re use of Inglenook Caravan Park	√		Ongoing Enforcement issue subject to Committee report	Yes	
Complaint about Planning issues in Millom	√		No	No, but doing all we can.	
LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES					43
Complaint about advice received re Flooding and Coastal defence	√		To improve communications with Parish Council	Yes	
Complaint about abandoned show at the Civic Hall	√		Unavoidable	Yes, complimentary tickets given for a future show.	
Show cancelled due to clashing with local Rugby League final	√		Yes, check dates of local future events in Copeland	Yes, show to be rescheduled and original tickets will be honoured	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(L & E Services cont'd)</p> <p>Sports centre male showers cold.</p> <p>Sports centre drinks machine 10p increase</p> <p>Swimming Pool – complaint about prices and cold showers</p> <p>Complaint the bottom of the Pool was dirty.</p> <p>Complaint the ladies toilets at the Pool were dirty</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Boiler reported and repaired.</p> <p>No, but noted.</p> <p>Yes, showers cold because had been left running, investigate push button showers. Prices comparable with other pools</p> <p>Explained its swept twice a week but impossible to keep clean at all times</p> <p>Again explained cleaned twice daily and when needed. Need to check more regularly</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No, increased across all leisure services.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, pool cleaned</p> <p>Yes, toilets cleaned.</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
(L & E cont'd) Complaint about a slippery footpath at Strand St	√		Yes, ensure cleansing schedule is adequate for Autumn, falling leaves etc	Yes	
Complaint about conditions of buildings in Town centre.	√		Yes, develop contacts with property owners	Yes	
Complaint Enforcement Officers parking on urban clearway	√		Yes, spoke to Officers concerned	Yes	
Complaint about Enforcement Officers attitude when questioned re parking restrictions on Market days	√		Yes, spoke to Officer concerned	Yes	
Complaint about Enforcement Officers attitude whilst driving a Council vehicle.	√		Yes, spoke to Officer concerned	No, Officer denied the allegations	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
(L & E cont'd) Complaint about street cleanliness at Brisco Mount	√		Yes, liaise with Copeland Homes re cleansing schedule	Yes	
Complaint about delay in collecting bags left after a beach clean at Drigg	√		Yes, communicate timescales to Customers	Yes, picked up within timescale	
Complaint about litter and general appearance of A595	√		Yes, review cleansing schedule	Yes	
Complaining about lack of communication re insurance claim	√		Yes, procedures reviewed	Yes	
Complaint tickets bought before the 2 for 1 offer was on re Civic Hall show	√		Yes, promotions should be offered from the beginning of ticket sales	Yes, I free ticket given fro a future show	
Lakes college complained they were charged for the use of the Civic Hall kitchen	√		Yes, in future take photographic evidence if kitchen left in mess	Yes, bill reduced although staff remained unhappy.	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
(L&E cont'd) Complaint 2 for 1 voucher not valid against another show.	√		Yes, make sure promotions are fully explained	No	
Complaint about bar open during the show.	√		No, other 218 customers were happy.	Yes, explained rules and regs of this type of show.	
Complaint from a loud, rude drunk, abusive and potentially violent customer that the show was not as advertised	√		Yes staff training required to defuse such situations	Yes, £20 refund given to calm him down then asked to leave.	
Sports centre complaint customer complaining about activity prices	√		No, prices are comparable	No	
Complaint that Sports Centre ladies showers dirty	√		Yes, clean more regularly while area awaiting re-painting	Yes, immediately cleaned	
Complaint ladies could be seen changing by staff going in the cleaning cupboard	√		Yes, staff to be reminded not to look that way when entering the cupboard	Yes, informed curtains available and staff reminded of procedures	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
(L & E cont'd) Complaint about below standard equipment in the Sports Centre	√		Yes, aero bikes may need serviced more regularly	Yes	
Complaint from a County squash player about the condition of the squash courts	√		No, Manager feels the courts are fine although staff asked to monitor the area especially when lots of children in.	Yes	
Pool – 2 complaints building too hot	√		No, explained correct temp for health and hygiene	Yes	
Pool – 3 complaints that the showers are cold and no heating on	√		Yes, boiler and air handling unit problems to be addressed ASAP.	Yes	
Non response to several e-mails requesting a replacement bin	√		Yes, close e-mail addresses for ex-employees	Yes, bin delivered.	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(L & E cont'd)</p> <p>2 Complaints about recycling site bins repeatedly left overflowing</p> <p>Complaint crew threw black box into the refuse vehicle</p> <p>Sports centre-complaints about the building being cold</p> <p>Pool – complaint about poor lighting in the car park</p> <p>Pool – complaint about the cleanliness of the ladies changing rooms deteriorating recently</p> <p>Complaint about Temptation being cancelled.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>Yes, improvements are being made</p> <p>No, must have been Doorstep collection crew</p> <p>Yes, recurrent problem with the boilers being addressed</p> <p>Yes, reported to the contractor</p> <p>Yes, discussed with cleaner</p> <p>Yes, due to damage and violence associated cancelled until further notice</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, replacement given</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes, cleaned immediately</p> <p>Yes</p>	

DEPARTMENT/ DETAIL	Resolved at STAGE 1	Resolved at STAGE 2	Lessons learnt?	Complainant satisfied?	
<p>(L & E cont'd)</p> <p>Complaint from regular users about lack of parking facilities at the Civic Hall</p> <p>Complaining a very good children's show was poorly attended.</p> <p>During "Mercury" (the group Queen tribute band) show, 20% of the customers complained about the Civics no smoking policy or the fact that the bar was closed during the act.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>No</p> <p>Yes, investigate why?</p> <p>Yes, keep the bar open during these types of shows.</p>	<p>Yes, explained limited spaces and a waiting list</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p>	
<p>TOTAL COMPLAINTS</p>	<p>106</p>				<p>106</p>

COMPLIMENTS

102 compliments recorded over the period the majority of which, 74, related to shows, exhibitions and attractions at the Civic Hall and Beacon.

The remainder included individual Officers standard of service, the quality of our published information and praise for the Councils ongoing commitment towards recycling.

All customer feedback, however received, is related to the department and if applicable, the named Officer.