

FORMAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED DURING THE PERIOD APRIL – SEPTEMBER 2005

ITEM

LEAD OFFICER:	Peter Wadsworth
REPORT AUTHOR:	Marissa Joyce
SUMMARY:	<p>The Council has had a written procedure for the resolution of customer complaints since 1992, with revisions in 1995,1997 and 2000. The procedure is based on the Local Government Ombudsman’s published recommendations for best practice on local authority complaints procedures.</p> <p>In the first half of this year there have been 67 complaints. The Customer Relations Officer resolved 45, the relevant Service Manager resolved 17 and 5 are currently still under investigation.</p> <p>£150.00 has been paid in compensation, £48.00 has been refunded because of non-collection of chargeable items within timescale and a £60 parking fine refunded.</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>

RECOMMENDATIONS	None
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DEPARTMENT	Resolved by CUSTOMER RELATIONS OFFICER	Resolved by SERVICE MANAGER STAGE 1	Resolved BY SERVICE MANAGER STAGE2	Complainant satisfied?	TOTAL
<p>BENEFITS</p> <p>Student alleging mis-informed about benefit entitlement. Found no case to answer</p> <p>Change over in systems resulted in pensioner on full benefit receiving bills for small amounts for previous years Ctax bills. Happy with apology given.</p> <p>Delay in processing then miscalculated. Complaint justified, claim recalculated resulting in £40 underpayment. Apology given, requested compen then dropped the complaint.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p>		<p>X</p> <p>√</p> <p>X</p>	<p>15</p>

<p>BENEFITS (Cont'd)</p> <p>Breach of Data Protection, gave them someone else's info in error. Complaint justified, human error, happy with apology issued to all parties.</p> <p>Delay in processing claim. Found had waited 8 weeks, happy with an apology.</p> <p>Paid cheque to tenant when had requested it be paid to Landlord. Found justified though Officer unfamiliarity with new benefits system, happy with an apology</p> <p>Delay in processing change of circumstances resulting in an overpayment. (Cont'd over...)</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>£100 compen paid against the overpayment.</p>	
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<p>BENEFITS (Cont'd)</p> <p>Found justified, 5month delay so offered £100 compen to reduce the overpayment and longer period to pay ctax instalments. Happy with this.</p> <p>Mis-informed resulting in underpayment of benefit. Found justified, system problem, apology given to complainant and her landlord, happy with this.</p> <p>Delay in processing claim and mis-informed. Found partially justified, waited 6 weeks for claim assessed. Apology given to both complainant and landlord. Happy to close</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>√</p>	
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<p>BENEFITS (Cont'd)</p> <p>Delay in processing benefit, then underpaid. Found justified, underpaid by £50 sent out in October when system fix received.</p> <p>Landlord claiming we are discriminating against him by delaying processing his tenants claims. Couldn't provide evidence, purely hearsay, so satisfied no case to answer.</p> <p>3-month delay in sending rent cheques. Found justified, problem on new system, fix requested cheques sent with apology, happy to close.</p> <p>Delay in processing claim. Found justified waited 8 wks happy with apology.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	
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<p>BENEFITS (Cont'd)</p> <p>Delay in processing claim, causing problems with both previous and current landlords. Found justified, claim processed and apology given.</p> <p>Delay in processing claim and staff attitude. Found no case, complainant very rude and refusing to supply information needed to assess the claim.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>X</p>	
<p>COUNCIL TAX</p> <p>Had to request his Council Tax bill 3 times before receipt. Found justified, problem with some Millom bills. Accepted the bill with an apology.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>21</p>

<p>Complaining about Officer attitude when questioning recovery action taken against him. Found no case to answer, no response from complainant.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>X</p>	
<p>Direct Debit deducted after she had told us she had left the property. Found justified, happy with refund and apology given.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	
<p>Delay in refunding monies overpaid. Happy with refund and apology.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	
<p>No bill received so Direct debit taken without notifying of new amount. Found justified, another Millom address, happy with bill and an apology.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	
<p>Second complaint same as above.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	

Third complaint as above	√			√	
New customer complaining about Officer attitude when trying to set up Direct Debit to pay his Ctax. Found justified, explanation and apology accepted.	√			√	
Complaining about recovery action, claiming mis-informed about an exemption. Found partially justified, recovery action put on hold		√		√	
Complaining received a Summons but never received a bill or any correspondence from the Council since moving 3 months earlier. I found copies on the system so unable to explain why he hasn't received them.	√			X	

<p>Received 3 copies of her Council Tax bill concerned about the cost to the taxpayer. Found justified, system error, happy with apology and thanks for letting us know.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	
<p>Employee complaining her Wages deductions hadn't been posted to her account, reminder received. Found justified, happy with new bill showing deductions had been posted and an apology.</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	
<p>Complaining too quick to take recovery action taken whilst in correspondence and making attempts to pay. Found justified, happy with apology and recovery action put on hold.</p>		<p>√</p>		<p>√</p>	

<p>Received Summons to Court when had already paid on reminder. Found justified, human error, happy with an apology and compen for time and trouble attending court.</p>		√		√ £50 compen	
<p>Complaining payments made not recorded. Found justified delay in posting some payments to the accounts. Happy with an apology.</p>	√			√	
<p>Delay in cancelling Direct Debit for business rates. Found justified, delay in closing the account. Happy with a refund and an apology.</p>		√		√	
<p>Complaining third party allowed to change her circumstances resulting in her loosing a discount. Found partially</p>		√		X	

<p>justified, apology given to which she didn't respond.</p> <p>Alleging recovery action taken in error. No case to answer, explained fully justified in our actions but he still wasn't satisfied.</p> <p>Second case as above. No case to answer, found to be her records, which were wrong. We accepted her apology.</p> <p>Alleging mis-informed about rural rate relief and staff attitude. Found justified, info given and satisfied with an apology.</p> <p>Alleging recovery action taken in error and delay in responding to letters. Found partially justified, awaiting her response to Stage 1.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p>		<p>X</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>Complaint still open</p>	
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<p>CUSTOMER SERVICES</p> <p>Alleging didn't record her request for a postal vote, which led to her missing the deadline. Found justified human error, sent forms for next time and happy with an apology.</p> <p>Alleging switchboard closed early and couldn't get through on the website requested 30p refund for postage. Found partially justified, phones open but busy, problem on website, which was fixed. Happy with an apology and refund.</p> <p>Didn't record a request for white chargeable goods to be collected. Found justified, human error, happy with refund and apology.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>√ Plus 1st class stamp.</p> <p>√ £16.50 refunded</p>	<p>5</p>
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<p>Complaint about Officer attitude on the telephone, wouldn't give her name or transfer him. Found justified, unable to transfer but didn't explain why and thought didn't have to give her name. Happy with an apology.</p> <p>Alleging mis-informed about the removal of tyres fly-tipped on his land. Found justified, Officer unaware of procedure, happy with an apology.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>√</p>	
<p>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</p> <p>Concerned about environmental issues around Arlecdon. I co-ordinated a joint response with County, satisfied with CBC actions but not County and took them</p>	<p>√</p>			<p>√</p>	<p>1</p>

to the Omb, who were satisfied with County's proposals.					
FINANCE Officer attitude when she rang to ask about him about double entry on concessionary travel scheme. Found justified, admin error, happy with an apology	√			√	1
LEGAL Re us not keeping Rights of way modification orders in the Copeland offices. No case to answer, we only have to keep them during the consultation period, after that its CCC duty. Not happy complaint still under investigation	√			Complaint still under investigation	1

<p>LEISURE SERVICES</p> <p>Alleging discrimination by not allowing him to charge for swimming lessons at the pool. Found no case to answer. Happy to close</p>		√		√	1
<p>PLANNING</p> <p>Alleging maladministration of a planning application. Found no case to answer, didn't agree with the decision rather than the process.</p> <p>Re Officer breaching data protection by discussing a complaint with a third party. Found justified, Officer spoken to by Head of Service and apology given. Remained dissatisfied</p>		√		X	7

<p>Alleging not consulted on neighbors planning application. Found justified, property not on O.S. map but should have been picked up on site visit. Wouldn't have objected so happy to close with map updated and an apology.</p> <p>Alleging maladministration of a planning application. Found no case to answer, didn't agree with the decision rather than the process.</p> <p>Complaining we refused to allow him to use the name he wants for his new house. Found no case to answer, choice is ours and too many nearby properties with similar/same</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>√</p> <p>X</p> <p>Went to Ombudsman, who also found no case to answer</p> <p>√</p>	
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<p>name. (Cont'd) Agreed on an alternative, happy to close.</p> <p>Alleging not taking appropriate enforcement action against a certain developer.</p> <p>Re safety issues on site. I'm co-coordinating a joint response from CCC and CBC</p>		<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>√ Complaint still under investigation</p> <p>Complaint still under investigation</p>	
<p>WASTE MANAGEMENT</p> <p>Delay in providing a replacement bin after damaged during collection. Found justified, waited 7 weeks. Staff error, bin delivered following day and happy with an apology.</p> <p>Complaining we won't give him a wheelie bin to store his black bags in. No</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>			<p>√</p> <p>X</p>	<p>11</p>

<p>case to answer, still on black bags. Offered to sell him one, closed not happy.</p> <p>Repeatedly missed collections. Found justified, concealed location and thought neighbours bags included his. Happy with an apology.</p> <p>Repeatedly missing an assisted collection. Found partially justified, thought to be other able members in the house. Asked for clarification, then assisted resumed. Happy with an apology.</p> <p>Delay in bulk chargeable collection. Found justified, clerical error, happy with collection, a refund and an apology.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p>		<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√ £15.00 refunded</p>	
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<p>Repeatedly missing an assisted collection. Found justified, human error happy with an apology.</p> <p>Alleging collector swore at her. Found justified, didn't swear but admitted retaliated when she swore at him. Happy with an apology.</p> <p>Delay in collecting white goods. Found justified, waited 2 weeks happy with collection, refund and an apology.</p> <p>Crew refusing to attach chain to wheelie bin on an assisted collection. Found no case to answer, crew don't have time, complainant remained dissatisfied.</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>√</p> <p>£.16.50 refunded</p> <p>X</p>	
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<p>Repeatedly missing an assisted collection. Partially justified, but Mr putting it out himself most of the time so confusing the crew. Happy with clarification and an apology.</p>	√			√	
<p>Re street cleansing around Inkerman Terrace/ the Retreat, alleging not on schedule. Found partially justified, on schedule but vehicles too big to gain access. Cleaned immediately and put on schedule for manual cleanse. Happy to close.</p>		√		√	
<p>PARKS AND OPEN SPACES</p>					
<p>Referred via the Ombudsman, alleging smashed headstones in St Nicholas's churchyard to make them into plant pots. Found no case to</p>	√			X	1

<p>answer though complainant not satisfied.</p> <p>ENFORCEMENT</p> <p>Ex employee alleging Officer verbally abused her. Officer denied it, of previous good character and she had no witnesses. Thought to be personal, not satisfied.</p> <p>Alleging given a parking ticket when the machine was out of order. Found justified, clerical error hadn't marked machine as broken. Happy with a refund and apology.</p> <p>Alleging illegal notices displayed re parking restrictions on market days. Still under investigation.</p>	<p>√</p>	<p>√</p> <p>√</p>		<p>X</p> <p>√</p> <p>£60 refund</p> <p>Complaint still under investigation</p>	<p>3</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>45</p>	<p>22</p>			<p>67</p>