

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**2 JUNE 2008**

**COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS QUARTERLY REPORT**

**QUARTER 4 – 1 JANUARY TO 31 MARCH 2008**  
**AND THE YEAR 2007/08**

1. This report summarises the compliments and complaints received during quarter 4 of 2007/08 and figures for the full year 2007/08.

Compliments Received

<b>Compliments Received</b>	<b>Adult &amp; Community</b>	<b>Business &amp; Environment</b>	<b>Chief Executive</b>	<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Central</b>	<b>Total for year/quarter</b>
<b>2006/07 Total</b>	193	149	3	20	0	<b>365 (year)</b>
<b>Quarter1 2007/08</b>	276	88	6	21	4	<b>395</b>
<b>Quarter 2 2007/08</b>	277	224	15	14	2	<b>532</b>
<b>Quarter3 2007/08</b>	216	130	16	43	2	<b>407</b>
<b>Quarter 4 2007/08</b>	197	182	16	10	37	<b>442</b>
<b>Total 2007/08</b>	<b>966</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>1776</b>

Analysis and Further Information

2. The majority of compliments this quarter were again received by ACS with 45%. BES received 41% of the compliments this quarter. The rise here was particularly in relation to: household waste recycling centres, with an increase from 1 compliment in quarter 3 to 26 in quarter 4; and Trading Standards, with an increase from 54 to 76.
3. The large rise reported in FCS was due to compliments from Facilities Management not being reported through the year and all being accounted for in the fourth quarter. Compliments will now be reported on receipt, so figures will be correct for each quarter in future years.
4. The new procedure and improved recording leads to the increase in figures between 2006/07 and 2007/08. It is expected that more meaningful comparison can start to be made throughout the following year.

## Complaints Received Stages 1 - 3

Complaints Received	Adult & Community	Business & Environment	Chief Executive	Children & Young People	Finance & Central	Total for year/quarter
<b>2006/07 Total</b>	276	112	8	126	10	<b>532</b>
<b>Quarter1 2007/08</b>	86	11	4	38	1	<b>149</b>
<b>Quarter 2 2007/08</b>	159	21	6	29	1	<b>222</b>
<b>Quarter3 2007/08</b>	222	8	3	31	3	<b>267</b>
<b>Quarter 4 2007/08</b>	175	11	8	24	6	<b>224</b>
<b>Total 2007/08</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>847</b>

## Analysis and Further Information

5. ACS continues to receive the majority of complaints (78%). It is accepted that this is because of the front line services it provides. Of the 175 complaints received 36 related to Social Care and 139 to Library and Community Services.
6. A review is underway in Library Services looking at how information is being recorded. Although it is recognised that all information collected is important, part of the review will be to set the criteria of what is considered a comment rather than a complaint.
7. There has been an increase in the number of complaints received since 2006/07 - a rise of 316, or 59%. This is mostly due to improved recording across the Council. It is expected that numbers will 'level out' now systems have been in place for some time and figures can be compared more usefully next year.

## Timescales

8. During the last quarter 89% of complaints were dealt with within the target timescale (a full response within 20 working days of receipt). Performance in this area has dropped slightly from 91% in quarter 3.
9. 24 complaints took longer than 20 working days to resolve. Of these 20 were handled through the statutory procedure for Social Care complaints, which is noted for being generally of a more complex nature requiring specialist input and the involvement of other agencies and occasionally legal advice.
10. Additional reasons for delay this quarter include complainant availability and staff capacity/availability.
11. When complaints do go over timescale complainants are kept fully informed in accordance with procedures.
12. 77% of stage 1 to 3 complaints in 2006/07 were dealt with within target timescale and 23% went over timescale. There has been an improvement in this area, with 89% of complaints being dealt with within timescales during 2007/08.

## Outcomes of Complaints by Directorate

Outcomes	Adult & Community		Business & Environment		Chief Executive		Children & Young People		Finance & Central		Total for year/quarter	
	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU
<b>2006/07 Total</b>	109	136	54	67	1	5	43	62	5	8	212	278
<b>Quarter1 2007/08</b>	10	61	7	3	3	1	7	11	0	0	27	76
<b>Quarter 2 2007/08</b>	27	127	11	8	7	1	25	15	2	0	72	151
<b>Quarter3 2007/08</b>	32	192	1	7	3	0	21	8	3	0	60	207
<b>Quarter 4 2007/08</b>	78	92	2	9	1	7	10	16	4	2	95	126
<b>Total 2007/08</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>472</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>560</b>

U = Upheld/Partly Upheld NU – Not Upheld

13. 43% of complaints in quarter 4 were upheld or partly upheld, a 17% rise from the previous quarter. The majority of these fell in Library and Community Services (57) and were due to failures of IT equipment.
14. It is accepted that some complaints will be upheld, but we seek to learn from these and improve our services as a result. Some of the changes that have been made as a result of complaints are detailed in Appendix 1 'Overview of Learning Outcomes for Upheld Complaints'.
15. Annually there has been a decrease from 43% to 31% of complaints that have been upheld or partly upheld.

#### Reason for Complaint

Category	Poor Service		No Service		Delay in Service		Disagree decision/policy		Staff Attitude		Poor Communication		Personnel		Other	
	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU	U	NU
<b>2006/07 Jul - Mar*</b>	52	94	11	7	24	4	19	69	6	17	18	7	0	6	4	58
<b>Quarter1 2007/08</b>	6	24	2	9	3	2	5	25	4	5	7	0	0	1	0	10
<b>Quarter 2 2007/08</b>	31	81	5	8	6	3	14	30	6	3	10	7	0	0	0	19
<b>Quarter3 2007/08</b>	29	114	2	7	3	5	7	23	3	3	16	7	0	0	0	48
<b>Quarter 4 2007/08</b>	38	24	38	4	1	7	8	37	1	5	9	10	0	0	0	38
<b>Total 2007/08</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>115</b>

U = Upheld/Partly Upheld NU – Not Upheld

\* No statistics available for Apr - Jun 06

16. Of the 221 complaints completed this quarter, 62 related to poor service, 45 to disagree with decision/policy and 42 to no service. Just over half of these (84) were upheld or partly upheld.

17. Annually 814 stage 1 - 3 complaints were completed, with 347 (43%) of these being recorded in the category Poor Service. Of these, 30% were upheld or partly upheld.
18. Figures for 2006/07 were not available for the first quarter, but for the period July06 - Mar 07 - 396 complaints were completed, 146 (37%) of these were categorised as Poor Service and 88 (22%) as Disagree with Decision/Policy. 35% of the 'Poor Service' complaints were upheld/partly upheld and 22% of the 'Disagree with Decision/Policy' complaints were upheld/partly upheld.

### Complaints Process

19. During the last quarter 205 complaints were received at stage one, 17 at stage two and 2 at stage three.
20. It can be seen that only a small percentage of complaints move on to stages 2 (formal Investigation) and 3 (review of investigation by Chief Executive), which is the intention.

### Ombudsman's Complaints

21. At the beginning of this quarter 8 Ombudsman complaints were already in progress and a further 15 were received during the quarter. 9 complaints are still in train at the end of the quarter.
22. Fourteen decisions were made, all of which found no maladministration. One complaint did result in Local Settlement. This was in relation to a school transport appeal. Although the Council carried out the original appeal correctly it was agreed in this case to offer another appeal if further information was provided. Brief details of these complaints can be found at Appendix 2.
23. The Ombudsman's Office has experienced some pressure of work this year and there have been delays in making final decisions. However, the vast majority of our responses are made to the Ombudsman within the timescales set by that office. Indeed, the provisional statistics sent to us from the Ombudsman quotes our average response time as 24.9 calendar days, which includes one particularly complex complaint where response was made in 88 days. The standard response target is usually 28 days, although complaints involving education appeals are usually set a deadline of 14 days.
24. A full report on Ombudsman complaints for the year 2007/08 will be brought to Standards Committee on receipt of the Ombudsman's annual letter.

### Learning from Complaints

25. Appendix 1 shows learning outcomes from complaints that were upheld or partly upheld for quarter 4.

### Yearly Comparison

26. Appendix 3 shows comparisons between 2006/07 and 2007/08 in graphical form.

### Conclusion

27. The team of Directorate Complaints Coordinators (DCCs) continue to meet regularly to share best practice.
28. Research is being carried out in relation to procuring a Council-wide system for recording compliments/comments/complaints.
29. Monitoring continues to improve and as a result statistics are becoming more reliable. Reporting issues have mostly been overcome and comparisons in future years should be more meaningful. This will only improve further with the introduction of a corporate electronic system that works well.
30. As part of the County Council's regular seminars for elected members, the event in June will include a short presentation by Neil Hobbs, Assistant Local Government Ombudsman, based in York.
31. The Committee is asked to note the information provided and decide what information they would like to receive in future and in what format.

**Amanda Fry**  
**Staff Officer to the Chief Executive**  
**County Hall**  
**NORTHALLERTON**

May 2008

Author: Dani Cryer  
Contact Details: Tel 01609 532272  
e-mail [dani.cryer@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:dani.cryer@northyorks.gov.uk)

Background Documents: None

Appendices: 1. Learning Outcomes  
2. Graphs