

By: Mike Hill - Cabinet Member for Communities
Amanda Honey - Corporate Director Customers and Communities

To: Governance and Audit Committee –24 September 2013

Subject: **KCC ANNUAL CUSTOMER FEEDBACK REPORT
2012/13**

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides a summary of the complaints, comments and compliments received by the Council and also includes Local Ombudsman Complaints and further improvements for 2013/14.

STATUS FOR ASSURANCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the Council's fourth annual report on compliments, comments and complaints. It sets out:
- The Local Government Ombudsman Complaints Statistics
 - A summary of the compliments, comments and complaints received by the Council
 - Progress planned for 2013/14
- 1.2 Kent County Council is committed to improving its services. In 2012 the Council launched its Customer Service Strategy, which seeks to put our customers first. Theme one focuses on 'understanding our customers' and appreciating what is important to them.
- 1.3 The Council wants to listen to its customers views and values their contributions. We are One Council putting people at the heart of everything we do. Customer feedback, whether it is a comment, compliment or complaint, helps us to understand where we are doing well and what we can do improve our services for all our customers.
- 1.4 KCC's Complaints Policy is in place to ensure that Customers receive an acknowledgement to their complaint within 3 working days and a response within 20 working days, with the exception of Children Social Services statutory complaints.

2 THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN COMPLAINTS REVIEW 2012/13

Overview of Ombudsman & Changes to Service from the Ombudsman

- 2.1 In cases where a customer is unhappy with the responses received about their complaint from the Council they can exercise their right to involve the Local Government Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will investigate cases where a customer has exhausted the Council's own complaints policy and feel that their case has not been appropriately heard.
- 2.2 The Ombudsman can look at complaints about things that have gone wrong that has caused problems for the Customer:
 - in the way a service has been delivered
 - if a service has not been delivered at all, or
 - the way a decision has been made.
- 2.3 Each year, in June/July, the Local Government Ombudsman issues an annual review to each local authority. In her letter and the summary of statistics to accompany this, she sets out the number of complaints about that authority that her office has dealt with.
- 2.4 The changes in way the Local Government Ombudsman handles cases means that there has been a change in the way the Council's performance will now be reported. Appendix A is the letter received this year and details only the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman excluding any enquiries and premature complaints received.
- 2.5 The Local Government Ombudsman has made additional changes to their service and the way they operate including introducing two classifications of queries to the council, the first being an 'enquiry' which they normally ask the Council to respond to within 5 days, these include questions relating to whether a customer has exhausted the Council's own complaints policy.
- 2.6 This is to speed up the handling of potentially 'premature complaints' in which a complainant has not exhausted the Council's procedure or where fault is not likely to be found.
- 2.7 The second classification is a 'complaint' in which the Ombudsman has chosen to fully investigate the claim and will give the council 28 Calendar days or 20 working days to respond to its questions.
- 2.8 Decision statements made in 2013/14 will be published website at www.lgo.org.uk no earlier than three months after the date of the final decision. The information published will not name the complainant or any individual involved with the complaint.

KCC Performance

- 2.9 Despite the change in the way complaints are reported to us we have continued to pull together our own performance statistics against Local Ombudsman standards.
- 2.10 In 2012/13 the average number of calendar days it took KCC to respond was 28.2 days.
- 2.11 In 2012/13 KCC received a total of 202 enquiries and complaints from the Ombudsman. This includes 129 complaints and 40 enquiries, as well as 20 complaints and 13 enquiries that were deemed premature.
- 2.12 The Ombudsman's letter has identified that KCC received 129 complaints in 2012/13 which correlates with our own statistics.
- 2.13 This is a reduction on last years' 228 complaints and enquires received in which 44 were deemed to be premature or advice was given to the complainant.
- 2.14 The Ombudsman's letter notes that the average number of complaints received by County Councils is 54, however this varies hugely between councils based on their population size. Kent is the largest County Council authority, in terms of population, in the UK.
- 2.15 In 2012/13 the Ombudsman was able to give decisions on 137 complaints received about the council during 2012/13. A breakdown of the Local Government Ombudsman Decisions made in 2012/13 can be found in Appendix B - Table One of this report. Table Two shows these in relation to KCC's Directorates.
- 2.16 Of the 137 decisions made, there were four 'Reports' made against the council with evidence of maladministration reported in each. A summary of the findings and recommendations are available in Appendix C. It is important to note that some of these decisions relate to complaints made in 2010–2011. Procedures have been put in place to ensure that these incidents should not happen again.
- 2.17 Of the other complaints investigated by the Ombudsman, 86 of the 137 (63%) received were under the category of Education & Children's Services. 36 related to Education Appeals, the authority statistically has one of the largest volumes of appeals relating to schools admissions. Also a further 10 related to Home to School Transport provision, following a change to policy in the previous year.

3 DEVELOPMENTS IN KCC COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS & COMPLAINTS MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 During 2013/14 we will continue to work towards launching a corporate complaints system which will enable all customer feedback to be logged in one place. This will help us to identify more easily where improvements can

be made and share best practice amongst services. For the first time we will have the ability to have an organisation overview which can be used to understand the customer experience of our services.

- 3.2 We are looking at how to make the KCC complaints handling approach more responsive to customer needs. This will include:
- One contact telephone number, postal address, email and e-form
 - One leaflet for the council informing the public how to contact us regarding their feedback
 - One initial complaints response team based in the Contact Centre; this team will:
 - Log complaints arriving via the four central points (mail, e-mail, web and phone)
 - Acknowledge receipt of complaint meeting 3 day requirements
 - Answer 'simple' enquiries
 - Divert complex complaints to 'specialist' directorate leads to answer within 20 days (with exception of statutory children's complaints)
- 3.3 This year's work has been focused on understanding system requirements and capturing the experience of customers with the intention of improving services and reducing complaints. By improving reporting we can help the authority to take action earlier and put in changes that can make a difference.

4 MONITORING

- 4.1 Throughout the year complaints monitoring has been reported in the Council's Quarterly Performance Report, which has highlighted any issues that have arisen during the previous three months. It is hoped that as we implement a corporate wide feedback system we will be able to report on complaints in real time. This will mean that we will be more responsive and have a greater overview of how KCC is performing at a given point in time.

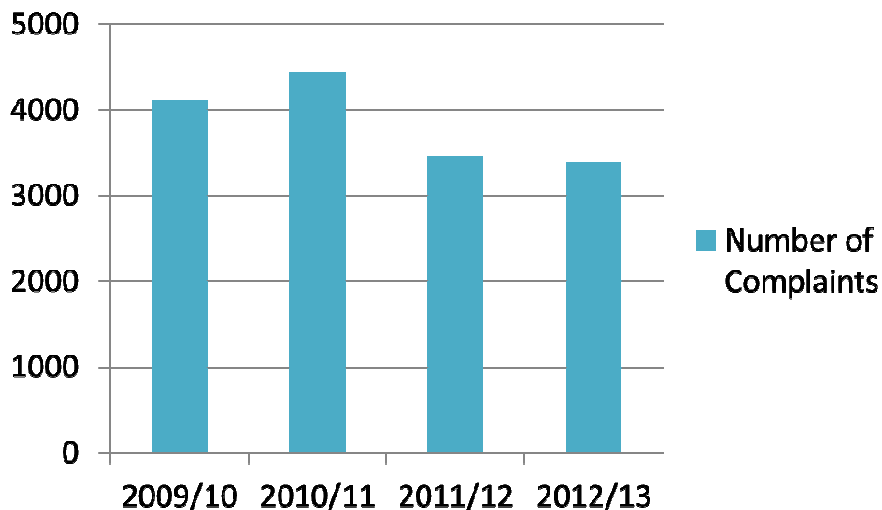
5 NUMBER OF COMPLIMENTS, COMMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

- 5.1 A **compliment** is an expression of thanks or congratulations or any other positive remark. (Internal compliments are excluded from this process).
- 5.2 Compliments across the council increased with **5456** recorded compliments from April 2012 to March 2013 compared to the same time period in the previous year when **4,092** compliments were recorded.
- 5.3 Compliments are equally important to record and have provided a valuable source of learning and can act as an indicator to reveal best practice or areas where we are getting things right across the Council.
- 5.4 A **comment** is a general statement about policies, practices or a service as a whole, which have an impact on everyone and not just one individual. A comment can be positive or negative in nature. Comments may question

policies and practices, make suggestions for new services or for improving existing services.

- 5.5 This year we received **1530** comments compared with **1,143** last year. This is also a reduction on the previous year. The council actively encourages customers to give opinions about services and we are working towards making it easier to make a comment about a council service.
- 5.6 A **complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not and however made, about the standard of or the delivery of service, the actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff which affects an individual service user or group of users. This is consistent with the definitions used by other local authorities.
- 5.7 The emphasis in the complaints procedure is to ensure that staff are equipped and empowered to act decisively to resolve complaints at a local level. The aim is that we work harder to resolve issues at the first point of contact. By recording accurately where things went wrong, we can use that information to improve service delivery and ensure that customers receive consistently good service regardless of how they choose to access them.
- 5.8 In 2012/13, **3,374** complaints were recorded compared with **3,456** for 2011/12, this equates to a **decrease** of 2.4% in complaints recorded.

Complaints recorded per annum



- 5.9 There was however an increase in complaints received about waste management (42%) owing to the new policy which prohibits commercial waste from being deposited at the Household Recycling Centres; Corporate Finance (100%) who received no complaints last year, but received 126 this year; this was largely due to a printer mechanical failure leading to the mislabelling of the Annual Pension Benefit Illustrations. Contact Point (8%) saw an increase due to time customers had to wait for Blue Badges.

- 5.10 It is important to be able to identify where there is an increase in the number of complaints received for a particular service, and investigate trends. This will help us to identify areas for improvement and learn from previous complaints to ensure that mistakes are not repeated.
- 5.11 A breakdown of complaints and comments by Directorate and Service can be found in Appendix D – Tables 3 - 5

6 REASONS FOR COMPLAINTS

- 6.1 The main grounds for complaints during 2012/13 tend to fall under one of the following themes (not in order of prevalence):
- Quality of service
 - Delivery of service
 - Poor communications
 - Changes to service delivery due to cost saving measures
 - Policy decisions
 - Availability of KCC services
 - Staff behaviour
 - Timeliness

7 COMPLIANCE WITH STANDARDS

- 7.1 KCC is committed to acknowledge any complaints received within 3 working days and to provide the customer with a response within 20 working days. As a whole KCC acknowledged 90% and responded to 81% of complaints within corporate timescales.
- 7.2 The percentage of complaints meeting KCC response standards by directorate is shown in Appendix E, Table 5.

Families & Social Care - Adult Social Care

- 7.3 There is only one statutory timescale for adult social care complaints and this is the acknowledgement of the complaint, which must be provided to the complainant within three working days of receipt. 95% of these complaints were acknowledged within the statutory timescale of three working days, this is an improvement against 86% last year.
- 7.4 The period for responding to the complaint is agreed with the complainant on a case by case basis depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint and the desired outcome. This can be anything from 5 to 65 days. 70% of complaints were responded to within the timescale agreed with the complainant which is 3% more than the previous year when the Council achieved 67%.
- 7.5 The average response time for statutory complaints set with a complaint plan timeframe of 20 working days is 19 working days. Complex cases that require either an off-line/external investigation or a joint response with health colleagues are identified at the beginning of the complaint and a longer timeframe is negotiated. When these complex lengthy cases are included in

the performance figure, it rises to an average of 21.5 days across the County. Within Adult Social Care there is no statutory response timeframe to be measured against as the legislation allows for the response timescales to be agreed with the complainant.

Families & Social Care - Children's Social Services

- 7.6 The Local Authority must consider and try to resolve Stage One complaints within 10 working days of the start date for Children's Social Services complaints. This can be extended by a further 10 working days where the complaint is considered to be complex.
- 7.7 Timescales have been extended for particularly difficult or complex cases, for example when more than one agency or service is involved or when cases are involved in other processes such as court proceedings and safeguarding procedures. Performance against timescales has deteriorated since the previous year. In 2012/13 64% of statutory complaints were completed within 20 working days, this compares against 65% completed within 20 working days in the previous year.
- 7.8 The Local Authority should consider Stage Two complaints within 25 working days of the start date (the date upon which a written record of the complaints to be investigated has been agreed) but this can be extended to 65 working days where this is not possible. The complexity of the complaints made a 25 day target unachievable, all were extended and only one Stage Two process was fully completed within 65 working days.

8 METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

- 8.1 Information on how to complain is available on our website and on our Complaints, Comments and Compliments leaflets. The public can give us feedback in a number of ways.
- 8.2 The below is a breakdown of our customer's chosen method of communication for complaints where this was recorded:
- 44% Phone
 - 23% Email
 - 17% Letter
 - 12% Comment Card
 - 2% Online
 - 1% Face to Face
 - 1% Other
- 8.3 It is important to ensure that all channels remain open and effective so customers can choose how they contact us. It should be noted, however, that it can be more difficult for staff to record comments, compliments and complaints when they are given face-to-face, but are perhaps more likely to be able to resolve the situation there and then with the complainant.

9 COMPENSATION

- 9.1 In 2012/13 KCC has paid £63642.48 in compensation, settlements, changes to the amount we charge and waived charges as a result of complaints to the organisation this includes;
- £30,382.80 which has been paid or waived as part of local resolution and
 - £33,259.68 following Local Government Ombudsman Decisions.
- 9.2 Last year we paid out £45,864.13, however this year's total includes costs where charges were waived as a result of complaints to the organisation or to the Local Ombudsman.

10 LEARNING THE LESSONS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

10.1 Complaints are a valuable resource helping us to understand where improvements could be made to improve the customer experience. These improvements can be changes to procedures or processes, improvements in communications or improvements to the quality of service. The text below outlines examples of where improvements have been made as a result of a complaint being received;

10.2 Improved communications

Following increased levels of complaints to Highways and Transportation about the changes to the drainage service, KCC updated the website and messages on the telephone line to inform customers about how we carry out cleansing. This is part of a wider review of all highway and transportation content on KCC's website. The service is also actively tackling customer dissatisfaction due to lack of communication by making more call backs to our customers once their enquiries have been investigated.

10.3 Improvements to service experience and quality

In Adult Social Care, a commitment has been made to ensure that when a patient has been discharged from hospital and referred to Social Services that they are contacted by telephone now rather than by letter. This is to help ascertain how they are and to arrange services if necessary. Letters will only be sent as a last resort when all other attempts have failed.

10.4 Improvements made following Customer Feedback

Following feedback (from customers) about the height of the kerbs and safety of the road next to the Kent Library and History Centre, the service has been working with Property and Highways to drop the kerbs outside the centre, introduce traffic calming measures and make changes to the main road outside to make the journey safer and clearer for walkers

11 LEVELS OF COMPLAINTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (MEMBER COMPLAINTS)

- 11.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 the existing Standards regime ceased to operate from Midnight on 30 June 2012. The Act puts in place a system of requiring elected members to notify the Monitoring Officer of a new category of interests (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests "DPI") and requires him to maintain a public register of those interests.
- 11.2 With effect from 1 July 2012 the Council was required to adopt a new Code of conduct for members and put in place arrangements for investigating allegations of failure to comply with the Code and for making decisions in respect of those allegations.
- 11.3 For the first time, all Kent Districts worked closely with the County Council and the Kent and Medway Fire Authority to create a single code, with some localised amendments, which applies to all four tiers of local authority in the county.
- 11.4 As enacted, the Localism Act 2011 puts in place a standards regime which includes the following features and requirements:
- (a) A duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by elected and co-opted members of the authority.
 - (b) A requirement to have a Code of Conduct dealing with the conduct that is expected of members when they are acting in that capacity
 - (c) A requirement for the Code of Conduct, when viewed as a whole, to be consistent with the principles of selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty and leadership
 - (d) A requirement to have in place arrangements under which allegations that a Member has failed to comply with the Code can be investigated and also under which decisions relating to those allegations can be made.
 - (e) A requirement for the authority to appoint an 'independent person' whose views must be sought and taken into account by the authority before it makes its decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate. Additionally, the views of the independent person may be sought by the authority and by a Member in other limited circumstances specified in the Act.
 - (f) A regime for requiring the notification to the Monitoring Officer of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) to enable him to establish and maintain a register of interests, backed by criminal sanctions. Under the new regime it is not only the interests of the Member that must be notified and registered, but also those of a spouse or civil partner; a person with whom the Member is living as husband or wife, or as civil partners.
 - (g) The authority must also secure that its Code of Conduct includes appropriate provisions in respect of the registration of DPIs and interests other than DPIs.
 - (h) As with the former regime, the new provisions allow for the withholding of sensitive information from the register where the Member concerned and the Monitoring Officer consider that the disclosure of details of the interest could lead to violence or intimidation.

- (i) As with the former regime there are provisions for obtaining dispensations to allow a Member to speak and vote notwithstanding an interest

Former Standards Regime – 1/4/12 to 30/6/12

Number of Complaints	Outcome
2	No Action

New Standards Regime – 1/7/12 – 31/03/12

Number of Complaints	Outcome
9	No action – Dismissed by the Monitoring Officer

12 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 Governance and Audit is asked to note the contents of this report.

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Useful information:

It is a statutory requirement under the following items of legislation for local authorities to have in place a complaints and representations procedure:

- Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006
- The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations were published in February 2009 and came into force with effect from 1 April 2009. This procedure introduced a single approach to dealing with complaints for both the National Health Service and Adult Social Care.
- NHS & Community Care Act 1990 (section 50)
- Health & Social Care Act 2000
- Local Government Act 2000

Appendix A – Letter from the Ombudsman

Local Government OMBUDSMAN

16 July 2013

By email

Mr David Cockburn
Head of Paid Service
Kent County Council

Dear Mr Cockburn

Annual Review Letter

I am writing with our annual summary of statistics on the complaints made to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) about your authority for the year ended 31 March 2013. This year we have only presented the total number of complaints received and will not be providing the more detailed information that we have offered in previous years.

The reason for this is that we changed our business processes during the course of 2012/13 and therefore would not be able to provide you with a consistent set of data for the entire year.

In 2012/13 we received 129 complaints about your local authority. This compares to the following average number (recognising considerable population variations between authorities of a similar type):

District/Borough Councils-	10 complaints
Unitary Authorities-	36 complaints
Metropolitan Councils-	49 complaints
County Councils-	54 complaints
London Boroughs-	79 complaints

Future development of annual review letters

We remain committed to sharing information about your council's performance and will be providing more detailed information in next year's letters. We want to ensure that the data we provide is relevant and helps local authorities to continuously improve the way they handle complaints from the public and have today launched a consultation on the future format of our annual letters.

I encourage you to respond and highlight how you think our data can best support local accountability and service improvements. The consultation can be found by going to www.surveymonkey.com/s/annualletters

LGO governance arrangements

As part of the work to prepare LGO for the challenges of the future we have refreshed our governance arrangements and have a new executive team structure made up of Heather Lees, the Commission Operating Officer, and our two Executive Directors Nigel Ellis and Michael King. The Executive team are responsible for the day to day management of LGO.

Since November 2012 Anne Seex, my fellow Local Government Ombudsman, has been on sick leave. We have quickly adapted to working with a single Ombudsman and we have formally taken the view that this is the appropriate structure with which to operate in the future. Our sponsor department is conducting a review to enable us to develop our future governance arrangements. Our delegations have been amended so that investigators are able to make decisions on my behalf on all local authority and adult social care complaints in England.

Publishing decisions

Last year we wrote to explain that we would be publishing the final decision on all complaints on our website. We consider this to be an important step in increasing our transparency and accountability and we are the first public sector ombudsman to do this. Publication will apply to all complaints received after the 1 April 2013 with the first decisions appearing on our website over the coming weeks. I hope that your authority will also find this development to be useful and use the decisions on complaints about all local authorities as a tool to identify potential improvement to your own service.

Assessment Code

Earlier in the year we introduced an assessment code that helps us to determine the circumstances where we will investigate a complaint. We apply this code during our initial assessment of all new complaints. Details of the code can be found at:

www.lgo.org.uk/making-a-complaint/how-we-will-deal-with-your-complaint/assessment-code

Annual Report and Accounts

Today we have also published *Raising the Standards*, our Annual Report and Accounts for 2012/13. It details what we have done over the last 12 months to improve our own performance, to drive up standards in the complaints system and to improve the performance of public services. The report can be found on our website at www.lgo.org.uk

Yours sincerely



Dr Jane Martin
Local Government Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

Appendix B - Table One - Ombudsman Complaints – Decisions Made using Ombudsman Categories in 2012/13

Decisions received for Complaints	Adult Social Services	Education & Children's Services	Corporate & Other Services	Highways & Transport	Planning & Development	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Housing	Total KCC
Premature	4	13		1	1	1		20
Investigation Discontinued	4	38	1	3			1	47
Investigation Complete	7	1						8
Investigation complete and satisfied with authority actions	7	4						11
Investigation Discontinued Injustice Remedied As A Result of Investigation	1	4						5
Investigation Discontinued Injustice remedied		7						7
Not in jurisdiction & no discretion		6	1	1	1			9
Out of jurisdiction		2	3	1				6
Not to initiate investigation	6	23	3	2		6		40
Maladministration/Report	3	1						4
Totals	32	99	8	7	1	6	1	157

Table Two - Decisions made by the Ombudsman in 2012/13 mapped against KCC Directorates

Decisions received for Complaints	Adult Social Services	Children Social Services	Education Learning and Skills	Environment and Enterprise	Customer & Communities	Business Support and Solutions	Total KCC
Premature	4	12	1	3			20
Investigation Discontinued	4	14	24	4	1		47
Investigation Complete	7		1				8
Investigation complete and satisfied with authority actions	7		4				11
Investigation Discontinued Injustice Remedied As A Result of Investigation	1		4				5
Investigation Discontinued Injustice remedied		2	5				7
Not in jurisdiction & no discretion		5	2	2			9
Out of jurisdiction		1	2	2		1	6
Not to initiate investigation	6	8	15	7	2	2	40
Maladministration/Report	3	1					4
Totals	32	43	58	18	3	3	157

Appendix C – Ombudsman Report Findings & Recommendations 2012/13

Report Findings	Link to report
<p>The Ombudsman found maladministration because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent County Council failed to respond to being told about J and failed to fulfil its duties to him under the Children Act 1989, and • Dover District Council failed to fulfil its duties to J under the Housing Act 1996 and failed to follow its joint protocol with Kent. <p>To remedy the injustice, the Ombudsman recommends that the Councils should apologise in writing to J and pay him:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £3,800 as the estimated value of the housing he should have had for 38 weeks • £3,800 which is the equivalent of £100 for each week that he was homeless to reflect the distress and inconvenience of having no home and selling or giving away his belongings, and • £2,500 to mark their regret for their failures. <p><i>Complaint submitted May 2010</i></p>	<p>http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-outcomes/childrens-services/childrens-services-archive-2008-to-date/dover-district-council-09-017-512-kent-county/</p>
<p>The Ombudsman found maladministration by the Council in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not assessing Miss B until four months after she was 18 • not producing a support plan for another four months • not including Miss B's assessed needs that were eligible for services in that support plan • poor and confusing communication with Miss B and her family • not offering Miss B's mother a carer's assessment • not offering Miss B direct payments so she could arrange her own care, and • restricting respite care for Miss B to its own residential care homes. <p>The Council's officers have agreed that it will remedy the injustice caused to Miss B and her family. It will pay the value of the services Miss B lost between becoming 18 and them eventually being provided and £250 to reflect her mother's time and trouble in pursuing the complaint. It will also amend the form it uses for support plans and tell everyone entitled to respite care of their</p>	<p>http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-outcomes/adult-social-care/adult-social-care-archive-2012-13/kent-county-council-10-012-742/</p>

<p>right to have direct payments.</p>	
<p>Complaint submitted December 2010</p> <p>The Ombudsman found the instructions from senior managers were contrary to the 1992 Choice of Accommodation Directions. The Directions say a person can choose a permanent or temporary residential care home (if certain conditions are met as they were in this case). She found maladministration by the Council for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refusing to fund the first four weeks of the place in the residential home • issuing instructions to staff that were contrary to Government directions, and • not realising that the instructions were wrong when the daughter complained, and not correcting them. <p>The Council has agreed to remedy the injustice by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apologising to the woman's daughter • refunding the cost of the first four weeks' residential care (£1,560) • withdrawing the incorrect instructions, and • identifying other people who may have been adversely affected by them. 	<p>http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-outcomes/adult-social-care/adult-social-care-archive-2012-13/kent-county-council-11-001-504/</p>
<p>Complaint submitted May 2011</p> <p>The Ombudsman recommends that the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay Mrs B £5,000 to recognise the injustice of her justified feeling that her father's death could have been avoided, and distress caused during the year she waited for a credible investigation • pay her a further £1,000 to recognise that it was her efforts that enabled it to identify systemic weaknesses in parts of its adult care service, and • provide up to £1,500 for Mrs B to choose a memorial to her father. <p>The Council has begun to review and improve the way it monitors the quality of care when it has arranged for people to have residential care. The Ombudsman recommends that elected councillors should monitor the reviews and system developments.</p> <p>Complaint submitted September 2011</p>	<p>http://www.lgo.org.uk/complaint-outcomes/adult-social-care/adult-social-care-archive-2012-13/kent-county-council-11-009-473/</p>

Appendix D - Table Three: Complaints Summary by Directorate 2012/13		
BUSINESS STRATEGY & SUPPORT	225	Finance complaints arose from a malfunction in packaging pension illustrations, which resulted in a delay of them being distributed or in some cases, resulted in them being sent to the wrong addresses.
CUSTOMER & COMMUNITIES	712	<p>Library complaints relate to a range of issues including IT, customer behaviour and general complaints regarding reservations and facilities.</p> <p>It should be noted that, along with Contact Point, Libraries, Registration and Archives deal with the largest volume of transactions in the directorate and actively promote the opportunity to provide feedback via customer comment cards and numerous customer satisfaction surveys for example.</p> <p>Complaints in Contact Point were largely due to Blue Badges and the time taken to process applications. We have reviewed the process to issue badges and as a result processing time is down from 12 weeks to 6 weeks. (This is now in line with the Department of Transport's guidelines for Blue Badge application timescales)</p> <p>Public Rights of Way (Countryside Access) complaints related to issues regarding obstructions and delays in clearing public access routes and being unable to discuss issues with a member of staff.</p>
EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS	40	<p>Since April 2010 the process for managing complaints has been managed by the Families and Social Care Children's team.</p> <p>The number of complaints received about the Local Authority's education service is very low when viewed against the context of the number of children in education however the department does not deal with initial complaints relating to schools as these are dealt with directly by the school, however parents can contact the authority if they have exhausted the Schools' complaints procedure.</p> <p>Complaints escalated to the Ombudsman relate to parents who are unhappy at the result of an admissions appeal which are recorded as part of a separate process.</p>
ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT	1586	There was an increase in complaints received in Waste Management due to the change in operating policy at Household Waste Sites. Customers were unhappy at the restrictions that have been put in place to prohibit commercial waste. Some of these complaints have been referred to the Ombudsman who have not found fault with the Council. The level of complaints has now returned to previous levels.

		<p>Highways and Transportation had a difficult year weather wise, with the wet summer which created the perfect growing conditions for vegetation; due to the wet grass Highways were unable to cut the vegetation as normal. In the winter, the service was hit by continuous bad weather, with several bouts of snow and icy conditions. Whilst complaints increased during these times, the service also received lots of compliments from customers who were happy to see the roads being gritted.</p> <p>NB: Although the highest number of complaints we receive relate to Highways and Transportation, as a proportion of Highways maintenance jobs completed, this represents only a small percentage (about 1%).</p>
<p>FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE</p>	<p>811</p>	<p>Some common themes include staff behaviour and poor communication and disputes with decisions made. Families and Social Care staff have been reminded to ensure that their correct details are on KNet to facilitate better communication and returning of calls and messages. Disputed decisions are usually related to funding decisions and reductions to support plans.</p>

Appendix E – Directorate Breakdown

Table Four - Comparison of complaints numbers for, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13

BUSINESS STRATEGY AND SUPPORT

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Business Solutions & Policy	2	5	7	0
Finance	2	4	0	126
Insurance	203	416	89	52
HR (Employee Services & Schools HR Services)	27	29	17	17
Property	6	23	4	21
Commercial Services	144	75	-*	-*
Strategic Procurement	1	0	0	-**
Other including IT	-	-	-	9
TOTAL	385	552	117	225

*Commercial services moved from Business Strategy & Support in to Enterprise & Environment in April 2011.

**Now reported with Finance figures

FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE - ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Strategic Commissioning Unit / Support Services	130	23	-	9
Learning Disability:	111	104	75	75
Mental Health	4	26	1	2
Older People:	375	351	253	245
Phys Disability:	54	44	53	54
Other (including Finance)		49	43	31
Total	697	597	425	416

(Some people complain about more than one issue, therefore the total adds up to more than the total number of complaints)

FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE - CHILDREN SOCIAL SERVICES

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Children & Families non-statutory	98	139	198	169
Children & Families statutory	200	267	305	226
TOTAL	298	406	503	395

CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Arts Development	3	0	0	0
Community Engagement	13	7	-	-

Managers				
Community Learning & Skills *	118	151	117	90
Community Safety	8	2	8	5
Emergency Planning	0	0	0	0
KDAAT	11	4	0	1
Contact Centre & Gateways	38	61	66	72
Communication & Media Centre	12	34	4	3
Kent Scientific Services	31	22	10	14
Key Training	0	-	-	-
Libraries & Archives	542	116	676	473
Registration (& Coroners)	11	17	46	***
Sport, Leisure & Olympics	-	5	2	4
SIP *	2	4	4	0
Supporting People	19	32	17	5
Trading Standards	22	11	11	7
Turner Contemporary	7	-	-	-
Youth Offending Service	2	8	3	****
Youth Services	87	43	16	16
Country Parks	109	102	96	16
Countryside Access	9	8	9	6
TOTAL	1,044	627	1083	712

* New unit for Kent Adult Education and Key Training

** Transferred from Chief Executives Dept 2008/09

*** This is now part of the Libraries and Archives reporting as the unit is now Libraries, Registrations and Archives

**** Youth services and Youth Offending services are now one unit Integrated Youth Services

EDUCATION, LEARNING & SKILLS

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Education	173	88	44	40

ENTERPRISE & ENVIRONMENT

Service	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Waste Resource Management	262	210	193	455
Highways & Transportation	1,259	1,959	939	1109
Planning and Environment	2	4	-	-
Commercial Services	-	-	152*	22**
TOTAL	1523	2173	1284	1586

* Commercial services moved from Business Strategy & Support in to Enterprise & Environment in April 2011.

** Service now independent from KCC complaints data only reflects quarters 1 & 2

Table Five - Acknowledgement and Response Times against standards

	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS	COMMENTS	% answered within our standards	
				ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	RESPONSE
COMMUNITIES					
2009/10	1,044	2,270	1,692	87%	96%
2010/11	627	4,077	1,382	98%	96%
2011/12	1,083	2,497	582	91%	92%
2012/13	712	3,542	878	85%	85%
EDUCATION					
2009/10	173	15	146	Not available	
2010/11	88	5	178	78%	84%
2011/12	44	137	74	63%	64%
2012/13	40	5	109	86%	63%
ENTERPRISE AND ENVIRONMENT					
2009/10	1,667	605	-	95%	98%
2010/11	2,248	551	16	98%	91%
2011/12	1,284	916	3	97.1%	89.2%
2012/13	1,586	902	0	95%	92%
FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE - CHILDRENS SOCIAL SERVICES					
2009/10	298	66	126	Not available	
2010/11	406	54	166	94%	79%
2011/12	503	59	159	71%	65%
2012/13	395	61	148	95%	56%
FAMILIES & SOCIAL CARE - ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES					
2009/10	436	502	213	89%	90%
2010/11	527	598	266	88%	73%
2011/12	425	388	290	86%	67%
2012/13	416	716	297	93%	81%
BUSINESS STRATEGY & SUPPORT					
2009/10	385	237	116	98%	96%

	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS	COMMENTS	% answered within our standards	
				ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	RESPONSE
2010/11	552	228	72	78% **	83% **
2011/12	117	95	35	77%**	93%**
2012/13	225	230	98	91%	97%

* The low compliance level found in Libraries has been investigated by senior managers and was traced to inconsistencies in how the complaints are recorded and reported by some front line members of staff. ** Time taken to deal with Insurance claims.

