



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

21st SEPTEMBER 2021

**CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SCHEME – COMMENTS, COMPLIMENTS AND
COMPLAINTS
ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21**

**JOINT REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S
SERVICES AND SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATION.**

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to:

- 1.1 Provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the operation and effectiveness of the Council's Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) between April 1st 2020 and March 31st 2021.
- 1.2 Seek Committee's comments on the background of the Customer Feedback Scheme together with improvements for 2020/21 and future developments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Acknowledge the work undertaken by the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team and the relevant legislative changes and new reporting requirements as a result of changes to the powers of the PSOW.
- 2.2 Determine whether they have any comments or observations to make in respect of the Customer Feedback Scheme Comments, Compliments and Complaints report (attached as Appendix 1)

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Whilst there is no current statutory requirement for the Local Authority to produce an annual report it is important that members note the improvements to the CFS and the nature of feedback received by our customers some of which has led to service improvement across the Council.
- 3.2 To ensure there is consistent reporting of customer feedback from which recommendations for improvement can be made and evidence of good practice/customer service can be shared across service areas.
- 3.3 Legislative changes to the powers of the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales came into force on the 1st May 2019 (Public Services Ombudsman Act 2019) giving that office greater investigative powers and through the development of the Complaint's Standards Authority a role in monitoring standards, trends and patterns across public service delivery in Wales.
- 3.4 The Council is, as part of this legislation, required to report on complaints activity to the PSOW and it is therefore recommended that this is noted and that Members consider how complaints activity is monitored going forward.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Management of the Customer Feedback Scheme merged with the existing management arrangements for the Social Services statutory process on January 1st 2019.
- 4.2 The Customer Feedback Scheme records all Comments, Compliments and Complaints received by both residents of RCT and those people visiting RCT who access our facilities. The scheme does not cover complaints where there are other statutory arrangements in place such as complaints about Social care or School complaints.
- 4.3 The complaints process is a two stage process and is in line with the Public Services Ombudsman's Model Complaints Policy. The Complaints Standards Authority confirmed RCT's compliance with this policy in a letter to the Chief Executive of RCT in 2021.

Stage One: Local Resolution – The emphasis at this stage of the process is early resolution of the complaint either by providing an explanation, putting things right or agreeing a way forward which may include identifying where improvements to services are necessary. The timescale for local resolution is 10 working days.

Stage Two: Formal Consideration – If the complainant remains dissatisfied after completion of stage one, they may request that the complaint proceeds to stage two of the process. This involves a formal investigation of the complaint with a report being produced by a Senior Council Officer. The timescale for dealing with this stage is 20 working days.

- 4.4 If the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two Investigation, they may progress their complaint to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales.

5. IMPROVEMENTS

- 5.1 Since January 2019 ongoing improvements have been made to the existing CRM system to enable more accurate recording of customer feedback and this has resulted in improved qualitative data. It is hoped that more robust and accurate data will be available following the commissioning of a new I.T. system for capturing both Customer Contacts and Customer Feedback.

Current improvements include:

- Review of the CFS policy with greater emphasis on feedback, not just a complaint's policy.
 - Monitoring of complaints timescales and closure of feedback items.
 - Updates of information and data categories for recording complaints and detailing the outcome of resolution in line with requirements of the Public Services Ombudsman Wales (PSOW) Complaints Standards Authority.
- 5.2 Other notable improvements include the analysis of outcome data which has highlighted the need to review the way in which customers interact with the Council and how we can manage their expectations and improve communication.
- 5.3 This will inform the work to improve customer facing web and social media information about the Customer Feedback Scheme which will provide both a means for customers to engage with the Council and provide further opportunity for the Council to evidence how customer feedback has improved or developed services. Discussions are underway as to how this can best be achieved.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no equality and/or diversity implications from this report.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 No consultation has been undertaken in relation to this report as it provides information on the operation of the Customer Feedback Scheme and direct feedback from service users in relation to how well services are delivered through the monitoring of compliments comments and complaints.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report and the work of the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team is managed within the existing allocated budget.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The Customer Feedback Scheme is not a requirement of specific legislation however the administration of the work of the Complaints Feedback and Engagement Team is underpinned by the standards and expectations set by the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) and is subject to scrutiny under the new powers afforded to the PSOW under the Public Services Ombudsman Act 2019.

10. LINKS TO COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/SIP

- 10.1 The function of the Customer feedback and Engagement Team and the collation of service user feedback through both complaints and compliments provide a quality assurance mechanism by which the Council can measure their performance against the corporate priorities to:

- Deliver essential services well;
- Engage with customers and use feedback to redesign and/or improve our services.
- Ensure local people get good outcomes from their services.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 All customer feedback provides valuable information from which services can improve and develop. This data also enables services and the Council as a whole to better understand the needs of its residents and to assist in both the planning and delivery of essential services.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

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