

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## HEALTH & WELLBEING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2011

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><i>DASS COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT</i></b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b><i>NONE</i></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><i>HOWARD COOPER</i></b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b><i>COUNCILLOR BOB MOON</i></b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Under the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 it is a statutory requirement to produce an annual report which provides information on the quantity of the complaints received and the adequacy of the Complaints Process. The annual report is attached as an appendix.
  - 1.2 On 1 April 2009 new legislation was introduced that substantially revised the previous approach to complaints. The new legislation, *The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009* and accompanying guidance (Listening, Responding, Improving) operates across Health and Adult Social Care and places significant emphasis on a personalised approach to complaints and 'learning from complaints'.
  - 1.3 As a result DASS has made changes to how complaints are managed. A new 'Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure' was formally introduced on 1 June 2010; however many of the changes have been in place throughout the year. The Department no longer operates a stage based system; instead complaints are handled in a reasonable and proportionate manner agreed with the complainant and detailed in a personalised Complaints Plan.
  - 1.4 This report details Complaints Management for the period 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010, and covers all complaints received by the Department and other customer feedback. The report includes four case studies drawn from actual feedback received that have been amended for editorial and confidentiality reasons.
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- 1.5 There has been an increase in average response times due to the switch to the new system of dealing with complaints and the removal of stages. This has been addressed and there is evidence in the early months of 2010-11 that performance is improving and will continue to do so. There is also a commitment to broaden out the area of work beyond complaints and to capture and learn from across the spectrum of customer experience including compliments and suggestions. These ongoing improvements are outlined in section five of the annual report.
- 1.6 The importance of learning from complaints is recognised by the Department and this is dealt with specifically at section four. four of the annual report. Thirty nine different actions were agreed as a result of complaints to effect improvement in service provision. These are an important development although it is acknowledged that more can be done to achieve a fully learning culture.
- 1.7 Compliments are dealt with at section six of the annual report. Three hundred and fifty two compliments were received in the year. It is significant that more people took the time to say how good the service was compared those who made a complaint.
- 1.8 Section seven of the Annual Report details the ongoing improvements to how customer feedback is managed to ensure that maximum advantage is drawn from the customer experience in developing services in the future.
- 1.9 This report after formal agreement from the Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee, will be made public via the Council website, and shared with relevant partners.
- 1.10 Also attached is the Quarterly Report on Complaints Performance for Quarters 1-3 in the current year. This report highlights how performance has improved throughout 2010-11, which is reflected in shorter response times to complaints and political contacts.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 2.1 That members note the contents of the report.

## **3.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S**

- 3.1 This report is a statutory requirement

## **4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 None
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## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

5.1 Complaints about the service need to be addressed, and relevant improvements made in order to reduce risk to the individual and/or carer, and for any organisational or reputational risks which may be raised as a result.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

6.1 None

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 None required

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

8.1 The department will also address complaints raised about services from this sector which it receives.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

9.1 Complaints which require commissioned investigations are currently carried out by operational managers from parts of the department which are not covered in the complaint.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are possible legal challenges which may arise as a result of a complaint.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 People who use the services of the department are amongst the most vulnerable in Wirral; in particular older people, disabled people and carers.

11.2 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

- (a) Is an EIA required? No
- (b) If 'yes', has one been completed?

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 None

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 People who use services and their carers may be at a higher risk of exploitation by others than the general population.

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## **APPENDICES**

Complaint & Customer Feedback Annual Report 2009-2010  
2010-11 Quarterly Complaints and Customer Feedback Report Quarters 1-3

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

*None*

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>