### ITEM No ...15.....

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 25 JUNE 2025

REPORT ON: ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS – 2024/2025

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 146 – 2025

#### 1. PURPOSE

The Annual Report on Complaints for 2024/25, contained in Appendix 1, presents an update on performance regarding complaints in 2024/2025, with comparisons to previous years, and shows how the Council continues to learn from complaints.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee notes:

- a the key performance indicators (KPIs) on complaints closed between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025, with trends from previous periods full report attached as Appendix 1;
- b examples of the range and volume of transactions the Council has with customers and citizens as a context for the number of complaints received see Appendix 2;
- c examples of how complaints have been used to improve services;
- d examples of compliments received about Council services, and
- e results of the satisfaction survey sent to people who made complaints in 2024/2025.

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the agreement of this report.

#### 4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The model Complaints Handling Procedure for Local Authorities requires that regular reports are produced for elected members. This is the annual report covering complaints closed between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2025.
- 4.2 In terms of performance management, the report includes data on key complaint handling indicators and results from the quarterly satisfaction surveys sent to those who had complaints closed during 2024/2025.
- 4.3 The Model Complaints Handling Procedure places a duty on public bodies to demonstrate how they used complaints to improve their services. The attached report gives examples of customer feedback gathered through corporate complaints and how this has been used to improve processes.
- 4.4 Appendix 2 includes infographics giving examples of the range and number of transactions the Council has with customers and citizens, providing context for the number of complaints received.

#### 5. OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

- 5.1 The report presented in Appendix 1 contains detailed information in relation to complaints Key Performance Indicators and trends to give a comprehensive picture on how complaints were handled in 2024/25. Key information to highlight includes:
  - (a) The number of complaints closed in 2024/25 was 833, compared to 1024 in 2023/24.

- (b) Performance in terms of % of complaints closed within the target time of 5 working days for Stage 1 complaints and 20 days for Stage complaints improved in year 2024/25, compared to the previous year:
  - 66.8% of Stage 1 complaints were closed within the target of 5 working days, which is an improvement compared to 55.7% last year.
  - 49.3% of Stage 2 complaints were closed within the target of 20 days. which is an improvement compared to 46.8% last year.
- c) In terms of average time taken to close complaints, there was also an improvement noted in 2024/25, compared to the year before.
  - the average number of days taken to close Stage 1 complaints was 5.9, compared to 7.7 in 2023/24.
  - the average time taken to close Stage 2 complaints was 24.9, compared to 27.8 in 2023/24.
- The KPIs for both stages of complaints are designed to drive improvement in the promptness of responses, rather than being absolute standards that every case is expected to meet. Stage 2 cases especially can be about complex and sensitive issues. However, a range of actions are being undertaken through our Complaints Improvement Plan to ensure that improvements in our performance on complaints. These measures include complaints handling training workshops for employees, and monthly reporting on Key Performance Indicators to the Council Leadership Team.
- 5.3 All of the issues reflected in this report will continue to be discussed by the Council Leadership Team, the Complaints Review Group and within individual services. The "Learning from Complaints" section demonstrates the Council's commitment to continually improve the service that is provided to the citizens of Dundee, as well as the processes to prevent the same issues recurring. A number of complaints led to senior managers within services speaking to their team members to ensure that improving customer experience is at the heart of service delivery.
- 5.4 On 1 April 2025 a new Corporate Complaints System was launched and key improvements being implemented include:
  - The Corporate Complaints system is now hosted on a system that is integrated with other council processes, making the complaints process more streamlined
  - Better and more detailed reporting capabilities
  - Services able to reassign complaints to another service directly, no need to involve Customer Services staff in this process, saving valuable time
  - Better alignment with the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's Child Friendly Complaints Process and Guidance.
  - Option to create tag words for filtering/searching
  - Improved "search" functions
  - Overdue complaints escalated to managers.

#### 6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 This report has been subject to the Pre-IIA Screening Tool and does not make any recommendations for change to strategy, policy, procedures, services or funding and so has not been subject to an Integrated Impact Assessment. An appropriate senior manager has reviewed and agreed with this assessment.
- The complaints recording database includes a feature that asks those dealing with complaints to note whether any complaints relate to an equalities issue or a protected characteristic age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex or sexual orientation. In 2024/25, there were two such complaints recorded, one relating to disability and one relating to nationality. Both of these complaints were reviewed by the council's Equality and Fairness Officer who assessed them as having been handled well, and no further action was recommended.

#### 7. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Management Team was consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

GREGORY COLGAN CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ANDREA CALDER HEAD OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICES

**DATE: 9 JUNE 2025** 

this pae is intentionally left blank

## **Dundee City Council**

# **Annual Report** on Complaints

2024 - 2025



#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Dundee City Council is committed to providing high-quality customer services and values complaints as a means to improve its services. The Council's Complaints Handling Procedure (CHP) is designed to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close to the point of service delivery as possible.

Complaints are treated as a valuable source of customer feedback and strive to deal with them well, carrying out thorough, fair and impartial investigations and making evidence-based decisions.

If something has gone wrong, complaints let us put things right, they help us to learn lessons, and to improve our processes to prevent the same problems from happening again.

The Chief Executive provides leadership and direction to ensure an effective CHP and that the Council learns from the complaints received.

#### 2. DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The Scottish Local Authorities Model Complaints Handling Procedure which defines a complaint as follows is used by the Council:

"an expression of dissatisfaction about the Council's action or lack of action or about the standard of service provided by or on its behalf"

Our Complaints Handling Procedure has two stages:

- At Stage 1 of the complaints process, the target is to respond within 5 working days, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The target time for Stage 1 complaints can be extended to up to 10 working days if necessary. Stage 1 complaints are also referred to as "Frontline" complaints.
- Stage 2 complaints process is used if the complaint is particularly serious or complex and can't be dealt with within 10 days, or if the person remains dissatisfied after they've had a Stage 1 response. Stage 2 of our complaints process is also called the "Investigation" stage.

If the complainant remains dissatisfied following Stage 2 of our complaints process, they can raise the complaint further by contacting the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

#### 3. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman places a duty on Local Authorities to record and report on key data related to the complaints handling process. Our performance data on handling complaints during 2024/25 is presented below, with regards to all complaints "closed" during the period of 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

#### 3.1 Number of complaints closed

The chart below shows the total number of complaints closed per year in the last seven years. In 2024/25 there were a total of 834 complaints closed. This is a decrease on number of complaints closed compared to 2023/24, with the number returning to the levels noted the year before.



Detailed breakdown of complaint numbers over the last seven years is included in the chart below:

Service	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	2023/ 2024	2024/ 2025
Corporate Services	89	71	80	83	92	108	68
Children & Families - Education - Children's Services - Criminal Justice	125 46 3	98 43 8	41 30 3	70 37 4	83 60 7	93 52 5	110 36 11
Neighbourhood Services - Housing & Construction - Environment Services - Communities, Safety & Protection	180 153 N/A	177 136 22	130 129 19	162 263 31	199 228 41	316 232 59	292 183 27
City Development	50	56	48	58	76	117	78
Chief Executive's	6	4	2	2	0	1	0
Dundee Health & Social Care Partnership: Community Care	32	51	23	50	44	41	28
Totals	684	666	505	760	830	1024	833

#### **Nature of complaints**

"Nature of complaints" are categories that are set by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman. They help councils to identify trends in complaints made by members of the public. This information is used to identify training needs or areas of improvement across the council.

Similarly to last year, the top two reasons for complaints closed in 2024/25 was "Failure to provide a service" and "Delay in responding to enquiries and requests".

Nature of Complaint	2018/1 9	2019/2 0	2020/2 1	2021/2 2	2022/2 3	2023/2 4	2024/2 5
Delay in responding to enquiries and requests	13.8%	16.3%	18.2%	22.8%	16.2%	20.9%	23.5%
Failure to meet our service standards	21.5%	17.8%	15.5%	16.4%	17.0%	16.9%	16.8%
Treatment by or attitude of a member of staff	25.1%	24.8%	20.3%	18.9%	20.2%	20.5%	21.2%
Failure to provide a service	21.1%	25.6%	24.6%	27.2%	34.1%	26.8%	25.4%
Dissatisfaction with our policy	12.3%	11.2%	14.1%	11.4%	8.6%	10.5%	8.4%
Failure to follow the proper administrative process	6.2%	4.3%	7.3%	3.3%	3.9%	4.4%	4.6%

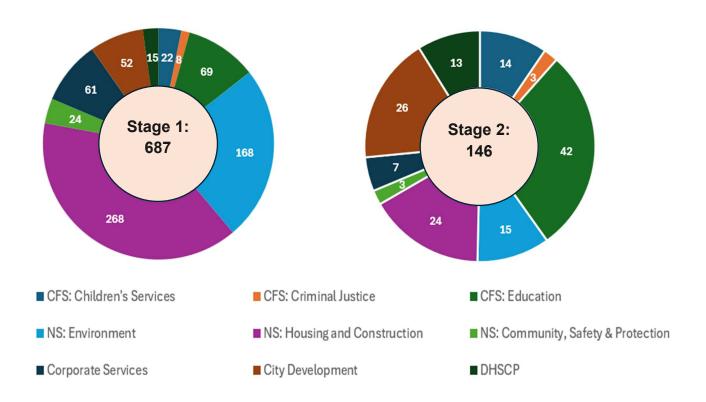
#### 3.2 Overview of complaints at Stage 1 and Stage 2 Complaints

#### Stage 1 (Frontline) Complaints

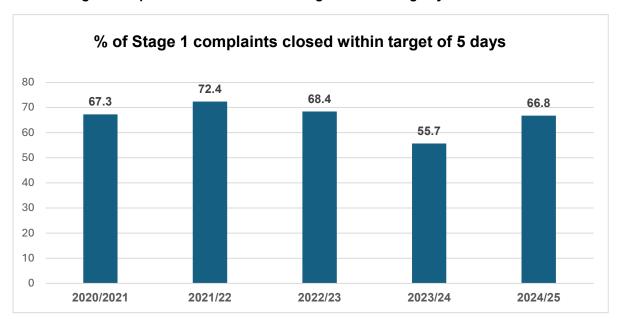
In 2024/25 a total of 687 complaints were closed at Stage 1. The diagram below shows that Neighbourhood Services – Housing and Construction had the highest number of complaints (268), and Children and Families Service – Criminal Justice had the lowest number of complaints (8), excluding Chief Executive's Services with 0 complaints.

#### Stage 2 (Investigation) Complaints

In 2024/25 146 complaints were closed at Stage 2. 66 of those were opened at Stage 2, and 80 were escalated from Stage 1. The diagram below shows that Children and Families – Education closed the highest number of Stage 2 complaints (42), with Children and Families Service – Criminal Justice and Neighbourhood Services – Communities, Safety and Protection having closed only 3 complaints each.

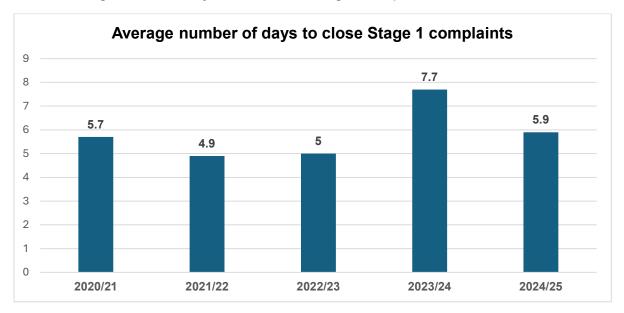


#### 3.3 Stage 1 complaints closed within the target of 5 working days



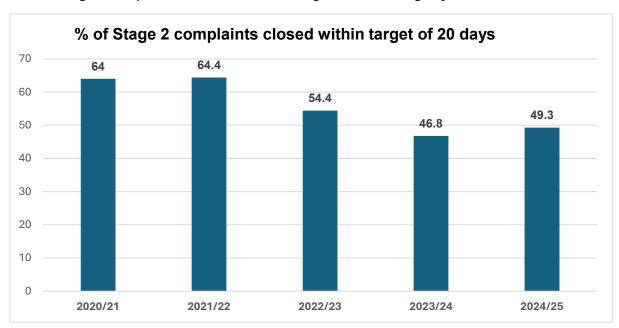
Benchmarking data for 2023/24 shows that the % of Stage 1 complaints completed on time for our Family Group (Group Four) average was 62.5%, and for the Scottish Average it was 69.5%.

#### 3.4 Average number of days taken to close Stage 1 complaints



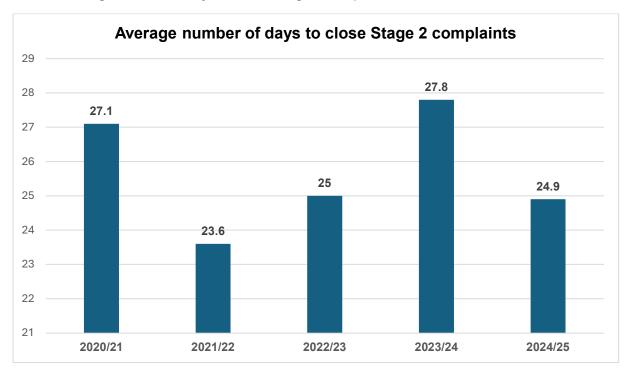
Benchmarking data for 2023/24 shows that our Family Group average was 12.7 days and the Scottish Average was 8.9.

#### 3.5 Stage 2 complaints closed within the target of 20 working days



Benchmarking with other councils for year 2023/24 shows the % of Stage 2 complaints closed on target time of 20 days was 53.4% for our Family Group and 66.65% for the Scottish Average.

#### 3.6 Average number of days to close Stage 2 complaints

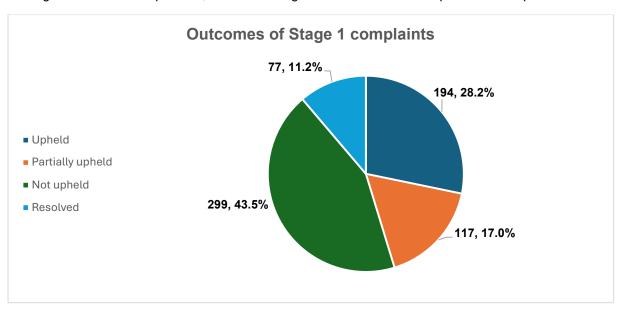


Benchmarking data for 2023/24 shows that our Family Group average was 25.0 days and the Scottish average was 21.7

#### 3.7 Outcomes of complaints closed

#### **Stage 1 Complaints**

The majority (43.5%) of Stage 1 complaints were not upheld. 28.2% and 17% of Stage 1 complaints were Upheld or Partially Upheld respectively. 11.2% of complaints were "resolved", where a resolution was agreed with the complainant, without making a decision whether to uphold the complaint or not.

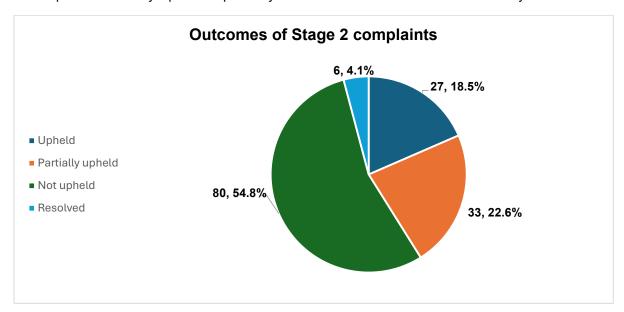


Stage 1 outcomes for Dundee City Council in year 2024/25 compared to benchmark of the Scottish average and our Family Group average for year 2023/24 is provided in the table below. Benchmarking complaints data for 2024/25 will be available later in the year.

Outcome	Dundee	Family Group	Scottish Average
Upheld	28.2%	32%	38.6%
Not Upheld	43.5%	32.9%	31.6%
Partially Upheld	17%	21.4%	15.3%
Resolved	11.2%	13.7%	13.7%

#### **Stage 2 Complaints**

The majority (55.1%) of Stage 2 complaints were not upheld. 18.4% and 22.4% of Stage 1 complaints were Upheld or Partially Upheld respectively. The "resolved" outcome was used in only 4.1% of cases.



Stage 2 outcomes for Dundee City Council in year 2024/25 compared to benchmark of the Scottish average and our Family Group average for year 2023/24 is provided in the table below.

Outcome	Dundee	Family Group	Scottish Average
Upheld	18.4%	20.9%	25.8%
Not Upheld	55.1%	45.1%	46.7%
Partially Upheld	22.4%	26.1%	21.6%
Resolved	4.1%	7.9%	5.5%

#### 4. COMPLEX COMPLAINTS

While the target in the complaints handling procedure for dealing with complaints at Stage 2 is 20 days, this can be extended without any limit, as it is acknowledged by the Ombudsman that many complaints at this stage will be more complex and take longer to investigate. Data for the last 6 years on the number of cases closed in each time period is shown in the table below:

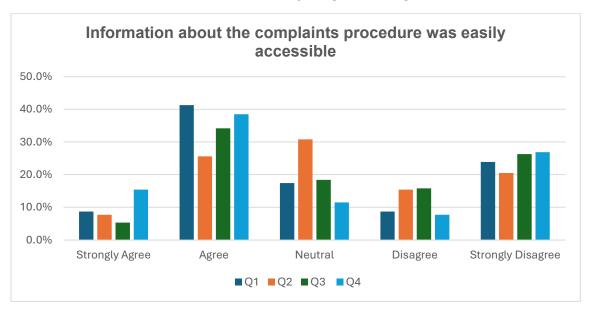
Year	20 days or less	21-39 days	40-99 days	100 days +
2024/2025	74	30	14	1
2023/2024	75	36	19	2
2022/2023	85	40	10	1
2021/2022	91	29	11	1
2020/2021	60	11	13	3
2019/2020	86	21	18	6

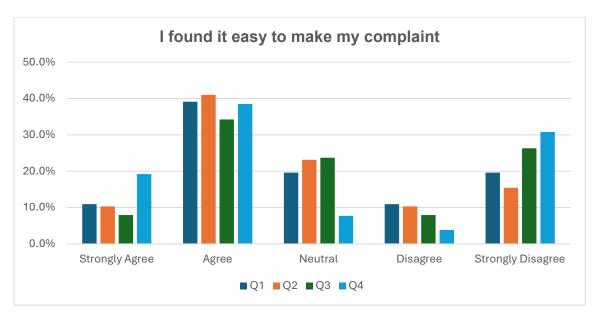
#### 5. SATISFACTION WITH COMPLAINTS HANDLING - QUARTERLY SURVEYS

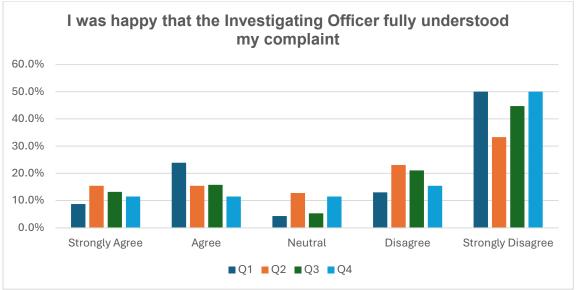
The model Complaints Handling Procedure requires the Council to report on a measure of customer satisfaction with its complaints process. To do this, quarterly surveys are issued to people who have made complaints. The survey agreed by the Scottish Local Authorities Complaint Handlers Network is issued to complaints by email. Since the survey sample consists entirely of people who have made a complaint, many of which are not upheld, it may not be surprising that satisfaction levels are not particularly high.

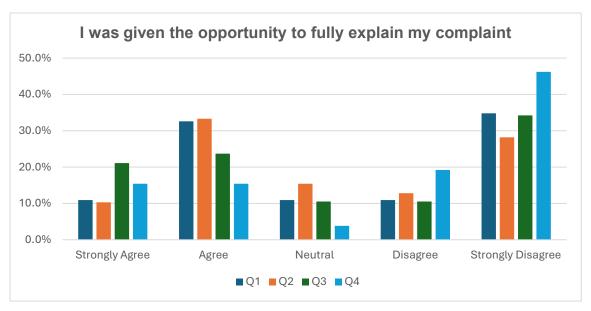
The response rates to our survey are low, with return rate ranging between 19% in Q4 of 24/25 and 31% in Q1 of 24/25. Caution must be exercised due to the small sample who return the survey and the fact that those who remain unhappy may be more motivated to do so.

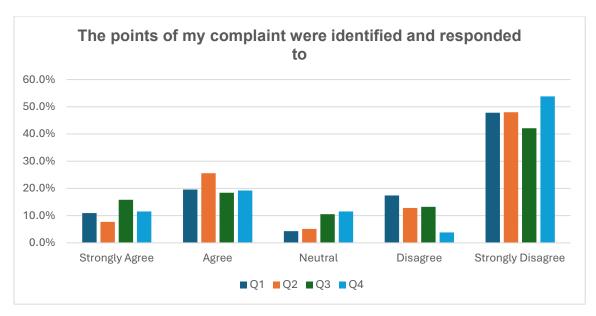
Question 1: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statements below:

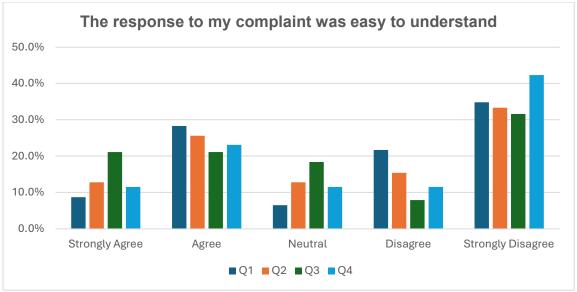


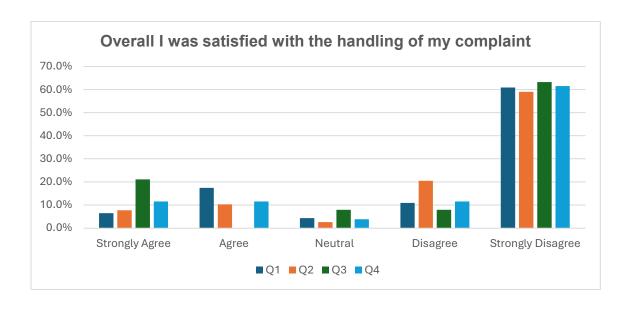


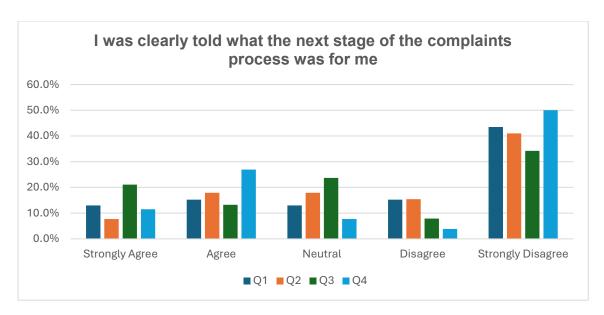




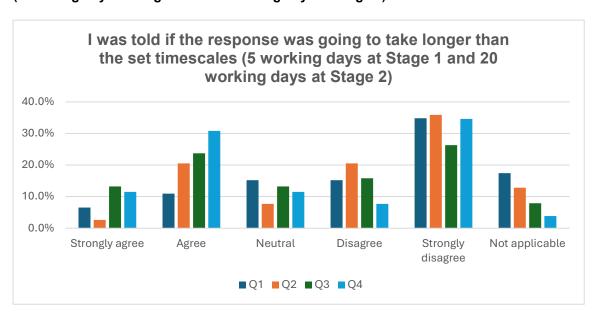




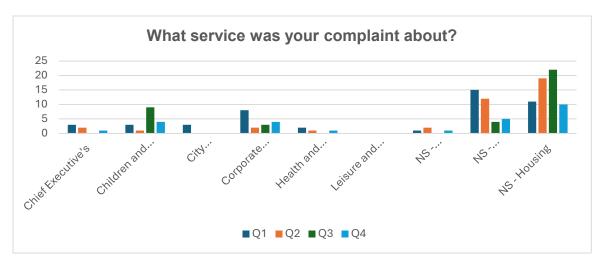




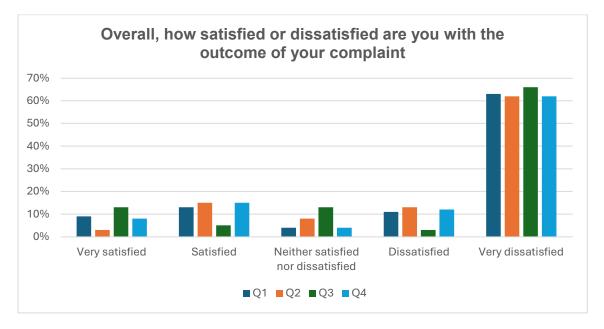
Question 2: I was told if the response was going to take longer than the set timescales (5 working days at Stage 1 and 20 working days at Stage 2)



Questions 3: What service was your complaint about?



 $\label{eq:Question 4: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the outcome of your complaint?}$ 



#### 6. LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

When a complaint is upheld or partially upheld Investigating Officers are asked to identify the root cause of the complaint and planned service improvements, designed to prevent similar issues recurring.

These can involve speaking to individual employees, arranging training for teams on correct use of procedures and customer care standards, or using the complaint as a 'case study' in team discussions. However, complaints are used to identify wider process/service improvements and below are some examples of how that was done during 2024/2025.

A customer complained that	We listened, we acted
A customer signed a "Transfer of Right of Burial" form without having a full understanding of the legal implications of signing it, due to the funeral directors not explaining this fully.	The service will undertake a review of wording in the legal forms to ensure that terms are as clear and transparent as possible.
A communal food waste bin located near a play park has not been emptied, attracting fly tipping and foliage growing around it.	The team will ensure communal food waste bins are emptied timeously and they will review all locations of the communal food bins in the area to address issues of fly tipping
Parent was upset about the way that the nursery staff reacted when their child ran out to the outdoor area while the area was not staffed and closed. The child did not know the garden was closed.	Nursery staff will place a visual clue on the door to indicate to all children when the area is not staffed and is out of bounds.
Customer received two separate replies to her Stage 1 complaint in respect of her council tax	Staff members in the team who deal with Stage 1 complaints will be encouraged to attend Handling

Complaints training, to ensure that responses to complaints address all the points that the complainants are raising.
The service will undertake a review of relet standard and decoration policy.  The team will also enhance property repairs element of the mutual exchange process by introducing a Repairs Project Officer Inspection.  Additionally, the process of allocating void properties is being relooked at, and a 20-week void plan is being implemented.
The Education service will ensure all schools are aware of access rights and deal with these appropriately.
Work is underway to include oily fish once a week. The Children and Families Service will implement a 2-choice cold platter option for children attending afternoon sessions. The team will ensure ongoing communication with families is well planned, considered, and timely, particularly when there is a planned change to service delivery. The Children and Families Service will continue to liaise with Tayside Contracts to review the most up to date Setting the Table guidance as it applies to the provision of meals in nurseries. Development of a final food policy for implementation in August 2025 is an action in the Children and Families Service Annual Improvement Plan for 2024/25. This will reflect the recently revised Setting the Table Guidance and any food provision requirement
Blue Badge team will review their process to ensure Blue Badges are dispatched timeously.
The padlock on the container had been broken, not allowing the crew to empty it. Following the complaint, the padlock on the container was replaced and the container emptied. The service will from now on ensure that any bin repairs are actioned timeously.
Staff members from the service concerned will receive training on customer service standards and case recording.

#### 7. COMPLIMENTS

In addition to complaints, the Council also receive compliments from members of the public, who are satisfied with the service they have been provided with. These positive comments and feedback can be submitted by customers by completing the 'Tell Us About Good Service' form on the Council's website, by calling or emailing our Customer Services Team, or by sharing them directly with the service or staff concerned. Below are the compliments which were submitted by our customers during 2024/25.

I received excellent help and assistance from a customer services adviser in submitting changes to tenant occupation and council tax exemption forms. She guided me through the online service by filling in the forms for me. Very helpful, thank you.

Good evening. I just wanted to write to you in your position as Chief Executive to pass on my sincere thanks for the support provided to Police Scotland by Dundee City Council in relation to our investigation into the murder of a man. After a major homicide investigation led by Tayside Division CID, last week, persons were arrested, charged with murder and remanded in custody. I know this has brought some level of comfort to his family. Behind the scenes, there was a huge amount of work invested in the investigation – and we received support from many areas, not least of which was Dundee city Council. I think this quote from our Crime Scene Manager sums it up perfectly: "I just want to pass on how grateful I was for all the assistance I had from Dundee City Council. I appreciated how helpful, understanding and genuine how nice everyone was"

After 41 hours of no heating or hot water finally got someone out to fix it, I can't thank you enough, the female adviser that works for repairs Dundee City Council you are an angel, spoke to her at 11 am & by 2 there was a man at my door, she'd phoned me 4 times in that space of time to check on me & update me. I have never known anyone so sympathetic before!

Hello, I noticed that work to clean gutters in Victoria Road has been done. Please pass on my thanks to the Departments involved.

Thank you to everyone involved in the care and maintenance of Dundee's open spaces, the parks, the gardens, the flower beds. You do a brilliant job and, like many fellow Dundonians, I want to say that you cheer our hearts, that your efforts are appreciated hugely. If you can publicise this email of thanks within the department please do so because I really want all those involved to know that their efforts are appreciated, especially as circumstances/finances become harsher year on year.

So thankful she took the time to actually ring instead of just sending out a letter from an actual human, I've been crying down the phone to them since October & explaining my situation and needs not helping in anyway! But yesterday this lovely Scottish woman listened to everything I had to say and then went on the hunt for someone herself phoning them and begging them all day to come out and sort it within 2 hours they did just that! My faith has been restored in life!

Please forward my sincere thanks to the Area Supervisor and Area Manager for the sterling effort on cleaning up the footpath. The area has been transformed for the better!

Just a quickie to say, how glad I was that there was a street cleaner by the Caird Hall square, yesterday. I had come out of the Oxfam shop on Reform Street and found someone had dropped a glass bottle, on the pavement, on the drainage channel, there was, not only, a load of white sloppy substance, who knows what, but more importantly, fairly large pieces of sharp, jagged, brown glass, and smaller pieces, ready to damage pet dogs' paws, or puncture wheelchair users' tyres, or potentially injuring anyone if their shoe soles were thin, or flow down into the watercourse at the next rainfall, or do irreparable to the many seagulls, which have been tempted into the city centre by food debris, which would no doubt be tempted to try and eat these brown 'insects', leading to slow,

excruciatingly painful death. I set off towards the Caird Hall and as above, found one of your colleagues. I explained the situation, and asked if he would inform his office to get it dealt with, and, to my delight and relief he said, 'Oh I'll go and deal with it right now!', and off he went. On my return, half an hour later or so, it had all been well cleaned up and the danger removed. Bravo to him!

I would just like to pass on my thanks to you all for the effort made by the team to reinstate the communal areas at Fleming gardens. At my surgery today I am delighted to say that a number of residents came to talk about all the works that have been done, along with others who have called me in recent weeks, all praising the works that have been done. It's not often I have had such positive comments, and it would be fantastic to see this continue as the year/s go on.

I have just been tidying the graves of my parents and my late wife in Barnhill cemetery. The cemetery is looking fantastic. I don't think I have ever seen it looking better. I understand that the grave diggers are short staffed, and I would be pleased if you could pass on my thanks to all involved for keeping it looking so nice.

I'd like to share my sincere gratitude for all of your hard work, professionalism and care. You ensured that you listened carefully and worked very hard to meet XX emotional, social and spiritual needs as well as physical. You are an absolute credit to social work.

I recently visited the above Pocket Park and was pleased to find that it had been cleaned up as I had requested when I last spoke to you. May I thank you for this? And , also, can you please pass on my thanks to the relevant staff at our Parks Department. It really has made a difference to this little Park.

This is to express our gratitude for the exceptional care and support you provided me during my difficult pregnancy. Thank you for your encouragement, smile and positive outlook which made a huge positive impact on my journey. With heartfelt thank you.

Many thanks to the male adviser in customer services for his help with my query today. I think it's always nice to thank someone who has been helpful.

I am writing as a parent of a pupil at X Primary School and another child at X nursery. I am writing to express my sincere gratitude for the Head Teacher and her team's outstanding leadership and unwavering support. It is clear that under her guidance, the school/nursery has flourished into a nurturing and dynamic environment where pupils are encouraged to excel academically and grow personally. Her commitment to fostering a culture of inclusivity and excellence has had a profound impact on each child's educational journey. The recent Gold award for the Rights Respecting School is confirmation of this. The Head Teacher's approachability and open communication have been invaluable to our family. Regular updates and transparency ensure that we are well-informed and actively engaged in my children's education and well-being. Moreover, the dedication to the professional development of the teaching staff is evident in the high-quality education our children receive. The enthusiasm and passion displayed by the teachers are a testament to the supportive environment she has cultivated. I want to thank her and her team for their unwavering commitment to making the school a place where children can learn, grow, and flourish. We are truly fortunate to have her at the helm.

I phoned on the 19th of March regarding my council tax number and the woman was extremely helpful and provided me with the information and I asked for and more. On the phone she told me more information than I asked, which was extremely helpful and was very kind and patient on the phone. The service I received was excellent.

Got a call to ask about tradesman coming this afternoon at home. The guy was great made my disabled wife relaxed. He explained fully what he was going to do. Very professional, absolutely first-class tradesman. An ambassador for Dundee City Council.

I just wanted to thank you for doing the bin today without any problem. Thats all I want. I don't want to keep moaning about it, so thank you all very much

#### **EXAMPLES OF THE VOLUME OF TRANSACTIONS THE COUNCIL DEALS WITH ANNUALLY**

