

SHETLAND ISLANDS COUNCIL

2009-10 Statistics Tables – Explanatory Notes and Commentary

Tables:

Attached are summary details of the complaints that the SPSO received and determined about your Council in 2009-10. Table 1 details the number of complaints (by our subject categories) received for your Council for 2008-09 and 2009-10, alongside the total of local authority complaints for these years. In previous years we have used this table to show the total of all contacts (enquiry calls and complaints) that we received about your council. This year we have not included enquiry calls, as feedback has shown that it is more meaningful for you if we concentrate on the actual complaints received. We recorded seven complaints about the Council, compared to four in the previous year.

Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints determined about your Council by the SPSO in 2009-10. Received and determined numbers do not normally tally exactly, as figures tend to include cases carried forward from the previous year.

Graph of prematurity rates: The anonymised graph shows, for each Council, the percentage of complaints that we received and determined as premature, against the national average in 2009-10 (55%). This represents a decrease on the 2008-9 average of 60%, which is to be welcomed. Figures have been rounded up or down to the nearest whole percentage.

We consider a complaint to be premature when it reaches us before the complainant has been through the full complaints process of your organisation. The graph does not reflect the number of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionately, compares against the average for Scottish local authorities. This year your Council is number 6 on the graph, above the average. You will see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was five out of a total of eight complaints determined (62% of the total for your Council). The previous year's figure was one out of five (20% of the total for your Council). The proportion of premature complaints has therefore increased, albeit against a larger number of complaints determined. As the figures on which this is based are very small, however, proportions may be less meaningful than they are when based on larger numbers.

NB We do not adjust our figures to mitigate the impact of housing stock transfer. It is evident, however, that there is a tendency for authorities that retain housing stock to receive more complaints and to fall higher within the prematurity graph than those that have undertaken stock transfer. This is to be expected, given that housing complaints are usually the largest category of complaint and that there is a disproportionately high incidence of prematurity in housing complaints.

Reported Complaints and Recommendations

We investigated and reported on one complaint about your Council in 2009-10, which we upheld. Attached is a summary sheet showing this complaints, and the recommendations made. You will be aware that SPSO complaints reviewers follow up to find out what changes have been made as a result of recommendations.

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We hope that you find this summary information useful. If you have any enquiries about the statistics provided, please contact Annie White, SPSO Casework Knowledge Manager, on 0131 240 8843 or by emailing awhite@sps.org.uk. Statistical reports are available on the SPSO website at: <http://www.sps.org.uk/statistics/index.php>.

Table 1

Complaints Received by Subject		Shetland Islands Council	Complaints as % of total	Sector Total	Complaints as % of total
2008-09	Building Control	0	0%	27	2%
	Consumer protection	0	0%	5	0%
	Economic development	0	0%	4	0%
	Education	0	0%	89	6%
	Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	0%	69	4%
	Finance	0	0%	148	9%
	Fire & Police Boards	0	0%	1	0%
	Housing	0	0%	459	29%
	Land & Property	0	0%	32	2%
	Legal & admin	2	50%	79	5%
	National Park Authorities	0	0%	5	0%
	Other	0	0%	9	1%
	Personnel	0	0%	22	1%
	Planning	0	0%	269	17%
	Recreation & Leisure	0	0%	44	3%
	Roads & Transport	2	50%	87	5%
	Social Work	0	0%	188	12%
	Valuation Joint Boards	0	0%	24	1%
	Out of Jurisdiction or Subject Unknown	0	0%	43	3%
	Total	4		1,604	
2009-10	Building Control	0	0%	36	2%
	Consumer protection	0	0%	10	1%
	Economic development	0	0%	2	0%
	Education	0	0%	94	5%
	Environmental Health & Cleansing	0	0%	71	4%
	Finance	1	14%	143	8%
	Fire & Police Boards	0	0%	3	0%
	Housing	3	43%	432	25%
	Land & Property	0	0%	33	2%
	Legal & admin	2	29%	90	5%
	National Park Authorities	0	0%	8	0%
	Other	0	0%	11	1%
	Personnel	0	0%	24	1%
	Planning	0	0%	264	15%
	Recreation & Leisure	0	0%	73	4%
	Roads & Transport	0	0%	94	5%
	Social Work	0	0%	199	11%
	Valuation Joint Boards	0	0%	19	1%
	Subject Unknown or Out Of Jurisdiction	1	14%	128	7%
	Total	7		1,734	

Table 2

Complaints Determined By Outcome			Shetland Islands Council	
			Sector Total	
2008/09	Assessment	Premature	1	923
		Out of Jurisdiction	3	102
		Discontinued before Investigation	0	170
	Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	1	279
	Investigation	Report issued: complaint not upheld	0	25
		Report issued: complaint partially upheld	0	22
		Report issued: complaint fully upheld	0	15
		Discontinued during Investigation	0	10
		Total	5	1,549
	2009/10	Assessment	Premature	5
Out of Jurisdiction			2	118
Discontinued before Investigation			0	194
Other			0	17
Examination		Determined after detailed consideration	0	409
Investigation		Report issued: complaint not upheld	0	13
		Report issued: complaint partially upheld	0	25
		Report issued: complaint fully upheld	1	12
		Discontinued during Investigation	0	6
		Total	8	1,837

Shetland Islands Council

Published	Case Ref.	Summary	Overall Report Decision	Recommendation(s)
19/08/2009	200700224	<p>(a) the methods of recording and collating incidents of bullying were unclear (upheld);</p> <p>(b) the procedures for managing incidents of reported bullying were not adhered to (upheld); and</p> <p>(c) the Council failed to convene a CRC to hear Mrs C's complaints about the social work department (upheld).</p>	Upheld	<p>(i) support the School in a review of their record-keeping to reflect the incidents of new bullying and episodes of continued bullying. This reporting schedule will highlight the progress being made to address new and older reported episodes of bullying within the School;</p> <p>(ii) review the School's criteria for first time/new incidents of bullying and the identification of ongoing bullying issues to be clearly set out separately to reduce the confusion and misunderstanding;</p> <p>(iii) support the School's development of appropriate contingency plans to be introduced to the policy of handling bullying when a number of incidents are being reported by the same pupil and evidence is difficult to obtain from other children;</p> <p>(iv) ensure the local policies are adhered to and explanations are recorded within the documentation when there is a departure from the prescribed procedure;</p> <p>(v) apologise to Mrs C and Child A for the confusion caused as a result of diverting from the documented procedure;</p> <p>(vi) review their procedures and practices to ensure CRCs can be held within set timescales; and</p> <p>(vii) apologise to Mrs C for the delay in convening a CRC.</p> <p>The Council have accepted the recommendations and will act on them accordingly.</p>