WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE 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) <u>received</u> 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 37 complaints about the Council, compared to 36 in the previous year.

Table 2 shows the outcomes of complaints <u>determined</u> 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 <u>number</u> of premature complaints that we received about your Council, but shows how your Council, proportionately, compares against the average for Scottish local authorities. Your Council is number 4 on the graph, well above the average. You will see from Table 2 that the actual number of premature complaints for your Council was 27 out of a total of 39 complaints determined (69% of the total for your Council). The previous year's figure was 23 out of 36 (64% of the total for your Council). The proportion of premature complaints has therefore increased against an increased number of complaints determined, and represents a high level of premature complaints received about your Council.

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 the complaint 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@spso.org.uk. Statistical reports are available on the SPSO website at: http://www.spso.org.uk/statistics/index.php.

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Education				0%		0%
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Legal & admin		Land & Property	0	0%	32	2%
National Park Authorities			4	11%	79	5%
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Table 2

Complaints Determined By Outcome			West Dunbartonshire Council		
				Sector Total	
2008/09	Assessment	Premature	23	923	
		Out of Jurisdiction	3	102	
		Discontinued before Investigation	4	170	
	Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	6	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	36	1,549	
2009/10	Assessment	Premature	27	1,043	
		Out of Jurisdiction	4	118	
		Discontinued before Investigation	2	194	
		Other	1	17	
	Examination	Determined after detailed consideration	4	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	39	1,837	

West Dunbartonshire Council

Published	Case Ref.		Overall Report Decision	Recommendation(s)
22/04/2009	200700058	the Council delayed unreasonably in holding a CRC (upheld).		(i) apologise to Mr C for the failings identified in this report; (ii) review their procedures to ensure that the CRC membership is kept up to date at all times; (iii) ensure that, in future, any extension to the time limits, as set out in the Directions, is agreed by the complainant(s); and (iv) consider, as part of their review of procedures, whether there is a need for specific literature to be provided to Social Work complainants on the complaints procedure.