

Further information for Corporate Representations

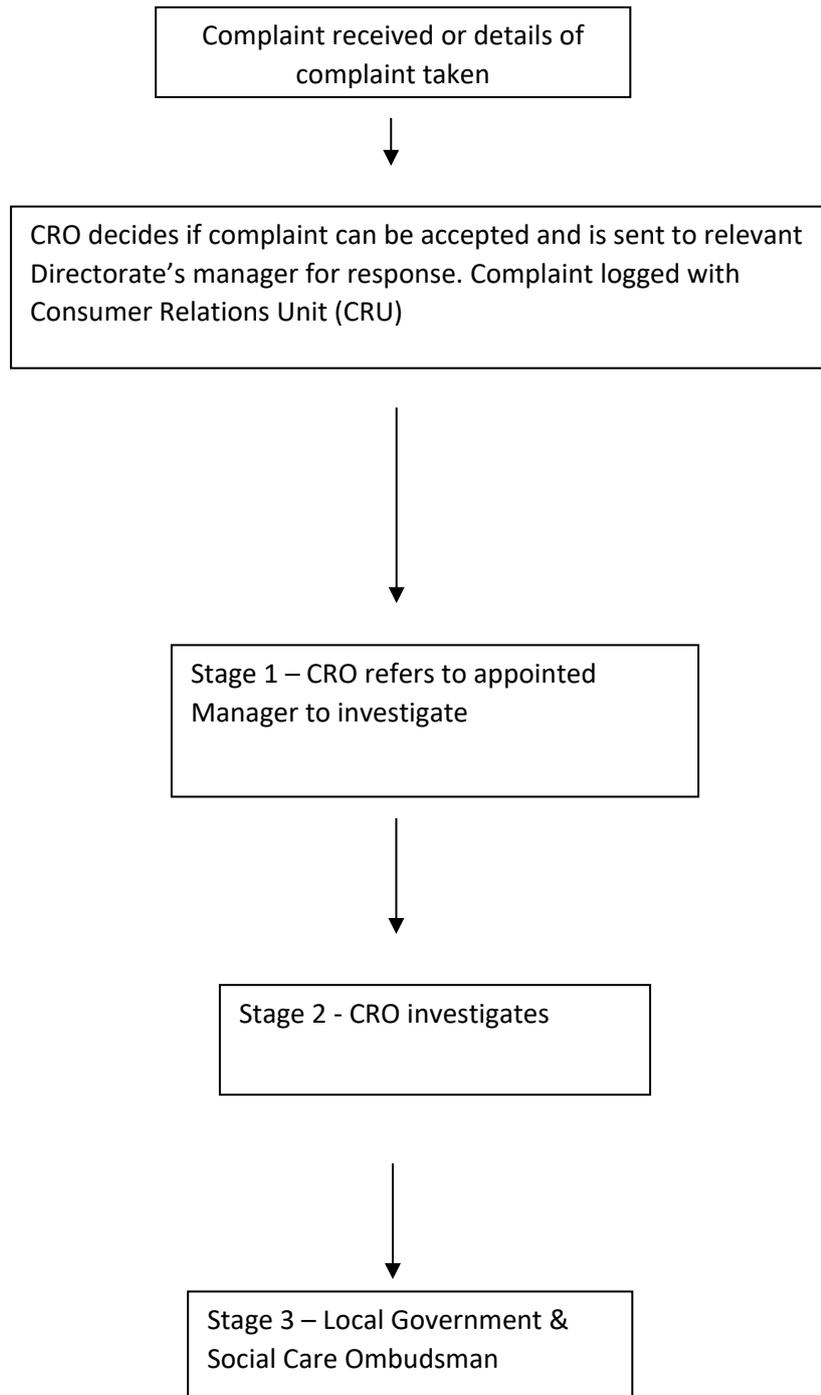
1. Schematic diagram to be produced to demonstrate the complaints process

The schematic diagrams (flow charts) below are for Corporate complaints. The Representation Procedure encompasses comments, compliments and complaints. The procedure is important because:

- It provides a way for members of the community to contact the Council and voice their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with staff or services.
- A well-publicised and efficient Representations Procedure improves communication between the Council and its customers
- It demonstrates to customers that the Council values their comments and are prepared to act on them.
- It enables customers to reward good service by providing a method of recording their compliments. These are used by management to demonstrate to staff that they are working to high standards and are valued by their customers and helps to provide a more balanced view of how successful the Council is at delivering high quality services to the public.
- It enables the Council to re-direct resources/attention thereby improving service.
- It enables the Council to assess customer satisfaction.
- Customers benefit two-fold: they benefit as individuals by having their problems sorted out; and they benefit collectively as a result of improved services.

Complaints are allocated to Managers to respond to. Key Learning is identified by the manager responding and recorded on CRU's database for individual and general learning. The Consumer Relations Officer (CRO) can provide training on the complaint's procedure to staff at all levels. The CRO is also available to visit individual teams to discuss the complaints and representations procedure of any concerns that may arise from it.

Flow Chart for receipt of Corporate complaints



Types of complaints

Informal Complaint

Response/ Action can be completed quickly.

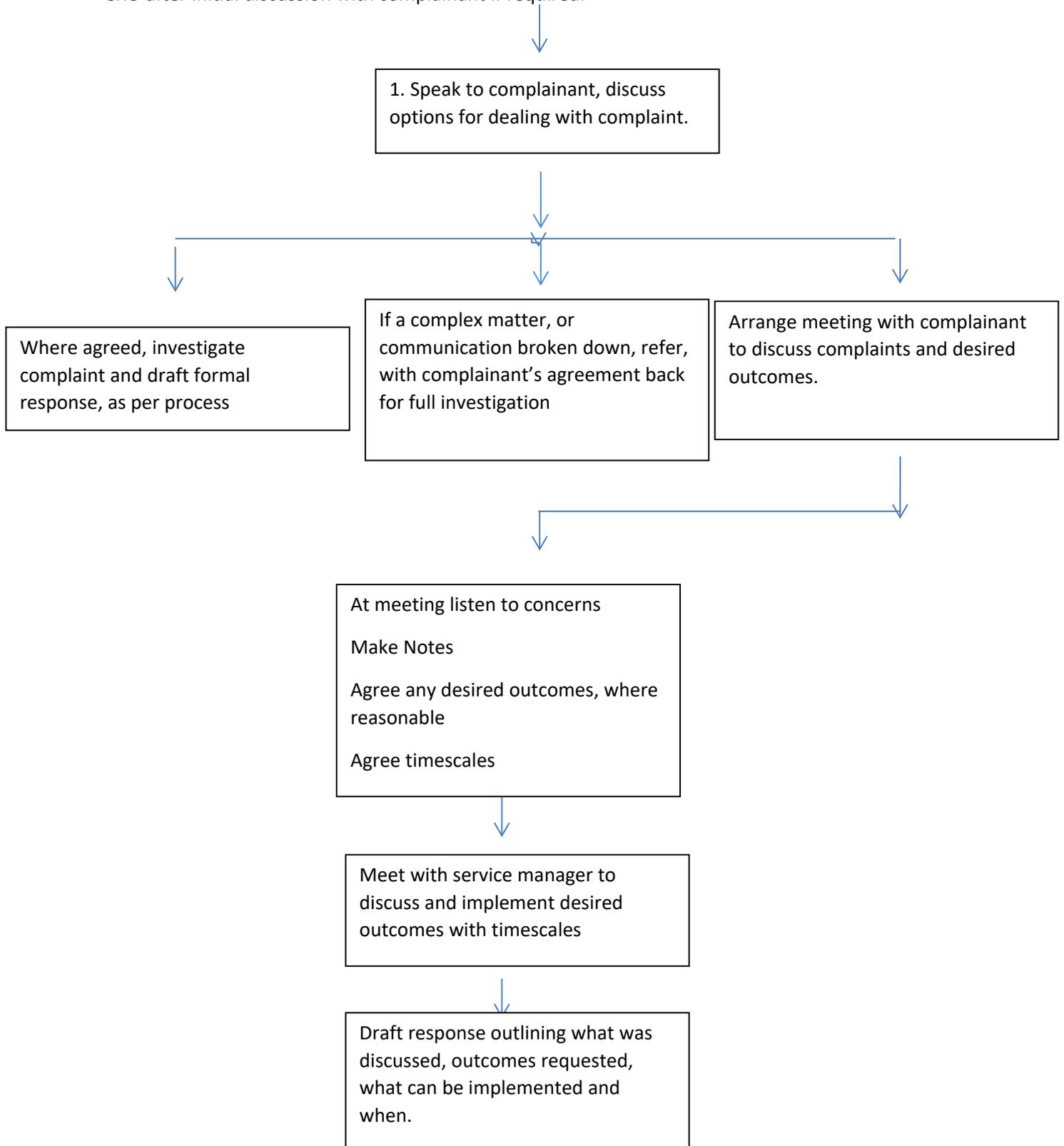
Stage 1 – Team/Group Manager investigates and responds.

Stage 2 – Unhappy with Stage 1 response can request escalation to Stage 2. Investigation conducted and report written for Director to respond. Allocated Investigating Officer or CRO investigates.

Stage 3 – LGO – Unhappy with Stage 2 response can request escalation to LGO.

Process for considering Conciliation or Mediation (Conflict Resolution)

CRO after initial discussion with complainant if required.



2. Explanation of time limits and how performance is measured against this

There are agreed time limits for dealing with complaints, although the LGO suggests a maximum of 3 months. The expectation is that the Stage 1 response should be sent within 20 working days of receipt of the complaint.

Formal complaints can be made either verbally or in writing. The complainant should be acknowledged within 7 working days. The CRO will ensure that the complaint can be accepted and forward the complaint to the relevant Directorate and manager for response to the complainant.

Managers tasked with investigating complaints must have relevant competences to conduct an investigation. If they do not feel adequately equipped, they are advised to contact the CRO for additional training.

Managers and staff must make themselves available for interview, clearing a space in their diary if necessary. Requests for information should also be dealt with promptly. Those dealing with Stage 1 complaints should contact the complainant asap to clarify:

- Details of the complaint and desired outcomes
- How the complainant wants to be kept informed of progress
- A meeting if appropriate
- Whether they need advocacy assistance
- A timescale for dealing with the complaint, or the default timescale.

The CRO should be informed if the timescale agreed is different to the 20 working days, which should include 10 days for the draft response to be signed off by the relevant Officer.

Delays at the initial stage of the complaint process are often caused by:

- difficulty in obtaining consent from the service user (where complaints have been brought by members of the family or friends)
- difficulty in contacting the complainant to agree the complainant's desired outcomes

Delays in progressing and completing complaints are often caused by:

- complexity of the complaint, requiring other agency input such as NYAS or Onside advocacy
- complainants adding to the initial complaint

There is flexibility in how a complaint can be dealt with, and mediation or conciliation meetings can be offered if appropriate.

Overdue complaint responses are monitored and chased by the CRO. The CRO returns responses to investigating officers for further work where necessary.

Reports that detail response times are produced on a quarterly basis, which include timescales for responses. These reports are presented at SLT, DLT and SMT. An Annual Report is also produced. Ad hoc reports are produced on request.

3. Feedback/complaints received by Councillors – consider how this links to the Complaints Team

The guidance states that "all complaints however made or received must be forwarded to the Consumer Relations Unit." This includes complaints received via MPs or Councillors.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of actions by WCC, the discharge of, or failure to discharge a Social Services function which does not fall under the statutory processes for Adults or Children's. If an expression of dissatisfaction is more than an observation and requires either action or a response, then it is deemed to be a complaint.

4. Data for future report – drill down into data to show statistics. Also highlight where delays arise in the process.

A 'deep dive' of quarter 2 response times has been used to illustrate where delays arise in the process.

Stage 1 Responses

Area the complaint relates to	Within 20 working days 2019/20	Over 20 working days 2019/20	Total
Operational Services	104	32	136
Reasons for the delay		<p>20 Complaints allocated to E&I area but received a late response by service due to pressure of workload.</p> <p>7 WCF late responses mainly SEN due to complexity of complaint.</p> <p>2 Adult late responses due to complexity of complaint.</p> <p>3 complaints only 1 or 2 days over timescale.</p>	

Stage 2 Responses

Area the complaint relates to	Within 25 working days 2019/20	Over 25 working days 2019/20	Total
Operational Services	5	6	5
Reasons for the delay		<p>Delay due to IOs having other investigations and leave commitments, which caused delay in report being written.</p>	