

Ombudsman Joint Code Handling Communication Plan v 2.0 Jan 24 (Starts March (early and Mid) leading up to Implementation date

This plan is to track and monitor all communications during and throughout the implementation of the Joint Handling Code

Items for the bulletin should be:

- Information or actions that **managers** specifically need to know (if the message applies equally to all employees, then it should be promoted via the Intranet)
- As concise as possible, with signposting to further detail if the reader wants it.

Items should include:

- The title of your item
- Brief bulleted summary of your message
- Details of any actions you want managers to take, if applicable
- A link to further information (usually an Intranet page, which will need to have been amended or created and made live by

Timescale for Information

Dates	Content of Comms	Completed
Friday 1 st March	New Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code – What is Changing	✓
WC 11 th March	Top tips for IM's and AM's	✓
WC 25 th March	Write article for Intranet – contact is Anne Wanty Look out for Guidance on Sharepoint.	✓

Communications across SCC

Name of Comms	Details	Contact
Monthly Equalities Bulletin	This to all employees across SCC. Email Alaina Briggs	✓
Support to Sheffield	People meetings that involve SCC and outside staff all involved in cost of living, benefits, housing and social cohesion type topics and Cat Arnold sends an update out after the meeting. Readers are members of the public	✓
Behavioural insight	Issy Howie has a developing group across the council.	✓
Managers Bulletin	Marion Reader-Haigh. Katie Ashmore is the contact	✓

Comms do the senior leadership Weekly Message, every week, and there is one on 5 March 2024

Comms also have a Manager Bulletin going out on 6 March 2024 and 25th March 2024

Newsletter	Service / Portfolio	Recipients	Frequency	Contact
Adult care and wellbeing	Adult Care and wellbeing	940	Weekly	Danielle Grant
Practice Development Newsletter	Adult Care and wellbeing	940	Bi-monthly	Andrew Drummond
Education and Skills News Monthly bulletin (next one if mid Feb).	Education and Skills	875	Ad-hoc	John Featherstone
Children and Families, a circular to staff	Childrens Social Services		Weekly	Fiona Addison
Your Home Your Neighbourhood e-bulletin to tenants	Housing Services		Monthly	Fran McGinley
Housing and Neighbourhoods news	Housing Services	865	Monthly	Fran McGinley
Communities Staff Newsletter	Communities	335	Monthly	Steph Warren
PKW Weekly Newsletter	People Keeping Well	325	Weekly	grants@sheffield.gov.uk
The Upload	ICT and digital innovation	111	Monthly	Imogen Wood/Akeem Balogun / Mike Weston
City Futures Update	City Futures	370		Jo Calcutt-Scott, Lorna Jackson
Neighbourhood Services Directorate Staff Newsletter	Neighbourhood Services Directorate	3950		Lesley Blythe
Strategic Support Services	Includes HR etc			Simon Williams
Service Update – Legal Services	Legal Monthly Comms		Monthly	Sharon Pugh
	VCFS			Emma Dickinson

Articles

<p>Message at the beginning of March and wc 25/03/2024</p>	<p>Introduction of the New Joint Complaint Handling Code</p> <p>What is this? The Housing Ombudsman and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman have developed more closely aligned Complaint Handling Codes.</p> <p>The new Codes place statutory requirements on our Housing and Repairs Services. They also provide best practice for the handling and management of all types of complaints.</p> <p>Why is it important to Sheffield City Council?</p>
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They will be implemented and monitored by 1 April 2024 (statutory) for Housing and Repairs Services. For all other areas, the new standards will be implemented by way of a 'soft launch' from 1 April 2024. Monitoring will commence September 2024.

What are the changes?

The new Complaint Codes – applies across all types complains (except for social care which has existing codes).

The complaints procedure is a two staged process:

There will be a revised Policy and Procedure, the main changes are:

All complaints to be acknowledged within 5 working days (currently 3-5 working days) of the complaint being received.

Stage 1 investigation – resolution should now be within 10 working days with a maximum extension period of an additional 10 working days with agreement from customer and reason for the extension. *Any extensions beyond this must be agreed with the complainant.*

Stage 2 investigation review – resolution should now be within 20 working days with a maximum extension period of an additional 20 working days *with agreement from customer and reason for the extension.*

Further changes are: -

- Elimination of problem-solving stage – these should be incorporated as part of Stage 1 (investigation stage). However, we will still try to resolve complaints at the first point of contact or within 5 working days.
- New and strengthened governance arrangements
- Consistent Recording of **all acknowledgements within 5 working days**
- Consistent recording of **all remedies and service improvements and evidence that any service improvements have been implemented.**
- Consistent Recording of **all reasonable adjustments agreed with customer.**
- Consistent recording of **all complaints regarding discrimination/equality – (all protected characteristics)**
- A focus on the prioritisation of complaints, transparency and keeping complainants updated and informed.
- The complainant should be signposted to the Ombudsman, if any extensions are made outside the above timescales and following a Stage 2 response.
- Any extension beyond the published timescales are only allowed with good reason, and the reason(s) will be clearly explained to the complainant and should be routinely recorded in the complaints case management system.

Why do I need to know about these changes?

	<p>If you investigate complaints as an Investigation Manager or you are an Accountable Manager, the new timescales are as detailed above.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You keep the customer updated via personal contact and routinely update CRM with all documentation and updates <p>Will all complaints be affected, Statutory as well as Corporate? No just Corporate Complaints. All complaints covered by an existing statutory duty – remain unaffected.</p> <p>What is next, Do I need to do anything?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book a place on the training sessions for Case Coordinators, Investigating/Accountable Managers – available on Go Learn on a monthly basis from April 2024
<p>W/C 25th March</p> <p>Page 292</p>	<p>We should wait now until wc 25th March to send out final comms and update the intranet as suggested. Re the links below – the revised policy and procedures should also be updated. Whilst these won't be officially signed off by Committee until 17th April – I'll let you have the final versions to be submitted before that date. These will need to be updated in pdf versions and all other docs on these pages reviewed. E.g. Problem solving guide name needs amending to 'Early Resolution, Retrospective Recording Guide'. See:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate complaints procedure Sheffield City Council Intranet • Complaints Sheffield City Council Intranet • Complain about a council service Sheffield City Council (internet) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New CC & IM/AM guidance to follow from @Lisa Brennan