



Name of meeting: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 24 September 2021

Title of report: Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2020-21

Purpose of report:

To update Corporate Governance and Audit on complaint handling for the year 2020-21, a review of the Ombudsman and Third Stage Complaints received. The document also contains details of the Whistleblowing Complaints that have been received.

For Corporate Governance and Audit Committee to consider the content of the report, and to advise if they would like any additional areas for the next interim report.

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Yes
<p>Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?</p> <p>Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?</p>	Julie Muscroft
Cabinet member portfolio	Paul Davies

Electoral wards affected: all

Ward councillors consulted: **none**

Public or private: **Public**

Corporate Customer Standards Annual Report 2020-21

1: Purpose of report

To update Corporate Governance and Audit Committee about complaint issues and performance during the previous financial year.

The report is informed by the Local Government Ombudsman Annual Report which is published late July. The report also incorporates information about third stage complaints handling, some key examples of learning and a summary of the Whistleblowing concerns that have been received.

2: Background processes

Appendix 1 contains details of the council's complaint processes.

3: Complaint Statistics – how is Kirklees performing?

This part of the report sets out the performance of the council in relation to several formal criteria.

Ombudsman Formal Report

The ultimate sanction that the Local Government Ombudsman can apply is to issue a formal report against a council. These are usually issued where a matter is very serious and the council clearly has a number of process issues to consider and resolve, where there is a public interest in matters and learning can be shared with other councils, or where the council clearly has not reflected or changed its procedures after issues had been highlighted in the past.

In 2020-21, there were no formal reports issued against Kirklees Council. The last formal report published against Kirklees was made in 2018.

Ombudsman Upheld Complaints

Overall numbers are very similar to previous years.

It should however be noted that the Ombudsman was closed for new complaints for 3 months of the year. It is difficult to consider what impact the pandemic the complaint had on complainant behaviour. Some residents may have decided to withdraw their complaints, others may have progressed them.

In 2020-21, 21 cases were formally investigated (23 in the previous year). There were 13 upheld complaints by the Ombudsman (2019/20: 12 cases).

Details of the upheld complaints are provided in [Appendix 2](#) with the summary of the case provided by the Ombudsman.

The proportion of cases upheld by the Ombudsman in Kirklees (62%) is lower than average for comparable authorities (72%) and was the lowest out of the 5 West

Yorkshire Councils. While the percentage upheld for Kirklees is higher than last year (52%), it relates to just one additional upheld case in the year for our council area.

100% of the Ombudsman's recommended actions were complied with.

The third measure published by the Ombudsman appears somewhat arbitrary; the percentage of upheld cases where the remedy offered by the council equals what the Ombudsman might also conclude. It does not take account of satisfactory remedies that do not reach the Ombudsman. This figure for Kirklees is 8% in 2019-20 (or one case). The importance of this measure is to reflect that the Ombudsman expects councils to actively seek to remedy identified complaints.

The corporate complaints team have continued to work with services to ensure they consider what an appropriate remedy might be if they have identified an error (and try to ensure any remedy is in line with what the Ombudsman might conclude), and to actively seek to resolve complaint matters.

Comparison with other councils: Ombudsman Investigations

We can also compare Kirklees performance against West Yorkshire as a whole. The Kirklees population is approximately 19% of the West Yorkshire total, and this can be used as a basic measure to see whether the council attracts more or fewer complaints than may be anticipated. This year Kirklees attracts a proportionate rate of referral, but fewer upheld complaints than might be anticipated by population.

The figure is slightly higher than previous years, but this was not a typical year (not least the Ombudsman's office was closed for 3 months of the year).

LA Area	Number of 2020-21 Mob investigations	Number of 2020-21 Omb Upholds	Percentage Upheld
Leeds	33	25	76%
Bradford	23	19	83%
Calderdale	12	11	92%
Wakefield	8	6	75%
Kirklees	21	13	62%
Kirklees Proportion	21/107 = 19.6% (19% of overall population)	13/74 = 17.5% (19% of overall population)	Ombudsman peer group 72%

Standard statistical caveats apply, in that with small numbers, as few of two extra or fewer investigations can make quite a difference to the figures.

It should be highlighted that Kirklees always promote the next stage of the complaints process, so residents are aware of their right to progress their concerns to the Ombudsman.

Some residents might not have confidence in the Ombudsman process (which is about matching the council's actions against the appropriate legislation/policy) meaning figures about dissatisfaction are deflated. However, this would be common across all councils so the proportions should hold credence.

Given the unusual year, we have viewed the decisions made by the Ombudsman over the first quarter of 2021-22. The measure is different to that outlined above, but Kirklees attracted 12 (18.7%) of the 64 West Yorkshire cases with published decisions received, and 4 Kirklees cases were upheld from 19 West Yorkshire upheld cases (21%) (so these are essentially in line with population proportions, but the caveats above also apply).

Complaint Volumes

Appendix 3 contains historical comparison data regarding the number of complaints received at third stage.

Numbers in 20-21 are similar to the previous year, and somewhat lower than the years prior.

While the drop may well in part be related to the pandemic, it is also worth noting that the Corporate Customer Standards Team are getting more involved with pre third stage complaints also.

2018-2019	703 Cases Customer Standards involved
2019-2020	782 Cases Customer Standards involved
2020-2021	858 Cases Customer Standards involved

There has been a large further increase this 2021-22 financial year (so far) In the first five months of this year, customer standards have seen 555 cases (1332 cases projected in a full year). Numbers can fluctuate considerably, so this increase may not be sustained.

The reasons for this increase may be varied but include escalation by the customer in cases of non-response, fewer dedicated complaints managers within services, changes in escalation routes, more services asking for advice on complaint handling.

The increase in numbers is having an impact upon the effectiveness of the section, although recruitment of a further staff member to the team is ongoing.

Additional work beyond third stage and Ombudsman undertaken by the department includes:

- giving advice to services about complaints handling,
- looking at resolving complaints presented to the Chief Executive, Directors and those that appear complex at an early stage,

- co-ordinating replies between services where the complaint straddles a number of areas to ensure complaint responses are collated.
- dealing with repeated enquiries/vexatious complaints

The numbers considered by the corporate customer services team have increased considerably over recent years, and it is likely this early intervention work has contributed to ensuring that third stage and Ombudsman complaints have not increased.

5: Changes and trends

It's difficult from a complaints perspective to identify exactly what the impact of the pandemic was. People have reacted in different ways during the pandemic.

Anecdotal evidence suggests there was a large drop in complaint numbers during the early days of the pandemic and some cases that were ongoing at the point of pandemic were dropped.

Conversely, some individual's anxieties about the pandemic were perhaps reflected by the importance they placed upon their complaints (not necessary with any direct relationship to coronavirus), and there have been an increased incidence of more persistent behaviour.

It may be with more people at home that issues around planning and neighbour nuisance in particular became more prevalent and important to them, even as behaviours started to return to more standard patterns.

An analysis of the planning complaints received are provided in Appendix 3.

Unfortunately plans to start to spread restorative working in the area of complaints was affected by the pandemic. While staff numbers of the section have increased since 2008 (from 1.5 FTE to 2.5 FTE), there remains less time to devote to each individual complaint investigation and peaks and troughs of work are created. There has been a surge of work during the latter part of 2020-21 and ongoing, part created by the Ombudsman closedown (in spring/summer of 2020), and also from work generated by complaints received about Business Grants. The Ombudsman is currently reviewing a considerable number of Business Grant complaints across the country.

We are currently completing a new Job Profile for the post of Assistant Corporate Customer Standards Manager. This will enable some flexibility to deal with the peaks of work that arise, and to potentially create capacity to become involved in additional complaints work, and to continue to support services to improve complaints performance and to try to push resolution to an earlier point in the process.

A number of learning from complaint examples in year and a few are highlighted below as examples.

Learning from Complaints: Example Bereavement Services

We received a complaint from a relative relating to a grave that had been laid down because it was considered to be unsafe and at risk of falling.

The complaints investigation determined that the council's record keeping on this particular grave was incomplete, and there were issues with recording the registered owners of grave sites.

Service Managers and legal service support recognised that the process around considering poorly maintained gravestones might benefit from review and arranged for representatives to attend a training course provided by the professional body.

Following from this, the managers met, and have identified a number of process and record keeping areas that could benefit from improvement. The internet advice requires further review.

The complainant has a professional interest in the area and is being consulted and kept up to date.

Learning from Complaints – Waste Collection

Many households main contact with the council is via waste collection. While the service receive many one-off enquiries relating to missed collection which can be caused by a variety of issues (from road conditions, poor public parking, failed bin presentation, human error, vehicle failure), there are a small number of repeated complaints.

While service managers are responsive to seeking to arrange to resolve matters on a case-by-case basis, there has been less focus on identifying and coordinating those regular complaints and formally responding to those customers who anticipate more than just a collection as a response.

The service is undertaking a review of its customer contact arrangements and record keeping, and we anticipate an improvement in service delivery which will significantly reduce dissatisfaction with complaint response, particularly for repeat complaints.

Learning from Complaints – Business Grants

The government asked councils to administer a range of Business Grant schemes as part of its response to the pandemic. The guidance that was provided did not contain a lot of administrative detail and there was no set review process described. The service usually has anything up to a couple of years to introduce a new scheme, here they had less than 2 months.

The Government also required a very rapid timescale for payments to businesses to be made, meaning there was an increased risk of introducing fraud and error into the administration process.

Clearly there was a high risk of the new process generating complaint.

Kirklees consulted heavily with neighbouring authorities to help provide assurance to its administrative processes, and while there was no (statutorily required) review process, it also introduced a formal reconsideration process for claims. This enabled a check process for rejected applications to be given a second, deeper consideration. Internal Audit were involved in reviewing decisions made and to undertake additional fraud and error work with payments.

While along with all other councils, Kirklees received a considerable number of challenges from unsuccessful businesses, the secondary reconsideration process considerably reduced the level of incorrectly determined claims and has given assurance that more claims were correctly considered.

Learning from Complaints – Planning objection publicity

In year, the local planning authority found their planning objection process coming under increased pressure. The process is that comments on proposed planning developments are published on our website with light redaction to remove the individual's identity.

A number of complaints were received from local residents who were concerned that various objections displayed on our website from other residents, unfairly represented the situation. Conversely, others were complaining that aspects of their planning objection comments were unnecessarily being redacted.

Clearly the planning authority are required to enable the public to comment upon proposed plans and recognise that the comments provided should be made public wherever possible. The comment is only formally considered at the point of the decision on the application.

A review of the objections determined a light touch review of comments to remove anything obviously offensive or inappropriate in the comment. However, subjective comments (perhaps a honestly held opinion as to the formal status of an aspect of the application) would remain, as it would enable further comment/opinion/correction to be received. This ensured the department had a consistent approach to the complaints and comment it had received.

7: Whistleblowing Concerns

The Head of Risk and the Corporate Customer Standards Officer co-ordinate investigations for those cases directly reported to the Whistleblowing telephone line and email address. Other investigations may take place through issues reported to the HR section, direct to Internal audit, the external auditor or to the Chief Executive's Office.

It is worth noting that many of the cases received fall outside of the technical definition of a Whistleblowing complaint (the legislation seeks to protect internal staff if they "whistle-blow") and many concerns arrive from members of the public.

Services are reminded that employee whistle-blowers are legally protected from persecution and that they should play their part to ensure that reviews are impartial and that concerns are reasonably considered.

Whistleblowing issues may be referred to the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee or to Scrutiny for their consideration. Those investigated by internal audit are reported as a part of other reporting mechanisms to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.

Whistleblowing contact details when provided always remain confidential on request.

During the year 2020-21 15 Whistleblowing referrals were received via either the Whistleblowing e-mail address (www.whistleblowing@kirklees.gov.uk) or telephone (01484 225030). This was a significant reduction from 33 the previous year, but more in line with the usual numbers received.

With more home working, it is possible there were reduced tensions between colleagues which resulted in fewer referrals and concerns about treatment and favouritism.

The whistleblowing reports received and how they were dealt with can be found in **Appendix 4**.

8: Information required to take a decision

This is detailed in the report above

9: Implications for the Council

- 3.1 **Working with People** – It is important that customers feel that – as far as is reasonable- they are fairly treated
- 3.2 **Working with Partners** – None directly, although their roles and actions sometimes appear within complaint resolution issues
- 3.3 **Place Based Working** – None directly
- 3.4 **Improving outcomes for children**– improved outcomes for all customers is an important part of any complaints process- both resolving the immediate complaint and understanding what can be learnt, as addressed in the report above
- 3.5 **Climate change and air quality**- None directly
- 3.6 **Other (e.g., Legal/Financial or Human Resources)**- the work to resolve complaints both within Service areas and Directorates, and through the central team is an important part of caring, for citizens, customers and staff, suppliers and businesses.

10: Consultees and their opinions

There are no consultees to this report although executive team, service directors and heads of service are involved in understanding complaints handling, and they and or the teams have detailed involvement in all complaint handling by the corporate team and Ombudsman

11: Next steps and timelines

To consider if any additional activity, or further reports or information is sought.

12: Officer recommendations and reasons

1. Members are asked to note the Report and determine if any further action is sought on any matter identified.

13: Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations

Not applicable

14: Contact officer

Chris Read (01484 221000 x73579)

15: Background Papers and History of Decisions

Ombudsman Annual Report 2021

16: Service Director responsible

Julie Muscroft; Legal, Governance, Commissioning & Risk

Appendix 1

Recap of the Council's Complaints Procedure

The council's complaint process for 2021-22 has three internal stages.

First stage – the complainant initially contacts the council to express dissatisfaction about the service they have received. Many of these complaints are resolved by front line staff immediately, as errors are spotted corrected and an apology offered, or an explanation is given to explain the situation to justify why the situation is accurate.

Second stage – this is where the complainant remains dissatisfied and the complaint is referred to a senior manager within the appropriate service to consider.

Third stage – the Corporate Customer Standards Officer will review the actions taken by the service on behalf of the Council and Chief Executive and consider whether anything further can be done to resolve the complaint. The Local Government Ombudsman requires the council to give the complaint a final review before they may become involved with it.

Some complaints do not progress through the council's complaints procedure; these are usually complaints where a formal review process applies such as complaints relating to Childrens and Adults Services and Housing Benefit assessment complaints. The Ombudsman will consider some complaints before third stage review if they are considered urgent (for example school admission appeals).

Complaint stages are sometimes merged depending on the type of complaint received so as to ensure matters are dealt with appropriately and to ensure the complainant can progress to the Ombudsman as quickly as possible if matters have been dealt with.

Appendix 2: Summary of the cases upheld by the Ombudsman 2020-21

The summary of the case provided by the Ombudsman in each case is as follows (the wording used in the summary is that provided by the Ombudsman to ensure impartiality).

Omb Case Reference	Service Area	Summary
18 016 766	Education	There were delays by the Council in the implementation of alternative educational provision for a child out of school; and the provision, once implemented, was inadequate. There were also delays in the implementation of the child's specialist provision, and confusion and delays in the Council's complaint handling. The Council had already offered a partial remedy for these faults, but has agreed with the Ombudsman's recommendation to increase its offer.
18 018 267	Adults Charging	Mrs R complained about the Council's handling of her mother's care costs and its delays in responding to her complaint. The Council was late sending a bill of increased care costs, which caused the family worry and stress. It has apologised and reduced the invoice to reflect the injustice caused by its delay. It will review its processes to avoid a recurrence.
19 008 358	Adult Care Services	Mrs B complained the Council failed to properly investigate and take action when she reported a safeguarding concern, delayed identifying an alternative care provider and delayed completing the investigation and telling her the outcome. Some parts of the safeguarding investigation were not carried out properly, the outcome was not clearly identified and the Council delayed telling Mrs B about the conclusion. That led Mrs B to have to go to time and trouble to pursue her complaint and undermined her confidence in the robustness of the investigation. There is no fault in the delay identifying a new care agency. An apology, payment to Mrs B and reminder to officers is satisfactory remedy.
19 009 470	Adult Care Services	Mr X complained about the actions of the Council when the care home his mother lived in raised a safeguarding alert. Mr X said this caused him distress and his mother's health to deteriorate, eventually leading to her death. The Council carried

		out a satisfactory investigation which identified fault in its own actions and those of the care home. It made recommendations to prevent a recurrence of the issues complained about.
19 010 427	Education	There was fault by the Council in failing to provide alternative education when it became aware a pupil was receiving less than full-time education. This resulted in loss of education for six months and placed additional stress on the family. Recommendations for an apology, a financial payment and service improvements are made.
19 010 641	Childrens	Ms X complained the Council did not follow correct procedures when it received a safeguarding referral about her child. The Council appropriately investigated her complaint under the statutory children's complaints procedure, so the Ombudsman will not re-investigate the complaint. The Council was at fault for delay at both stage 2 and stage 3 of the process which caused Ms X uncertainty and distress. It will pay Ms X £150 to remedy this.
19 013 110	Adults – Domiciliary Care	Mrs X complains on behalf of her late father, Mr Y, about the care provided by the Council. She says this caused much stress and meant Mr Y's last days were chaotic. She wants the Council to take the matter seriously and the Care Provider to be more accountable. The Ombudsman finds the care provided to Mr Y put him at an increased risk of harm and caused him distress. It also caused Mrs X and Mrs Y stress and frustration. The Council has agreed to apologise to Mrs Y and Mrs X, pay them £350 and waive 20% of the care costs to remedy the injustice. It will also take action to prevent similar problems in future.
19 014 729	Adults Charging	There is evidence of fault in this complaint. The Council took too long to complete a financial assessment which led to Mr & Mrs X receiving a large bill. There is no evidence to suggest the Council told Mrs X the care would be free.
19 017 084	Adults – assessment and care plan	Ms X complained on behalf of her daughter, Ms Y, about the Council's re-assessment of Ms Y's care and support needs. The Ombudsman found no fault in the Council's decision to re-assess Ms Y's needs. There were problems in the assessment process,

		but the Council worked with Ms X to resolve them. The Council was at fault for delays putting in place an increase to Ms Y's direct payments and for not offering Ms X a carer's assessment. It agreed to offer a remedy.
19 019 202	Adults – assessment and care plan	There is evidence of fault in this complaint. Between March 2018 and September 2019, the Council failed to ensure all Mrs X's needs were met. It focused only on her personal care needs and failed to take account of her domestic situation. The Council's failures caused an injustice to the whole family, but particularly to Mr X who suffered the strain of an increased caring role.
19 020 880	Adults – charging	Mr and Mrs X complained the Council failed to inform them that Mrs X's care was chargeable prior to receiving an invoice for the care. Mr and Mrs X also complained about charges being applied after they had cancelled the care package and for cancelled visits. The Council accepted fault for the delay in confirming the care charges and offered to reduce the charges to £1,345.36. The Council accepted the Ombudsman's recommendation of a further reduction of £774.08 to reflect the injustice caused through the Council's delay.
20 000 762	Business Grant	The Council was at fault for providing inaccurate information about eligibility for a business grant. The Council has now agreed to pay Mr X £500 for the direct injustice caused. That is an appropriate remedy, so the Ombudsman will not pursue the complaint further. Other parts of the complaint are more appropriately for the courts.
19 020 860	Refuse and Recycling	Miss X complained the Council failed to collect the bins from her house on numerous occasions within the first few months of 2020. Miss X also complained about the way in which the Council has handled her complaint. The Council was at fault for not collecting Miss X's bins and delays in arranging catch-up collection. The Council has resolved the bin collection issue in April 2020. The Council has agreed to provide Miss X with an apology and £100 to recognise the distress, time and trouble caused.

Appendix 3: Historical comparison data regarding the number of complaints received at third stage:

This is the second year the Ombudsman has presented its figures in a consistent way, but unfortunately the impact of the pandemic again makes it difficult to compare outcomes over time.

The ombudsman received 73 contacts in the year (as opposed to 123 the previous year). This was in part created by a 3 month shut down by the Ombudsman.

Numbers for Ombudsman Contacts for individual service areas in Kirklees are as follows:

Service Area	2019-20	%	2020-21	%
Adult Care Services	25	20	8	11
Benefits, Tax, NNDR	9	7	13	18
Corporate & Other	13	11	5	7
Education and Childrens	29	24	9	12
Env Services and Public Protection	24	19	12	16
Highways and Transport	7	6	5	7
Housing	6	5	7	10
Planning	10	8	14	19
TOTAL	123		73	

Third Stage Complaints - investigated internally

Service	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Adults	3	1	4	2	4	1
Benefits, C Tax & NNDR	16	16	14	6	7	6
Corporate and others	19	15	10	6	12	7
Children's and Education	4	5	5	11	7	2
Environment & Public Protection	15	16	29	31	19	19
Highways and Transport	6	11	3	8	7	7
Housing (including KNH)	5	2	2	4	2	4
Planning	18	19	15	20	13	26
Total	86	85	82	88	71	72
% upheld and Part Upheld	20.9%	21%	20.7%	22.7%	21.1%	18%

It is always very tempting to try to extrapolate some comment about individual services, but given the low number of overall contacts, it is more prudent to consider individual cases and learning from them rather than to draw too many conclusions.

The most striking figure in the set is the doubling of numbers of third stage planning complaints from 13 to 26.

Analysis of Planning third stage complaints

Analysis of these figures within Planning identified a wide spread of complaint

3 were recorded in relation to local campaigns against larger contentious developments (some duplicate replies were prepared to a number of residents from these 3 lead complaints).

3 related to planning enforcement issues (1 from a developer who felt enforcement was inappropriate, 1 about a complaint about a change of use development that was statutorily out of time to take action, 1 about an enforcement where taking action was determined not to be proportionate (a parking surface treatment).

13 related to concerns about development plans for neighbouring premises.

(3 about an extension, 1 about a sports facility in the development site, concerns about the location of development on disputed land, a concern about a proposal near a conservation area, and ones about a garage, a consent for wall repair, and highway and access concerns).

1 related to a matter out of planning jurisdiction (powerlines)

4 related to disputed neighbour comments on the website

2 were issues which should be progressed to the Planning Inspectorate as it was the planning applicant that complained.

It should be noted that complaints in the planning process were largely not upheld, in that the decision could be demonstrated to have been taken appropriately and where the relevant concerns could be demonstrated to have been considered.

There were a small number of issues (4) which related more to timescales of consideration and about errors in wording and descriptions within the planning report, which did not affect the outcome.

It should be highlighted that the planning complaints process is led by a designated complaints officer, who considers the complaint against the legislative requirements, and where a process error is identified will consider the impact of that error.

A review of the process whereby public comment is displayed on the web was undertaken as a result of the complaints received.

Appendix 4: Summary of Whistleblowing Cases received

Cases with a star indicate that the whistleblower was a council employee and was thus making a Whistleblowing concern in accordance with the legislation. For administrative ease, we investigate concerns raised by members of the public in a similar way.

Concern	Outcome
A call was received that a council vehicle had visited a residential address to collect and transport private items.	A disciplinary hearing with the driver was undertaken
* There was a concern that a member of staff had been promoted without undergoing the standard recruitment processes	The appropriate process had been followed.
* There was a concern about some comments made from a School Head teacher in a council controlled school	The individual was referred to the school's whistleblowing process, where school governors consider matters raised.
That a private organisation used by the council had furloughed staff while still receiving funding for the work by the council	The matter was investigated. There are a number of reasons where furlough may have been appropriate to claim.
* A former member of staff complained about racism from their manager when they worked at the council.	The matter had been raised and investigated under HR procedures almost a decade ago and the opportunity to appeal the decision had expired.
* A member of staff had complained about how they had been treated by their manager, and how controlling they were.	The matter was referred to HR for investigation.
* A member of staff was concerned that the management was discriminating against them because they were required to shield.	The situation was complex and connected to a formal disciplinary matter

There were concerns that a contractor had been appointed on favourable terms	It had been confirmed that the appropriate tendering process had taken place.
* Concerns were raised about the recruitment, performance and other interests of a senior manager within a council department.	No specific evidence was provided. The officer was recruited appropriately, their performance was considered acceptable, their external interest was not one for personal gain and had been declared.
* A member of staff had posted questionable controversial content on their social media page.	<p>The individual had not declared (on their web page) they worked for the council, the questionable content was set only for "friends" to view, and while unwise was not of the worst kind.</p> <p>A discussion took place with the individual; they recognised the concerns and committed not to repost such material.</p>
* A member of staff was exceeding their authority in seeking information from another service. There were some data security concerns, although the information was not shared with the individual.	Information was passed to the manager and a discussion and advice with the member of staff was provided. There was no evidence the information sought was for personal gain.
* A school member was concerned around advice provided to colleagues around covid 19 which they felt was inaccurate.	Clarification was sought from the school and the individual whistleblower also took advice from their union. While the communication was not without fault, it was determined the actual advice shared was correct.
* A large number of concerns about a service's operation was shared.	Covid delayed investigation as the service operations had altered, so processes could not be investigated. A number of staff interviews took place, some concerns have been clarified and explanations provided, some investigation work remains ongoing.
A member of staff forwarded a sales email from their council account to their personal account which they then forwarded to another party.	This did not relate to council business, although a very minor breach of the council's use of electronic equipment was identified.
* Concerns about the head of a council maintained school was shared.	Discussion about using the school's complaints procedure was discussed. Some information was shared with the safeguarding unit for advice. Discussion with the Head and Governors around elements of the complaint took place.

	Some changes in process were introduced by the school.
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