



Customer Feedback

South Kesteven District Council
Sue Griffiths
Head of people, projects and performance

 Your council working for you


What was starting point?

- No overall consistent approach
- Approach not underpinned by detailed guidance
- Ethos of how to deal with customer feedback not explicit
- Compliments not being always added into system
- Requirements for Covalent (our performance management system) not fully understood by all
- Cross service complaints sometimes not being owned by a particular manager
- Standards different – some excellent but not shared

 Your council working for you

What have we done?

- Looked at all feedback in detail weekly
- Feed issues back to managers (said what was good too)
- Met with all the team to understand what they did currently and how they could improve
- Researched practice in other councils
- Commissioned some training – some for all staff and specific skills
- Developed letter templates
- Developed area on intranet
- Set up a customer focus group

 Your council working for you

Outcomes

- Ensured complaints are handled more swiftly
- Produced letters less likely to escalate the complaint
- Been clearer about what is a complaint – not just that someone does not like a proper decision
- Collected better data in Covalent so we can start using lessons learnt
- Captured compliments better and now thank customers for them
- Customer feedback process being reviewed

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure

- Based on best practice and research
- Clear definition of complaints, comments and compliments
- Linked to values and behaviours *"We listen and respond to our customers"*
- What is not a complaint e.g where there are separate appeals procedures
- Details of process – any method of contact
- Set timescales for dealing with complaints
- Acknowledgement of compliments

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure - complaints

- How will it work?
 - Stage One – up to Service Manager with Head of Service reviewing all letters
 - Stage Two - Independent Head of Service to review (within 3 months of initial complaint)
 - Stage Three – Independent Director – thorough review prior to LG Ombudsman
 - Housing Panel for housing tenants

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure - complaints

- What will it improve?
 - More independence at an earlier stage
 - Management can changes procedure or policies that cause problems
 - Length wait for different stages –clearer deadlines
 - Ad hoc Members Panel frustrating for all met infrequently, takes time to convene, is a very adversarial experience, limited powers to make amends, does not feel independent to many
 - Quicker route to Ombudsman for those who feel they have a serious grievance

 Your council working for you

Improved procedure – role of Members

- Cabinet and Scrutiny will receive an annual report, together with Ombudsman letter
- Clear procedure for Members to communicate to their residents and help them
- More focus on learning lessons – Members can make recommendations from range of feedback
- Knowledge that SK is operating best practice

 Your council working for you
