

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>2 JULY 2010</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>CUSTOMER INSIGHT UNIT (COMPLIMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMMENTS)</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Purpose**

To provide an update on the work to develop a joint Herefordshire Public Services (HPS) feedback policy and the Customer Insight Unit (CIU).

### **Recommendation(s)**

**THAT: the update be noted and the continued development of the joint working arrangements supported, subject to any comments the Committee wishes to make.**

### **Key Points Summary**

- Complaints and feedback before January 2010 were managed locally by services across Herefordshire Council. This resulted in differences in the way complaints were managed and inconsistent quality of processing. The establishment of the standard system has rectified this issue.
- Complainants could continue to pursue their issue with different officers or departments, using the lack of internal co-ordination to further their cause. Where complainants have attempted this, the CIU have been able to stop it.
- As a result, complaints would often get escalated up to 'Stage 3' arbitrarily. This escalation process did not add a great deal of value to the complaint handling process. To date, no complaint which has been received since 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010 has been taken on by the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Because there was no unified, standardised system for dealing with complaints, it was impossible to acquire an overview across the council. This is now possible and forms part of performance monitoring reports to JMT.
- The Herefordshire Customer Insight Unit was established on 4 January 2010.
- It established a single point of contact for Herefordshire Council and PCT for all customer-instigated feedback, including complaints, comments and compliments.
- The Insight Unit is based at Garrick House in Hereford and is made up of officers from across the council and PCT, who work together to administer and monitor feedback.

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Further information on the subject of this report is available from  
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- Since January 4, a total of 177 compliments and 352 complaints have been received by the unit.

## Introduction and Background

1. The new unit was established on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010, to coincide with the change to Herefordshire Council's constitution.
2. The new complaints and feedback policy, which was based on the Adult Health and Social Care statutory requirements for complaints began to be used for the management of feedback at the same time.
3. The Unit was intended to establish a single point of contact for all feedback across Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire. To this end, information and advice was cascaded across the county entitled 'Making experiences count'.
4. The overall number of officers from across NHS Herefordshire and Herefordshire Council assigned to the unit equated to 4.5 fte's, with some limited support from the Children and Young People's Directorate.
5. The department was established using a 'soft launch' approach, as the overall extent of workload was uncertain, particularly in some areas of Herefordshire Council, and by establishing a single point of contact, it was not immediately apparent whether the demand could be catered for adequately.
6. A major advantage of the CIU and the adoption of a standard process means there is a single administrative system (SAP CRM) used to manage the feedback coming into the Council and PCT. Before the CIU, the system was used inconsistently across the council and so a picture of overall levels of feedback and trends thereof was impossible to determine. Within both Provider Services and Commissioning, For Information Governance purposes the information held on the administrative system relating to health services is very limited at present.
7. It is, however possible to see the relative levels of feedback received across the council and PCT, by directorate. To date, a total of 529 contacts have been received through the unit, of which 177 were compliments and 352 were complaints (see table 1, below).

**Table 1: Overall Level of Feedback by Type and Proportion received by the Customer Insight Unit between January 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2010.**

By Directorate	Count of Compliments	Count of Complaints	% Compliments	% Complaints
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Children and Young People</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>7%</b>
<b>Environment and Culture</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Regeneration</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>PCT</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>352</b>		

8. Of the 352 complaints that have been received by the CIU, it appears that to date, 0 have been escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman and 0 have been

escalated to the Parliamentary and Health Services Ombudsman. This picture may change as complainants decide to pursue their issue subsequently. However, this level of escalation to the LGO in particular appears to have reduced somewhat.

9. The feedback has been received through a variety of methods, although it appears that email, telephone and letter (mostly the 'Making Experiences Count' leaflet) are broadly similar in popularity.

**Table 2: Feedback received since January 2010 by access channel**

Directorate	E-Mail	In Person	Internet	Letter	Telephone	Grand Total
Adult Social Care	5	1	1	12	4	23
Children and Young People	3			10	4	17
Deputy Chief Executive	23	17		9	17	66
PCT	3			43	7	53
Environment and Culture	68	27		67	108	270
Regeneration	17	4		31	8	60
Resources	8	7		8	4	27
Others	10			1	2	3
Grand Total	137	56	1	181	154	519

10. To date, individual managers and services have received feedback from the CIU. As the level and detail of the information available has developed, it will now be possible to begin to report more widely, as per the original action plan.
11. From May 2010, the information received via the Customer Insight Unit will be used to inform the Customer Insight component of the joint corporate performance report to JMT.
12. In April 2010, a mini-conference was organised for key stakeholders from across Herefordshire. The culmination of the morning's discussion was an action plan, which will inform future developments of the management of feedback across Health and Local Government Services in the county. This action plan will also inform the future development of the management of the Customer Insight Unit.
13. **Next Steps:**

As the CIU continues to develop over the next few months, the following steps will be taken to further improve the service:

- Recruitment into substantive posts within the unit.
- Corporate feedback policy will be reviewed and updated, if necessary.
- Joint corporate report will begin (reporting to services will also begin).
- Feedback improvement action plan will be implemented.

## Background Papers

None identified