

Learning from Complaints 2023/24

Quarter 4 – 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024

	No. of Stage 1 complaint's
No. of Stage 1 complaints received	1
No. escalated to Stage 2	0
Stage 1 – response in 5 working days	1
Average no. of working days to respond	5
Stage 1 - Extended to 10 working days	0
Average no. of working days to respond	0
All stage 1 complaints – Average no. of working days for response	5
Outcome at Stage 1 - upheld/partially upheld/not upheld/ resolved	0 upheld/0 partially upheld/0 not upheld/1 resolved

	No. of Stage 2 complaint's
Stage 2 – no. escalated from Stage 1	0
Stage 2 – response in 20 working days	0
Average no. of working days to respond	0
Stage 2 – no. started at Stage 2	1
Stage 2 - response in 20 working days	20
Average no. of working days to respond	20
Total number of Stage 2 complaints	1
Outcome at Stage 2 - upheld/partially upheld/not upheld/ resolved	0 upheld/1 partially upheld/0 not upheld/0 resolved

Total Complaints submitted: 2

No. of Stage 1 complaints as a % of all complaints: 1 (50%)

No. of Stage 2 complaints as a % of all complaints: 1 (50%)

Complaints resolved as a % of all complaints: 1 (50%)

Complaints upheld as a % of all complaints: 0 (0%)

Complaints partially upheld as a % of all complaints: 1(50%)

Complaints not upheld as a % of all complaints: 0 (0%)

Complaints referred to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO): 0 (0%)

Outcome of Stage 1 Complaints:

There was 1 stage 1 complaint relating to Valuation Roll.

The complaint was regarding the valuation of a commercial premises. The complaint related to the time taken to consider an enquiry made by the ratepayer. The issue was in relation to the length of time taken to look at the evidence provided by the ratepayer and make a decision as to whether the Valuation Roll should be amended. An apology was provided by the Valuer dealing with the enquiry to the ratepayer as the length of time taken to respond to their enquiry had been out with the timescale we aim to provide. This was due to the high volume of work and the fact that time-sensitive work was given priority, such as proposals and appeals. The property was subsequently updated on the Valuation Roll to reflect the current use and the ratepayer was satisfied with this outcome.

*The complaint was **resolved**.*

Outcome of Stage 2 Complaints:

There was 1 stage 2 complaint relating to Council Tax which was started at stage 2.

There were 2 issues raised as grounds for the CT payers complaint which related to a Council Tax proposal/appeal. We advised that although we were unable to consider the CT payer's proposal as a complaint as there is a separate and distinct route for this under statutory regulations, we would consider grounds which were covered under our Complaint's Procedure. In this case the proposal made was treated as out of time, but it should have been treated as valid therefore we did consider this as a ground of complaint. The second was in relation to a complaint of systemic racism. The CT payer mentioned they had been in communication with the City of Edinburgh Council regarding a variety of issues over a number of years, and was unhappy regarding the outcome of the contact with them and this was further impacted by the outcome of the contact with our office regarding his recent Council Tax proposal/appeal.

Firstly, the complainant had made a proposal requesting that the properties they owned were considered as one property and banded accordingly rather than banded as separate properties as currently shown on the Valuation List since 1 April 1993, as they were banded separately as houses of multiple occupation. This proposal had been considered as out of time and a response was issued to the CT payer in this regard. The proposal should have been treated as valid. An apology was made to the CT Payer and a visit to the properties was arranged so that an inspection could take place and an outcome with regard to the band could be provided.

Secondly, the CT payer made a complaint of systemic racism. The ratepayers email was passed to our Assessor and their management team. Our Assistant Assessor has responded to the ratepayer outlining that Lothian Valuation Joint Board (LVJB) have an Equality and Diversity Policy in place to ensure both employees and other stakeholders are treated fairly, equally and with respect. Furthermore, LVJB is fully committed to embracing and implementing the principles and ethos of the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. As set out in the 2023 Mainstream Report on Equalities, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training has been promoted to all LVJB employees in the last year and we will look to continue this again in 2024. LVJB's Equality and Diversity Policy and 2023 Mainstream Report on Equalities can be viewed on our website - [HERE](#)

Whilst we will continue to work to identify and put in place arrangements to enhance the provision of training for staff around equality and diversity, we acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and learning. We have asked the ratepayer to engage with us to assist in our understanding of the issues they have raised.

*The complaint was **partially upheld** on the basis that their proposal had been initially treated as out of time.*

Produced by	Governance Team	18/04/2024
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