Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council

Annual Complaints Handling Data

1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026

1.0 Complaints Handling

The information contained in the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO)'s MCHP Parts 1-3 was adopted in full by Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council in October 2023 to ensure it meets NIPSO's MCHP test of compliance.

Our CHP aims to provide a quick, simple and streamlined process for responding to complaints early and locally by our capable, well-trained staff. The aim is, where possible, to resolve the complaint to the customer's satisfaction. Where this is not possible, the customer should be provided with a clear and reasoned response to their complaint.

1.1 Reporting of complaints

Council has a process for the internal reporting of complaints information, including analysis of complaints trends. Regularly reporting the analysis of complaints information helps to inform management of areas where services need to improve.

We publish on a **quarterly** basis information on complaints outcomes and actions taken to improve services i.e. good practice and lessons learned.

The first Complaints Reports was tabled at Audit Committee on 17th December 2025. This yearly report was tabled at Audit Committee on 17th June 2026.

From September 2026, the Senior Management Team will be updated quarterly on:

- complaints performance statistics
- analysis of the trends and outcomes of complaints.

An **annual** complaints performance report is published on our website in line with NIPSO requirements and provided to NIPSO (on request only). This summarises and builds on the quarterly reports we have produced about our services.

The Complaints handling procedure ensures:

- A standardised approach to dealing with customer complaints across the public sector in NI
- A simplified consistent process for customers to follow when lodging a complaint
- Staff and Customer confidence in complaints handling; and
- Encourages the Council to make best use of lessons learned from complaints

All complaints are progressed in accordance with the new internal governance procedures and in line with statutory requirements established by the Public Services Ombudsman Act (NI) 2016.

2.0 Definition of a Complaint

The Council's definition of a complaint is **'An expression of dissatisfaction by one or more members of the public about the Council's action of lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by or on behalf of the Council'.**

Stage 1: Frontline Response provides the opportunity to resolve or respond to complaints quickly and effectively. The procedure is:

Inform corporate support for logging purposes and identify service manager/ officer to deal with Stage 1 response. Aim to resolve within 5 working days (or 10 if extension is appropriate). Corporate Support will acknowledge within 48 hours from next working day.

Stage 2: Investigation is appropriate where the customer is dissatisfied with the frontline response. It will require a more in-depth and detailed investigation to establish the relevant facts given the complexity or serious nature of the issue. The procedure is:

Assign to a HOS/ Director for Directorate Investigation. Complaint acknowledged within 3 working days. Issues of complaint clarified, outcome sought, confirmed. Resolved within 20 working days.

3.0 Supporting the customer

Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council is committed to providing a high standard of customer service to all its citizens.

All members of the community have the right to equal access to our complaints procedure. It is important to recognise the barriers that some customers may face barriers to complaining. These may be physical, sensory, communication or language barriers, but can also include their anxieties and concerns. Customers may need support to overcome these barriers.

All Complaints received are managed under a two stage complaints process:

Stage 1: Frontline

The following is the Complaints Data for the period **1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026,** for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

- Number of Stage I complaints received and closed out in the financial year 2025/26 – **34 received and closed within the 2025/2026 financial year.**
- Number of Stage I complaints rectified within target time (5 days) – **15 of these met the deadline of 5 working days or less to rectify = 44.18%.**

Stage 2: Investigation

The following is the Complaints Data for the period **1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026,** for Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council.

- Number of Stage II complaints received and closed out in the financial year 2025/26 - **28 received and closed within the 2025/2026 financial year.**
- Number of Stage II complaints rectified within target time (20 days) - **12 of these met the deadline of 20 working days or less to rectify = 42.86%**

4.0 Complaint Categorisation

Most complaints fell under the category of 'Conduct and actions of staff' (38.71%), with all complaints categorised as detailed below:

Complaint Categories:	**(Based on a total of 62complaints)**
Failure to provide a service	12.90 %
Failure to achieve published service standards / quality of services	6.45 %
Conduct and actions of staff	38.71 %
Delays in responding or poor administration	6.45 %
Policies, rules and regulations	30.65 %
Failure to fulfil statutory responsibilities	4.84 %

4.1 Complaint Outcomes

Complaints received for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 were investigated in line with statutory guidelines and closed based on the following outcomes:

Complaint Outcomes	
Resolved	3.23 %
Upheld	12.90 %
Partially Upheld	20.97 %
Not Upheld	62.90 %

4.2 Complaints By Directorate

Directorate	
Chief Executive	0.00 %
Corporate Services (including Planning)	22.58 %
Environmental Services	46.77 %
Leisure and Development	30.65 %
Finance	0.00 %

4.3 Complaints Channels

Complaints are received via several methods. The following data from 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026 provides a breakdown of the channels used by citizens to engage with the Council when logging a complaint.

Channels	
Email	74.19 %
Telephone	0.00 %
Letter	9.69 %
Online Complaints Form	16.12 %

4.4 Length Of Time To Resolve Complaints

- The average number of days to complete a Stage I was **8.65 days**. (The target for Stage I is 5 days).
- The average number of days to complete a Stage II was **30.46 days.** (The target for Stage II is 20 days).

4.5 Number Of Extensions Authorised

Stage I: The number of extensions authorised for Stage I complaints was **12 or 35.29 %.**

Stage II: The number of extensions authorised for Stage II complaints was **9 or 32.14 %.**

4.6 NIPSO Complaints

- 15 NIPSO enquiries were received.
- 4 were closed as complaint at time had not gone through Council's Complaints Handling Process prior to complainant going to NIPSO.
- 2 - NIPSO did not accept for Investigation.
- 3 - NIPSO received Council's answers to status check and no further correspondence has been received back from NIPSO.
- 1 was not for Council; it was for another organisation (animal welfare).
- 3 Council responses to investigation were issued and no further correspondence was received back from NIPSO.
- 1 Closed pending review.
- 1 Closed by NIPSO after they completed Investigation.

5.0 Lessons Learned

The Council will systematically review and analyse complaints to ensure that lessons have been learned, services improved, and appropriate action taken.

Detailed below are examples of service improvements as a result of the administration of the complaints handling procedures:

1. **Staff Training and Conduct**:

   Council rolled out Complaints Handling Training in August 2025. In addition, a suite of other training in relevant areas was highlighted on the Skillgate portal and advertised in the monthly ODHR Newsletter.

   Examples of this training are:

   Complaints Handling Procedures; How To Investigate Complaints; How To Record Complaints Outcomes.

   Examples of service improvements in this area are:

- Informal guidance on how to deal with similar types of complaints and how best to deal with customer complaints when liaising with members of the public.
- All staff reminded of Council's Customer Service Charter here Customer Service Charter

2. **Improved consultation and communication**

- Consultation and communication carried out where relevant and reasonable
- Review policies and procedures where appropriate
- Review internal communications arrangements
- Provide training to staff and elected members on identifying, managing and mitigating actual or perceived conflicts of interest
- Emphasise the need for adhered to established protocols to safeguard the Council's reputation and ensure fair treatment of all stakeholders.

6.0 Learning from Complaints

The Council is committed to a high standard of learning from complaints and has clear systems in place to act on issues identified in complaints. As a minimum, it must:

- seek to identify the root cause of complaints
- take action to reduce the risk of recurrence
- systematically review complaints performance reports to improve service delivery.

From September 2026, Senior Management will review the information reported on complaints regularly to ensure that any trends or wider issues which may not be obvious from individual complaints are quickly identified and addressed. Where the need for service improvement is identified, appropriate action (as set out in the Council's CHP) will be taken. Where suitable, performance in the service area will be monitored to ensure that the issue has been resolved.

For further information on our Complaints Handling Procedures please visit Complaints Procedure | Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council

Or email comments@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Note: No. 12, p. 11, Complaints Handling Procedure, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council