

Using complaints to improve performance

The information gained through the monitoring of complaints should be used to improve the provision of the services throughout the Council reflecting the Council's overall approach to value for money and continuous improvement. There were several occasions where the resolution of a complaint led to additional instructions being given to employees to reinforce existing procedures. Changes to the provision of services have also been made as a result of complaints received or the opportunity to improve has been identified.

- The Sport and Leisure Service makes more regular checks on the website and ensures information is always updated. Also, the website has been updated to include that an induction is required before the gym can be used.
- The Libraries Service displays information regarding availability of online renewals. Also, the speed and reliability of the network connection to Whickham Library has been improved.
- Customer and Financial Services has reviewed procedures in respect of tenants who have passed away and who may have been subject to a housing benefit overpayment to ensure the appropriate information is notified to the estate.
- Housing Services have revised the procedures to include random inspections to hostels/hotels used as temporary accommodation by the Council. The procedures to inform tenants in temporary accommodation of possible bailiff action and costs if they do not vacate the accommodation voluntarily when the licence is terminated have also been revised.

In Housing a number of improvements were implemented by the Gateshead Housing Company to improve service delivery:

- To ensure that a tenant is advised before works are carried out so relevant preparations can be made.
- To ensure that contractors do not make appointments via voicemail only.
- Jobs sent to sub-contractors are to be monitored more closely to prevent delays in timescales.
- A procedure has now been agreed to check notifications of 'non Council tenant' deaths.
- Procedures and processes which will include risk assessments, method statements and customer involvement is ensured when dealing with repairs which could affect gas safety have been reviewed.

- Property size is to be included on void details so that any issues should be picked up prior to it being advertised.
- Changes have been made to the major works procedure to make sure that all surveys are carried out in target and works orders are raised appropriately to prevent delays in work being carried out.