



## **Public Accounts Committee**

### **Public Hearing: Handling and Learning from Complaints Review**

### **Witness: Acting Chief Officer of Customer and Local Services**

Wednesday, 20th November 2024

**Panel:**

Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North (Chair)

Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour

Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South

Mr. P. Taylor

Mr. G. Kehoe

**Witnesses:**

Ms. S. Le Sueur - Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services

Ms. N. de Jesus - Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services

[13:02]

**Deputy I. Gardiner of St. Helier North (Chair):**

Good afternoon and welcome to the public hearing for the Public Accounts Committee. Today is Wednesday, 20th November, and we have with us the Acting Chief Officer for Customer and Local Services. Just to remind that this meeting will be filmed and streamed live. The recording and transcript will be published afterwards on the States Assembly website. We will start with introductions of members of the panel. Deputy Inna Gardiner, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee.

**Deputy D.J. Warr of St. Helier South:**

Deputy David Warr, a member.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs of St. Saviour:**

Deputy Raluca Kovacs, member as well.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Glen Kehoe, lay member.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Philip Taylor, lay member.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Introduce yourself and your team.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I am Sophie Le Sueur. I am the interim Chief Officer for Customer and Local Services.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

I am Nicola de Jesus, Head of Customer Experience for Customer and Local Services.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you, and thank you for coming and finding the time to answer our questions. The Public Accounts Committee is in the middle of the handling and learning from complaints review, and the main focus of this public hearing is to understand how the implementation of recommendations from the P.A.C. (Public Accounts Committee) report and the C. and A.G. (Comptroller and Auditor General) report of handling and learning from the complaints and feedback work in practice, what has changed, and how the overall implementation and effectiveness of the customer feedback policy and management systems do work. So we will start with a couple of general questions. How do you think the current customer feedback management system and associated processes are performing?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I think they are performing well. Our system, from a customer perspective we have different ways that customers can give us feedback. The key thing is that we will take feedback in any form. A very popular route is the online form, where we get feedback from customers that that is a simple, easy to use form and it is popular to use. They can also give feedback face to face, telephone, in person, in those different routes. Behind the scenes in terms of how we administer that feedback,

we have a system that we call the customer feedback management system. That is automatically linked with the online form and that is where government colleagues will log feedback that is received, whether it be a complaint, a compliment, a suggestion, a comment. I believe that system is fit for purpose. It is performing well. It is a system that has been built in-house by our digital services colleagues. They have recently undertaken a review of that service and that more independent review has concluded that it is fit for purpose. We do obviously have a regular programme of enhancing the system, and so there has been some recent updates which have helped from a usability perspective for colleagues and that sort of thing. So from a system perspective I think everything is in a good place. From a process perspective, we do have an annual review of our customer feedback policy and we also have a cross-government Customer Experience Board. We have a group of departmental feedback managers across all departments and they work well as a network of colleagues from different areas. There is both individual meetings and group monthly meetings and in that group they will talk about things like system functionality, any ideas for improvements on processes, what is working well, what could be improved on, and that is a useful group to also give us that assurance that we would be knowing how things are going.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I think you mentioned the corporate and other departments. Can you please expand on how the process ... I understand that the C.L.S., Customer and Local Services ... I will continue to say C.L.S. through the public hearing. For the benefit of the public, it is Customer and Local Services and we will use C.L.S. How you oversee the process across the government or you are not overseeing the process all the government.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So we hold a position as we are almost sort of probably considered as a centre of excellence in government, but we are also ... we have a customer feedback manager whose dedicated role is to support colleagues in government with making sure that we are treating complaints handling well, that we are doing what we need to do, that we are supportive to other colleagues. So what we do not do is we are not a cross-government feedback or complaints team. So it is very much the responsibility of relevant departments to manage and respond to their own feedback, but we are there to support if things are needed. We do act as the conduit for if something is submitted via an online form often a customer ... it might relate to a couple of areas or they might not actually even know which department of government their feedback refers to. So that is where we will help make sure we act as a sort of triage function and, therefore, we make sure it gets to the right departmental feedback manager. So we almost do the administration behind the scenes that a customer does not necessarily need to know about, but that is our very constant focus. The one area of government where there is a slight difference is within the Health Department, who do run with a Datec service. So absolutely customers can still use the online form and that feedback gets passed on straight

away to Health, but Health do for good, valid clinical reasons use a system that is well known across very similar health systems.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So in terms of C.L.S. interacting with other departments, what would you think are things that work well and what is things that you are working on improvements?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

In terms of how we ...?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Interact with other departments and focusing on customer complaints and customers across the whole government on the corporate level.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is it. This might be one that it might be useful for Nicola to come in because Nicola is responsible for all of those relationships.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Okay. Yes, sure.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So if you want to expand on your role.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

I think relating to that and what you said before in terms of that oversight and what we do is obviously we are kind of, as Sophie referred to before, where people see as the centre of excellence. So we provide the expertise and advice and support. So, for example, we have quality assurance processes in place on ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

For all other departments or for your department?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

For all departments. So our quality assurance process, other departments do the quality assurance checks on their feedback and what we do is provide support and advice in terms of how best practice looks, what good complaint handling looks like, what is going well, and then what areas for improvement there may be. That is what Sophie was referring to before, that monthly meeting that

we have with the departmental feedback managers as we called them, because they are representatives from each department, and also the Customer Experience Board is where those conversations take place in terms of what is going well and what could be done better. So that is where the conversations take place.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Do they take your feedback and you see the outcome is different after a month? I mean you give the feedback, you give support, you give advice, you meet monthly.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

For example, you say Health is outside of your scope. If Health does not listen to your recommendation, what happens next?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Well ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

So when we ... sorry, can I just continue?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. In terms of those improvements, how we see that is in terms of those areas coming back to us and saying: "This is what we have done." So say, for example, I do not know, an area is we can improve our communication with the individual providing feedback, we would then be able to see that in the quality assurance scores if they have improved or not. So that is where ... and if there is any issues, that is then raised to the Customer Experience Board, who are more senior members of the organisations, to then escalate appropriately. So in terms of those improvements, they are being seen over a period of time and looked at to see what improvements are made.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So all improvements are logged and they need to be accountable for implementing or not implementing these improvements?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

So we are talking about 2 different types of improvements, I think. So are you talking about improvements from individual pieces of feedback, just if you can clarify, or are you talking about improvements in complaint handling? Because quality assurance is about the actual complaint-handling process.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I think it is important for us to ... you have feedback.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Across the system you have complaints processes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources:**

Both of the processes are important to the public. You said that Health is not under you. You are centre of excellence. Would you give feedback about ... would you suggest improvements only about feedback or would you suggest improvements about complaints and feedback?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. Absolutely.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I think one of the things, for example, that by having a network where we can share examples - and this goes both at a departmental feedback manager level but also at an E.L.T. (Executive Leadership Team) level - at different levels of the organisation is we do things such as trying to learn and improve based on ... it could be on a single department's examples but it could also be wider. That is where to actually think ... so there are things we do such as "In Your Shoes" customer stories. So it might be that one month the example at the Customer Experience Board or the departmental feedback management meeting is a Health example. That does not mean that it is only Health who can learn from that and improve. So by having this network of cross-government people the key thing that we are trying to do and encourage is that getting different people in different areas of the organisations to think, okay, well, is there something here that I can apply to my own learning. I think that we do always try and centre ourselves around customer stories. Every meeting will usually

have an example and sometimes they might be small, sometimes they might be big. So it is not a matter of us being very necessarily prescriptive of: "You must do A, B and C." It is that almost discussion for that joint learning to actually reflect.

**Assistant Minister for Treasury and Resources:**

Okay. Yes.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Just to carry on, you are obviously the face of Government, effectively, are you not, at C.L.S.? So when a customer comes into there and they make a complaint of some description, they will not know sometimes which department it is that affects them.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

So obviously one of the issues will be is you obviously feed that back into the relevant department and things like that. How does that customer know that ... if they do not get relevant feedback, they do not get the answer that they want, how is that co-ordinated?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So that is our customer feedback policy where we do ... a really important thing is, first of all, acknowledging that feedback. The first thing we will always try and do is resolve feedback at the point it is given.

[13:15]

If we can take things seriously ... we still want it to be logged because there is often learning in that, but if we can resolve something there and then, that is absolutely the best place. But we recognise that is not always possible. So in that case, if someone would come in and give us some feedback, perhaps about another area of government, something that the individual who is receiving that feedback, that is not within their scope to be able to resolve there and then, that is where within our system that feedback is logged. It is automatically then triaged directly to the relevant place as to someone who can then take ownership of it. Within the customer feedback policy it is really important that we have timescales around acknowledgements, about when responses should be handled, and almost that is why having a central system means we can keep a watch on it. So that is the sort of thing that Customer and Local Services will also be like: "Hang on, that complaint has been logged for 4 days now. Can we check? Is it in hand? Is there something ...?" So almost the

system gives that visibility to the central customer feedback manager to be able to make sure it is being ... whereas in the old world, an email might have been sent and there was no means of actually knowing how it was ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I will probably ask a very quick question, so I hope you have ... if you do not have data, please supply us data a bit later but I hope you do have it. For the benefit of the public and for the benefit of the Committee - if you do not have data for 2024 I assume you have data for 2023 - how many total feedback ... numbers of feedback that was given? How many total complaints? So if you can give us some statistics it would help us to progress.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

No, that is fine. Yes, within departments we have a live dashboard, so almost each day I can know what the figures are. The figures that I have here is our latest pack that went to the Executive Leadership Team. So this will be at the end of Q3.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So this is for ...?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

For 2024.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Okay. For Q3? Q1, quarter 1, quarter 2, quarter 3?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So, for example, in 2024 we have had 1,036 pieces of feedback received. Of that, that is ... actually this is ... yes, so this is the right figure. Yes, of those that makes up 544 of those were logged as compliments, which was feedback that was documented through the system as a compliment; 352 of those were complaints; 97 were comments; and 43 were suggestions. Broadly, our volume of feedback does stay fairly static. We do sometimes see trends where there might be a slight peak. Sometimes we will do a campaign or we will really make sure we are trying to encourage feedback in a particular area that will lead to spikes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Just on that one, does it include complaints or feedback for C.Y.P.E.S. (Children, Young People, Education and Skills)?



**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Does these numbers include feedback and complaints for Health?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

We have total volumes, so yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Total volumes across all government?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, across government.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

It is really good that you have an equal balance of compliments and complaints. With the compliments, do you have analysis of what was really good about the service and how do you deal with that information?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, and that for us is really important that we do have that balance because I think ... and that is why we do encourage ... compliments are logged because sometimes it is about learning where we are doing things really well. We often talk about doing things from a customer story perspective. Sometimes those can be things where someone is saying that service has just inspired me, it changed so much for me, and it is like right, hang on, yes, we got things right here; let us try and learn to make sure we keep doing that. So the compliments are ... there is a part about internal celebration and recognition, that sort of thing, but there is also that serious point of you can also learn some really good insights from our compliments.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Can you give me some examples of what generally goes really well?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So the biggest ... in terms of compliments and positive feedback it is how it makes a difference to people. So how we make people feel is the general theme. So when we look at our feedback it is about how someone was treated, how they were communicated with, so that customer service, really. Obviously, I know that is kind of a generic umbrella. So when people feel listened to, heard, that is all the positive feedback that we receive. A lot of the time people ... and this is why a focus for us is celebrating positive feedback because it is showing value to the individual who has received that feedback. A lot of Islanders take time to provide that feedback, so ensuring that we pass that on to the relevant person if they have named an employee, and equally internally, as I said, we do have our own ... like in C.L.S. particularly we have our own recognitions where we do "Living Our Values". So we can put in nominations to employees where we have heard feedback from different customers. Yes, it is generally about how we make people feel that is important that makes a difference.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Okay. Thank you.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Also just to put a perspective, sorry, on those numbers, so what is the total interaction over that year? What is the number of interactions on the ground? What percentage does this represent, in other words?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is it. Yes, I do not have that number for you, but I suppose even if we think of in La Motte Street at the moment, we typically get 800 people a day. We would probably have 800 phone calls a day. The health service obviously have high volumes. I suppose a big focus for us is ... it is a very small percentage compared to the number of transactions that there are.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

That is the point I was trying to get to.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

But equally we do have other means of also gathering feedback. So, for example, it is not just about ... so what I have mentioned here is complaints, compliments, that sort of thing. We have other measures such as customer satisfaction measures which are just as important to us from a learning perspective. That, for example, is at the end of every phone call, if you phone the Tax Office or phone Customer and Local Services, Customs, these places, you get a short survey at the end

saying: "How satisfied were you with the service you received today?" That is also a really important daily touch point of how we are doing, and we are doing really well on that perspective. We are exceeding our targets. Government overall this year is at about 87 per cent satisfaction, and I think that ... it is different because also there can be things there that we pick up that might just be small things that we can catch them almost before they get to the point of being logged as a complaint. But the other thing we really want to focus on is we know that this data is very ... it is what is logged in the system. So we have done a lot of internal communication, making sure colleagues are aware of how you log feedback and why it is important. Do I think that there are some complaints or compliments that have happened that have not been logged? I would say there probably are, but it is almost like we can only learn and deal with that that we know. That is what our big focus and promotion is on. Almost trying to even log those complaints that you have perhaps handled straight away is to help us get that big picture. So I do think that has been a big focus and this year for the first time the C.E.O. (Chief Executive Officer) has put into Chief Officer objectives some different elements around complaints handling. But one of those measures is around the volume of complaints logged by colleagues and that is almost to try and ... it is to get away from a sense that a high complaint number is a bad thing. We really want to get to a point that we welcome feedback. We need to know ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

How many complaints by colleagues were logged?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So in ... we have it on this.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

We have it somewhere.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I will let Nicola look for it and I will just finish my sentence.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Sorry.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

No, it is fine. So for us that is a really ... it is trying to make sure that ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

I have it here.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

... colleagues feel empowered to make sure that we log things so that we can also do that following it through to make sure the trail is not lost and that suddenly someone has given feedback and we do not know, but also so that we can learn thematically. So I do think this is ... I am not saying things are perfect, but I think when I look at how we have progressed in the last 3 years, we have made really significant improvements and Nicola's team have done some really good sessions with different parts of government where we have almost identified almost this is feeling ... it is almost like, right, do we think that the insight that we are getting is actually reflective of what is happening on the ground? We have done some focus sessions in some areas where we have thought we need to go in and really just try to help make sure people understand how the system works, understand the value and the importance, and that is the kind of thing we are continually working on. Nicola has got that number.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So that is for Q3, so the volume of complaints across government logged by members of staff was 137 for Q3.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

By the way, we will move now in a different direction, but just to understand the number that you gave me, 1036, was it for Q3 or it was for all 3 quarters?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

For the year.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

For Q3, but we can ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Oh, no ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

No, Q3. That is Q3.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I thought that was rolling. Okay.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So 1,036, it is only for Q3?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Sorry, yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

We can give you the other ones.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes. Okay. Later we will ask to follow-up with information, yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Okay. Fine.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

I think what has just been said is very useful because now it comes to the feedback you give ourselves, basically, and the recommendations that have been provided to yourself from the C. and A.G. and ourselves at the P.A.C. specifically on the tasks in handling and learning from obviously the complaint process. We are looking at certain information on our recommendations, recommendation number 2 and number 6, that had target dates of 30th September 2024. Were they actually met and, if not, why not?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Just remind me ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So my understanding is all recommendations, apart from recommendation 1 is our only outstanding complaint at the moment. So recommendation 2 was about the roles and responsibilities, is that? Just checking we are talking about the same one, about roles and responsibilities for ensuring around the complaints register the renewed focus on capturing lessons learned from complaints? We are talking about the same one?

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So we have done lots of key work on that. That is a closed recommendation from our perspective. Part of that whole lessons learned is almost what I described.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Yes, exactly, yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That was not in place at the time Lynn did her last review around the whole customer story being at every meeting, the ... it is surprising how it has been quite a ... it is harder than you might think to try and do that sort of corporate lessons learned. So it has taken us ... I was involved in the 2020 review as well and we were really committed to trying to do it then, and I think we probably had not made quite as much progress as we would have liked by the time of the second review. But I would say now, with Nicola and her team's focus and that we have real E.L.T. support in this area and recognising where we have got to, that ...

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Do you have an example of some sort of ... just so we've got confidence in what you are actually saying? Because there is a lot of fluff above that that I would like to understand it.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So of lessons learned?

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Yes, just give us an idea now that has basically been implemented, even if it is just a single department, just to understand that.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So the kinds of things that we have ... from the corporate learning that ... this was from the last month, from customer stories. The kinds of stories that were discussed there was some customer journeys around some payments involving a couple of different departments, some payment issues, that kind of thing. There was also customer stories around almost consent and who could know what and this sort of thing, just to give the context. So learnings that have been taken, a key thing is around the importance of accountability and responsibility and problem solving. That is something ... it might sound straightforward but especially the really making sure through all levels of the organisation that we recognise that it is really important that someone is taking accountability when a problem arises and people are not getting passed between teams. So almost especially when someone ... when something is going wrong, we have seen too many examples in the past where it is like, well, okay, the person who they are telling that to, it was not that person or that specific team who caused the problem but ultimately that customer is here now with a problem, so that sort of accountability. There has also been learnings on that importance ...

[13:30]

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Can you please pause on that one because I would like to really understand? Glen asked in details. You said there is payments that needs to be made across the departments. You realise the departments pointed to each other. You realise this is the theme that arises and it is not one-off.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

What is different now, in simple words, in simple English?

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

What has improved?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

What is the solution?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So, for example, in my department we have run a real focus. I have stood up and done a kind of ... as part of a quarterly briefing we always have, right, what is our key thing to focus on? One of them has been ... the key theme for the last few months has been own your customer, and that has then come through. We are giving examples. We are celebrating specific success. The Minister is really championing this, especially almost linked to when we are going to be moving to the new building soon, this whole if we can make sure that we are ... we can work together, whether it is even within different teams within our own department. There has been some examples where someone has been talking to one team but then they say: "No, you have to talk to this other team." As a result of that, those sorts of ... that feedback, we have really now championed this culture of own your customer and we are having some really good, tangible improvements as a result. We are recognising that success. We are giving examples. We are talking about it at different levels of management meetings. So I think that is a kind of example where we have done something different and we are getting better results.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

With the way that everything is tracked, obviously it sounds like everything has been quite positive. From our perspective, what improvements can be made from how we discuss things with yourselves? Obviously, we have that tracking recommendation. Is that something that you feel could be built on, improved on, that would help that whole process and then what comes back to ourselves?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I suppose from my perspective with this review it felt we were in a good position where the recommendations were quite clear. We knew what we needed to do; we just needed to get on and do them. That is what we have now done. We are just as pleased to be in a position where there is only one recommendation outstanding because we feel like we are doing them for us. We are not really doing them for you. So I think it is ... from our perspective, we have ... both times for the complaints reviews that we have had, we have almost treated the implementation of the recommendations almost as a project and there has been monthly focus. We have had people from different departments. We all come on to a monthly call. We are held accountable by Nicola, who will be kind of like: "Right, where are you up to with this? What is your timescale?" It is almost ... so from our point of view that is ... and then after that meeting each month we make sure the tracker is updated.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Can I just say I found it really helpful, to be honest, from my perspective. I think in terms of feedback or the world of customer experience and how I see it as an Islander myself, we are always looking for continuous improvement. So getting that feedback and then being able to have clear recommendations on aspects that I was reviewing and considering myself was really helpful. The tracker is really helpful as well; it works in terms of the recording and all of that going back and forth. So from my experience it has been very positive in terms of those recommendations and implementation.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Okay. Thank you.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Just 2 small points. You talked about own your customer. What if you do not believe that it is your customer that you are owning? Does that make sense? Are you with me? So in other words ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**



Yes, so that is almost, I suppose, the kind of thing where that is where we are really encouraging people to think, well, that is not the customer's fault. So it is almost behind the scenes you can be negotiating, trying to work out how to resolve it. But I suppose our big focus is put yourself in the customer's shoes. It is not helpful for the customer to be like: "Well, I am trying to talk to you but I do not ..." They almost do not know where to go, and sometimes that is where it ... we really want to have that culture of, okay, yes, you might not be the right person but you have a better chance of solving this than the customer going on a perhaps wild goose chase themselves. So that is where we are almost giving that permission to people to say this might be slightly out of your normal remit but this is important.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Take responsibility, basically, yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Can I just ...?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Just a minute. We are trying to be succinct ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Oh, sorry.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

... because we want to go through the questions. Yes.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

One tiny little thing and that was just in terms of training. Does this highlight gaps in skill gaps and people's awareness and knowledge? Is that a very proactive approach you take to some of that?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is what I think where we have a really good programme of training that is ... we have different levels around sort of ... we have introductory level training, which is very much about the basics of the policy, how to record a complaint, that sort of thing. We have our customer service skills training, our early resolution of complaints handling, complex complaints training, and the key thing is that these are delivered on a fairly regular cycle but it is almost they never quite stay the same from one session to the next because what we do is we feed into them learnings from the previous quarter or 6 months. So, for example, in the complex complaints training it is not just hypothetical, off-the-shelf

examples. It is anonymised, but it is real examples looking at what actually responses were. We keep those fresh and I think keeping that training current is really important.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Sorry, can I just add in addition to that, sorry ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes. Let us try just to keep our answers succinct.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Just in supporting that regular training, obviously we deliver ad hoc in terms of where the needs and the gaps in the organisation are. Going back to your previous question about that culture of owning your customer, that is where a lot of the focus is. Islanders do not care which government department they go to. The important thing is that customer journey and customer experience. So I can speak from my own experience in terms of how I deliver the training. It is about understanding that journey and experience and we are all there to provide that service and good customer service. So the training, the focus, the whole culture and mindset, that is what supports that whole own your customer behind the scenes.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Just on this one a very short point: how do you assess the training is effective? Then I have another one to the previous one.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So after all training we do pre-course evaluation, post-course evaluation, and we were just looking this morning at the different outcomes of that. I am pleased to say it is really good evaluation. We get success, but I think also we expect to see, and we have done, increases in, for example, our quality assurance scores. So we are regularly quality assuring, sampling different complaint responses, how things were handled. If we find things in there that are not quite as they should be, we train on them and we should expect to see those sorts of things go up, which they have been doing.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Okay. Just a question which I feel is important for the public on the previous one when you said that even in the handling process of a complaint or any sort of complaint it might not be the customer's

fault. So what process is currently in place for situations where during a complaint it is clear that the departmental error has negatively impacted the claimant and what are you doing to remediate that or to improve this process?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So that is where I think it really comes down to communication with customers. If we have done something wrong, we absolutely need to apologise, explain to the customer what went wrong and explain to the customer what we are going to do as a result. Sometimes, depending on the situation, based on our feedback with customers that apology and recognition is actually what they are looking for. But I think what is really important is that they can then know we are putting things in place to try and stop this happening again.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

What about when the impact is affecting financially or health wise as well?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I suppose that would all very much depend on the circumstances. That would be the person who ... this is where, for example, our work, we do not ... from a customer experience point of view we are not getting into the specifics of an individual complaint, but the person who is leading, if there has been a financial impact, that would be for the person who is leading on that complaint to make appropriate decisions.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

There is a process of redressing or anything financially?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I would say within the customer feedback policy there is something around redress, but I think it is very much dependent on what the service is, what the implications are, so there is not one ... that is very much for the person who is leading that complaint handling to decide what is appropriate.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I have 2 quick questions before we are moving to a different theme and Philip. So the first question: when you mention training, is it training for C.L.S. or you are doing the training for all departments?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Government wide.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Government wide, and it is led by your department?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. It is co-ordinated by the people in the Corporate Services Department. We very much support that and because it is corporate training it is the People Services.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

It is the corporate training, yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

But Nicola does a lot of the actual delivery, for example, as well.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Okay. The question was corporate or not corporate; it is clear. The second one on implemented recommendations that has been done, we talked about that it should be easily accessible. So the people who ... sorry, the follow-up post-complaints process, it is implemented. If people did not provide their email address, how do you get feedback post-complaint process?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

We now will write to them if they have given us an address. If they have given us a phone number we will give them a call.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

So everyone would receive a telephone call or letter or email?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. That is one of the ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

That is one of the changes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is one of the changes since the review.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I am just checking the changes have been implemented. Okay.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

The vast majority is still email but we absolutely will letter or phone call as required.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Good. Helpful. Thank you. So we move.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Okay. Thank you. It is all very interesting. Thank you. I was struggling to begin with looking for the policy.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Oh. Okay.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

I think I have found something that could be a policy. It is on the Government website.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, [gov.je/feedback](http://gov.je/feedback).

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Always a good place to look. One of the purposes is to ensure we have a consistent approach to ensure complaints are dealt with in a fair, unbiased, timely and confidential manner and we have a feedback system that tells us how well that is operating.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

You have told us that you have summaries that come through of the results for each individual department and you can monitor the progress of comments and complaints as it is going through. So on a real-time basis, is that how you keep in touch with how well complaints are being handled?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I would say personally now in my role I am probably not on a day-to-day basis; that is Nicola and her team and the relevant teams within different departments. But certainly as, for example, a leader within C.L.S., I expect to be able to each week, each month, know have we got any things that are outstanding that should not be. We will be monitoring within our own. We have different senior leadership forums. We have different management meetings where we would be reviewing any feedback, any lessons learned, any particular hot topics. Then at an Executive Leadership

Team level we have a quarterly slot. It is always balanced against the risk slot. So colleagues who lead on risk also ... it is always kind of at the same meeting. That works really quite well because it is almost making sure that any ... from our customer insight, that is always a useful discussion about what are we learning but are there any risks emerging. It balances quite well against the risk slot. But in reality, any chief officer at any point or different people, there is a dashboard where people can see their own ... what is appropriate for them to see. Their own department's data they can see. At any point they could log in and see these are the 5 complaints that are outstanding or this is the compliments we have had in this week. That is all available and different people use that in different ways.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

So how do the departments actually know how well that feedback is being handled, as it is being handled? I understand that you would not necessarily know but the people on the ground probably should do.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So what they can see is the system does ... so there are a few things around ... so timeliness is a really important thing in communication for customers. One of the biggest learnings, I think, from talking to customers is that if they are kept in touch with, they do not necessarily expect everything to be done at absolutely breakneck speed, as long as they know when they are going to get a response, when they are next going to hear from us. But our policy is all focused on trying to resolve things quickly, treating complaints as a priority. So the system, for example, has got ... if you were to log in as a particular department, you would see your relevant department's feedback and it turns red when it is a day away from the S.L.A. (service level agreement). So there is an obvious: "Hang on, do we know what is happening here?", and that departmental feedback manager would be calling the person saying: "Just checking, are you on this? Have you spoken to the customer?", that sort of thing. Is that what you were ...?

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

I think it was. I was just following it up because I do not know very much about it and you do. So are there specific people responsible for handling customer feedback within departments or is everybody responsible for it?

[13:45]

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So there is a role which we call the departmental feedback manager. There is a departmental feedback manager in every department and their role is oversight of complaints. So it does not

mean they are responsible in the sense of actually meeting with the customer and creating a written response or having a phone call with them. What they are responsible for is making sure we are doing a good job. So they might be liaising with the manager of the team where there is a complaint, saying: "Are you on this? Have you spoken to the customer? Is there anything you need?" So that departmental feedback manager will be almost co-ordinating and making sure we are doing what we say we are going to do in the policy, but the actual responsibility for handling feedback rests with the services, which I do think is right when it is bound to a particular service.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

I am thinking of the individuals. Some people are going to be good at it. Some people will be bad at it. The last thing you want is someone who is bad at it dealing with it. So the departmental feedback manager, are they responsible for making sure the right people are dealing with the comments as they come in?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, and I think a big part of what we do is making sure that, yes, we have trained people. What sometimes we realise is some areas, they do not have much feedback at all and suddenly there is one complaint. It comes somewhat out of the blue and they are not really experienced in how to handle this. That is where the departmental feedback manager can offer that bit of support and say: "Well, let us talk this through. Let us work out what your next steps are." They are not going to do it but they can offer that bit of support. If we see that someone is not very good at it, that is where absolutely we would be intervening to say ... and even quality assuring after the event if it is only spotted then to say: "Right, let us do a little drains up here. How could this have been done better?"

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

I think you may have intimated the answer to the next question. You said you act as a conduit?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

An aggregator, almost, and you then send out the results to the individual departments. It is then their responsibility to deal with that feedback, not yours.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

But do you have any responsibility to make sure that they are dealing with it?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Well, I suppose that is where we have the metrics. So we can see if something is not being done. So that is where we will start with a little nudge, just checking do we know what is happening here, that sort of thing. Ultimately, the Executive Leadership Team have absolutely given Nicola and her team the permission to escalate things. If there is a concern, E.L.T. have clearly said ...

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

We want to know.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

... if there is something that is not ... if something in their department looks like it is not quite working, please do escalate. That is not needed very often. There is actually really good relationships there, so we would not necessarily leap in and fix it but we make sure that people are on it. Like, is there a plan for this? Sometimes it might be someone who was handling a complaint has gone off sick, for example. We would just want to make sure has this been allocated to someone else, those sorts of things.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Okay. Thank you very much. I am going to pass back to my Chair who is trying to egg us on.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

No, it is absolutely fine. So, Nicola, just to make sure, you are the person that is responsible across the department. If something is going wrong, you are bringing this to E.L.T. and they need to act?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. Well, in the ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Is that the correct summary?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. Part of my responsibility is to raise those ... escalate, yes, any risks or issues.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

How often do you see the problems arising? How quick can you escalate it to E.L.T.?



**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

So I do not have to wait. Obviously, I work very closely with Sophie so any issues I have I will escalate to Sophie and then she will take it to her peers. Then if there are any ... we report on a quarterly basis to E.L.T. in terms of risks or issues to that forum, but equally I have monthly meetings with each department. So at those meetings they are the issues that I discuss. So obviously we do not wait for it to be months down the line. If there are any issues, I raise it there and then I obviously raise it with Sophie and then the right processes are taken.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

But we do not find that there is ... it is not like there is a high number of things where ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

No, no.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Because I think we really have come a long way in the last 4 or 5 years, I would say. People want to do this well. I think within government colleagues are really committed. I think people are starting to see ... or not even just starting to see, they really do believe if we can treat complaints handling as a priority and get this right, this helps all of us.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

We will move to the feedback system because we do have a couple of things to go through the review. I completely appreciate it is good to hear the positive on the recommendations we made. Now, integration of C.Y.P.E.S. into the customer feedback management system, what worked easy and where were challenges in merging into the broader government system? Because C.Y.P.E.S. was outside and it took 2, 3, 4 years since the recommendations that it was integrated. What worked and what you felt were challenges?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, it has been a long journey. I think, though, it is important sometimes that we ... possibly now when we look back with hindsight, when we initially rolled out the policy and the system, it was almost like, right, this is how it is going to work. We probably did not look at schools in enough of a ... they are very much their own thing and work differently. So I think that period of time ... we had then almost ... we were focusing on the other departments where the system did work in much more day-to-day work. So then I think through the focus of actually ... it became a really key objective from the C.Y.P.E.S. Chief Officer himself. He really wanted to be able to have that central oversight because it was not something that even it was just us pushing at a closed door. He was really wanting to make this work. So I think what worked well this time with this rollout was really taking

the time to work with C.Y.P.E.S. We have made some system adaptations and adjustments because schools are just not the same as a sub-department of I. and E. (Infrastructure and Environment) or whatever. So I think by having that ... and it has been ... I would say it is still very early days with C.Y.P.E.S. ... well, with schools, sorry.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Does C.Y.P.E.S. receive now as a department when the complaint is logged into a school that C.Y.P.E.S. can see the copy and see the complaint? Because this was the major thing that the department had no idea what is happening in schools. So now it does work?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. That is it. So a school, it would get triaged. It would go in exactly the same way as if a complaint came in about pensions: it would come in and it would end up with the pension team manager. If a complaint came in about a school, it would end up with the head teacher or the business support manager of that school.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Now when we are continuing to purchase programmes or systems that would work across the government, would you take into consideration different operations of the departments when purchasing the system? Because I understand the system was not built to incorporate a different type of operation.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. In hindsight, I think the system that we have is fine and fit for purpose. If there was an unlimited budget and the opportunity to buy something with far more significant features, we would not say no but it is almost ... it does not feel like the right priority. But I think there has definitely been some useful lessons that we have reflected on, and almost shared as well in that wider, is around it is not even just about the system perspective from schools. Getting the system to work in schools was one major part, but it is even about that understanding, well, how would feedback be received? Even the relationship between head teachers and pupils and parents, it is different. So I think there definitely are things that we have learned. I think we will continue to learn. It is still early days with schools but it feels like we have made great progress getting them on. Now it is trying to nurture that.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you. I will pass to Deputy Kovacs.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

What measures have been taken to assess that the online feedback system is working well? Have you had any challenges in collecting or using this feedback effectively?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So by the online system I suppose that is where we do have an online form. I would say that is probably our most popular route for people to submit feedback. Typically, it is about 50 per cent. I am just looking at figures here. We have had almost 2,000 bits of feedback to date this year, of which about 1,000 have been online. So I think customers like these days ... we know in all different ways of life people like doing things online. We have done work with different customer groups and that sort of thing to look at the online form to check does this work for them, is there any improvements that can be made. We have made some tweaks based on that feedback, but even things like for us it was really important ... we have recently launched the child-friendly complaints policy. It is really important that we have a means that children ... and we had initially gone down a little bit of a rabbit hole thinking we needed to have something quite different for children, but when we ran it past children and asked them, they were like: "That online form is fine. It is quite simple." So I think it is a popular way of people to use, and I think the ability that people can submit anonymous feedback online is something that people value.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

How is the impact with, like, child friendliness with the process? Obviously, children will go ... how is that working? Have we had any sort of ...?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Early days.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Early days, yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, so that is it ...

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Is there any feedback from families?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

It has been well received by our partners, and Nicola can talk to this. She is part of the children's cluster group, which is different children's charities, education, those sorts of things. So the one thing I suppose I am conscious that we do not ... we have had discussions. We do not actually

record on our system ... we do not ask people their age when they are submitting their feedback because it is not really relevant, but it means that we do not have a clear ... I could not say to you: "Since we have done it we have had this many." But I think it is early days. Do you have anything you want to add?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, it is early days but it has been well received obviously from feedback from, like, verbatim feedback and conversations that I have had in different areas. In relation to that, in terms of that system development and enhancement, we are putting in a check box, essentially: if you are under the age of 18, tick this box if you are submitting feedback. So in the future ... obviously it has only been launched in October, so in the future we will be able to review and monitor that to see ...

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Yes, and there is a long-term stability plan there to make sure that this keeps on going forward. Okay.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Exactly, yes.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

How does the Government make sure the feedback and complaints system is easy enough to use for everyone? What support is available for people who find it hard to make complaints in the usual way?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So I suppose that is what for us is really important, that we continually promote and make clear that complaints can be received in any format. It does not have to be via the online form. So we encourage people to come in and talk to us, phone us. We have been doing ... aside from obviously the child friendly, we have done some work with looking at how can other seldom heard voices, as it were, how easy is it for them to know. Sometimes it is that almost trying to build the trust that we appreciate that feedback. Sometimes it is that we want to ... it is not even about how easy or difficult a form is to fill in. It is trying to get past that point of not being scared to tell us that something was not as good as it could have been. That is where I think a lot of the underpinning work that we need to do is not necessarily about the complaint system per se but is building that trust in government as an entity. So that is where we are doing quite a lot of focus and that even comes through with the training on making sure our colleagues in government are empathetic, that people really do realise that we will value things. I think even people's past experiences of how we have handled

complaints and those sorts of things count for a lot. Nicola can probably talk a bit about her cluster groups and the work she is doing with some of those more minority groups.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. So obviously importantly it is just making sure we are continuously improving and acting on feedback. As we all know, changing demographics, new communities on Island. I am part of several cluster groups like equality, diversity, learning disability and children's cluster. My background is about accessibility and inclusivity as well in terms of my expertise. So we are constantly seeking feedback so via those cluster groups making sure people are aware of how to raise feedback but equally listening to if there has been any challenges. So apart from obviously the trust issue and supporting those things, but understanding is it that we need to provide things in different languages and how do we do that, is it that maybe where I go is use the expertise that we have in those cluster groups so they are closer to the communities.

[14:00]

So we have used Caritas or Salvation Army to then make sure that they then can promote the systems and then provide that feedback back to see where we can make changes. So we are constantly tweaking where necessary and listening to where those improvements can be made.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

What is the current process and availability for the ones that only can that way or prefer to complain in person?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

So anyone can provide feedback in person to essentially anyone in government. So it is raising that awareness because I suppose our message and the culture that we are trying to develop and educate is that if someone comes to you with a piece of feedback, you take that responsibility and take that complaint and then log it accordingly and then pass that on. So in person we welcome anyone to come in person and speak to us. Equally, we provide that support from customer experience where, if someone wants to speak to someone independently maybe, that we will say: "We are more than happy to meet with you and then take your concerns on board".

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Thank you. What surveys or measures are used to understand the public trust in the feedback system and what actions have been taken in the last year after receiving negative feedback around the process?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

In terms of feedback on feedback, what is really important and we touched on it earlier is us asking ... after every complaint that is closed we do ask customers how have we done. We can really learn from that. We have used examples of where people have said really positive things in that survey to help show people that you can turn negatives into positives. You can help build trust through handling someone's complaint well. So I think that survey remains important to us as well as different parts of satisfaction. Overall, there are some bigger surveys like the J.O.L.S. (Jersey Opinions and Lifestyle Survey) and that sort of thing, which I think offer the bigger kind of: "How much do you trust Government?", which again if we can get all of that underpinning right that can help. Sorry, can you remind me of the second part of your question?

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

If you can give us one example of what improvements have been done in the last year due to feedback.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Okay, yes. So if I think of some specific examples, we had specific feedback on how it was challenging, the gender change programme, and also around even just name change and how there was not a joined-up approach even, say, for example, change of name. Even if you got married, for example, it was like: "Oh, well, Revenue Jersey is this one way of doing things. Customer and Local Services is something totally different" and it just was not easy for people to know what to do, so that is an example where we took that feedback on board. It was not that difficult. We managed to change processes, align things across different departments and make it a better process.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

So just something here about complaints withdrawal. Obviously, sometimes people find it just too hard to make a complaint. They therefore withdraw it. That is another sign that something is not working, something did not happen quick enough. Are you able to identify how many complaints, whatever, are withdrawn? Do you monitor that at all?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, we do.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

We will follow up with a written question for this information but it is really important to think about the complaints.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

We do have that as data.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I think sometimes complaints get withdrawn for different reasons. Sometimes like you say it might be that it is overwhelming, but in many cases it is sometimes through that initial even acknowledgement someone is talking to someone where they say: "Let me understand it more". They then realise and say: "Oh, I am going to withdraw it" but it is, as you say, an important metric.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

My last one before I pass to Deputy Warr: how does C.L.S. evaluate whether the current feedback and complaint system is worth the cost and has any cost-benefit analysis been done to check its efficiency?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

From my perspective, complaints and if we do not get this right, it is inefficient and it is a cost that is almost unavoidable, so that is why we do prioritise a focus on complaints and we do have ... as I say, most of the complaints handling itself is done within the relevant teams and that sort of thing but, for example, yes, we do spend money on training people, having a customer feedback manager. But I think if we can ... it is such an important service area to focus on that we know when we come out the other side it is good value for money. Handling complaints is an expensive way of doing things. We want to move into a much more preventative space and avoid these things, so that is focusing on learning lessons, what have we done, how can we prevent this reoccurring or happening elsewhere? So that is how from a value for money perspective we absolutely see this as ... chief officers will manage their own ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

The question was kind of ...

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

So, more specifically, what changes, if any, have been made or can be made to reduce costs while maintaining quality?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

There is no ... do you mean around a budget for complaints handling or do you mean ...

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Yes. To make it more cost effective, yes.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. This is not an area where we have a big budget line or anything like that, so there is not a complaints budget of that. So I suppose this is something where, for us, this is almost a core part of business as usual, but we are putting our focus on making sure we are focusing on it quickly. For me, that is something that I think, and chief officers across government, we are trying to focus on. If we can handle complaints swiftly, so it is worth the investment in having someone focus as a departmental feedback manager, for example, because if we let things linger on ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

We are trying to understand specifics, I think.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Could I help you here? We invest so much in planned handling in terms of a system, system implementation, monitoring, departmental feedback managers. That all has a cost attached to it and the real question is how do we know we are getting full value from that in terms of speed with which services are delivered, for example, or lack of problems to deal with further on? Is there somewhere that that is monitored?

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Or to add to that as a clarifying point, how do we make sure that most of the complaints are sorted at the first point of contact, rather than adding to the cost?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, and I suppose that is what our metric is, that is what we focus on. We look at how many are resolved within 5 days, and that number has really come down since we have had this focus, how many are resolved at stage 1 rather than stage 2 or stage 3.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Have you ever done a cost-benefit analysis?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

No, not in a precise form like that but ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

No, I understand. The processes are good and I really welcome the processes. I am asking about a specific exercise.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**



Just from a cost perspective, our system was built in-house so we have not got an ongoing support. We are not paying a contractor or something for that. Our departmental feedback managers are not all doing this as a one ... often their role will also include some work on governance so their roles are multi ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

There are lots of things happening and if I am understanding correctly there are constraints in the resources, physical and human, and to think about the exercise of cost-benefit analysis is ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I suppose it is just not something that is ... we feel that what we spend in this area is absolutely reasonable because it is not big amounts but it is absolutely the area that is appropriate to focus on.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

That almost moves on to the question, which is: are you properly resourced? Have you got sufficient resources to be able to do this?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, that is it, and I think we as a ... our focus is as this centre of excellence to support others is something that we in C.L.S. have invested in, and I think other departments would acknowledge that our support has helped them because we can satellite in and help them see things through another perspective. We have some good examples of where we have done that in departments recently. I think in other departments chief officers make their own resourcing decisions but they do that according to what they need. Areas such as Health, I. and E., Treasury, Revenue Jersey, those sorts of things, the resource levels there are different to, perhaps, the External Relations Department. It does not have the same level so I think this is not something where there must be X amount of allocated resource. The key thing is that we are seeing this as a priority and making sure that the resource is appropriate. I do believe that we are in a good place.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

How many people are in your team handling different complaints?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Nicola's team is a wider team. It handles the customer feedback, it handles wider customer insight but we also have part of that team, which is our continuous improvement function, which would include, for example, lean practitioners who can go in, look at customer insight processes that are not working, do remapping of processes and that sort of thing. We have people who work on procedure, so it is a broader team than just complaints.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

There are 10 of us in total but that is not complaints focused. That is customer experience and continuous improvement, so it is both.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Okay, so this is tricky because you are saying what I am about to ask and I feel like I might be repeating the questions. How is the effectiveness of the customer feedback policy evaluated in quarterly E.L.T.s? I guess that question is: is it in monetary terms? What metric is used?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So for us it is the policy itself. We formally review it annually, which is done almost through a bottom-up review starting with looking at what we have received during the year. We always have a ... if we get a piece of feedback on it, if it is something that we think needs to be done sooner, we will act on it, but if not we store it until the review, so departmental feedback managers and then the customer experience board, which is cross-government, and then it comes to Executive Leadership Team and that is really ... it is not from a monetary perspective that that evaluation takes place. It is almost more from, well, how do we feel this is working? So one of the things we have also introduced is making sure ... we are going through at the moment are the key performance indicators that we are measuring ourselves against, do they feel right? This is always a changing landscape and I think Lynn in her report made the point that just because we set something up as a certain level and metric, we do need to keep those metrics under review and check that our targets are appropriate. So it is more that sort of thing rather than from a monetary perspective.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Sorry, I am going a little bit off here now and I am going to stop with this last question. It is really around what if you did nothing. In other words, what would be the consequences of you not doing all this work and using all this resource? That is why I am trying to work out cost. In other words, how do you evaluate that, that it is worthwhile doing?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

The thing is with being a long-time civil servant is I was around before we had this way of working in place and I remember there used to be a web page that had about 12 different things: "If you want to make a complaint about planning click here" and there was a little policy there. "If you want to make a complaint about Social Security click here" and there were all these different policies, all these different timescales, different ways. Some it had to be in writing and you might hear back in 30 days, some it was you could phone us, and it was just so confusing for a customer. The complaint volumes also when we started this process of trying to improve things, there were very few

complaints because hardly anything was logged unless it was like a really formal thing, but as a result there was no learning, there was no focus. So I think to go backwards, to move away, would be detrimental because that learning and sharing and that focus has just meant we have got things a lot more out in the open and there are some things that you think: "Oh, gosh, that is not as good as it could be" but at least we know about it and we can tackle it. Back in the old way you would not necessarily have known so you could not solve it.

**Deputy D.J. Warr:**

Thank you. So one other point here is around suppliers. How do you capture complaints and feedback from suppliers and potential suppliers to government?

[14:15]

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That in a way would be in exactly the same way. If someone is making a complaint it depends on what service you are offering, so it might be different teams would deal more with suppliers than others, but you would log that in the system, absolutely it would be treated in ... so I suppose our customer feedback policy, what we are clear on, is this is not just about individual customer transactions. Our customers are also organisations, they can be businesses, they can be visitors, they can be third sector organisations. It would follow the same process that it should be logged. They could use the online form, but you would imagine as a supplier you would probably have a direct relationship with someone and that person in government should then be logging that feedback and handling it accordingly.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Let us talk about departments that have good response rates and those who have very poor, unresolved situations, which I presume are all at stage 3 of your policy because that is the stage they have got to because time has elapsed. What does that tell you about the particular matters that are being raised in terms of the quality of the way they are being resolved and what are you doing about it?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I would say, just to confirm, stage 3 does not necessarily mean just on time. Stage 3 could be someone has gone through a complaint process and they are not happy with the outcome of a stage 2, so they have asked for it to be escalated to a chief officer level, so it could be for that reason as well as time. I suppose from a timeliness perspective that is something that we do monitor, we can report on, and we have recently had an important system upgrade that allows us to keep a track of this in a much better way. Because previously there might be good reasons why a complaint, if it is

really complex, it might involve a few different parties. It would be absolutely appropriate for everyone involved to say: "This is likely to take a few weeks", for example, and the important thing is that the customer stays at the centre of that and agrees to that extension and timescale and they know when they are going to hear. The previous iteration was not complex enough to recognise where an extension had been agreed. One of the recent upgrades means we now know there has been an extension agreed with the customer, so it has taken, for example, 3 weeks but we are all okay with that because we know what is going on behind the scenes. So if there are cases then now that are showing as overdue, there should have been a response, that is where we would really just make sure we speak to that department, check that they are on it, and working out what is happening. Ultimately, it is that department. We would be making sure that that department have got the right people involved.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

What about in your department?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

In my department, so we are in a good position I think looking at our quarter 3 statistics. We had 97 per cent of our complaints were closed within the timescales that we had agreed, but if there are those exceptional circumstances that is where Nicola or the team, for example, if there is something where we think: "Hang on. We have slipped up here. This is taking longer. This is not appropriate" relevant heads of service would be alerted and we would just be making sure. We have that culture where we do treat complaints as a priority. We are all busy people, there is lots going on, but we know that having learnt from experience, I suppose, as well that time saved now, by time put in now to try to resolve this it will help prevent further ...

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

How are complaints about services which are being delivered at the moment being dealt with? If a customer says: "I am not happy with this. They say they are going to be here on Thursday, it is now Tuesday, it is going to be 3 days and that is now going to be extended to 3 weeks", how is that handled?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So if someone is saying that, that is the thing, we would log that as feedback. I mean the key thing we would try to do in that situation is get that resolved. We would try to say: "What is happening here?" Sometimes it just takes a fresh perspective to go and shake the tree and say: "Hang on, what has gone wrong here?" and sometimes we can find there is something in a process that has slipped up. Often it is about focusing on how we can resolve it, depending on what the situation is,

how can we resolve that, and then afterwards it is that lessons learned piece of thinking: "Well, hang on, if it has happened to this customer we want to make sure we can fix it."

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Can I just add I think going back to your question about C.L.S. as well our focus is very much that first point of contact, interaction, early resolution. We should not be leaving it to someone else escalating it through the complaints process. We can see our number of complaints at each stage. We have stage 1, stage 2, stage 3. We are very fortunate that we are getting better at handling complaints and we see that they are less so at the later stages. So we can see that as a reflection of the department, but our focus and what we prioritise is that customer service skills, if you think about the training and education, customer service skills, getting it right or as right as possible first time and then early resolution and then it should reduce the number of complex complaints, obviously that is a journey in terms of the maturity of our organisation but we are in a positive place.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

I will just defer to my Chair now who is looking at me.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

I could talk for ever.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

No, I think it is good. I think that Glen would like to ask ...

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

It was just based on what you might have tried to allude to, Phil, is why then is the unresolved complaint rate for the H.S.E. (Health and Safety Executive) not reported alongside other departments?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

The unresolved?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

We do have, as was briefly touched on at the beginning, is that Health do run off a different system for very good reasons and so there is some data that is recorded slightly differently. So they are a department that we do not have that day-to-day liaison with because they have their feedback team running their own system, but they give us their data and performance quarterly to make sure we have it.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

So would that be part of that, then, that they would report back to you that they have not resolved?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

So that might be one. I would need to double-check on that but it might be one that their system records it slightly differently, so I think it might be that ...

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

Again, if that system is recording it differently is that something you should understand why it does it differently?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

We have made some good progress with being able to get the data through the 2 different systems as aligned as possible so that we can get ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. It is work in progress in terms of making sure that the K.P.I.s (key performance indicators) as such or the information that we look at, the customer feedback policy, that we get the same information from Health. So we are working on it to make sure that however they need to pull that data out of the system that they will then provide that at the same point. It is because of how they do it at different times of the year.

**Mr. G. Kehoe:**

It might be useful to see again once you have resolved that.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes, because if they are unresolved complaints they are unresolved complaints regardless in which system, and if we are reporting at the corporate level we would need to see unresolved complaints from Health. Is it something that we will see in 2025?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

We would need to ... I am not close enough to the detail on that particular one to know with Health how it works, but it is certainly something that we can take away, talk to them about, just to check is it that they can measure it but we just have not got the data or is it that it is a system thing. I do not want to commit either way.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

It is unresolved complaints and we think we would like to see it. The public would like to see that we have all data on unresolved complaints in one place.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. Is that our new language? We have recently changed our definition as well, just to flag ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Which is? Do you have different definitions of unresolved complaints?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

We would need to get back to you because we looked ... it is not necessarily unresolved. It is how we categorise how we close complaints, so it is just double-checking. I do not have it with me. It is not about unresolved. It is about how we close complaints on the system. So we have changed the definition to some of the criteria but we can get back to you in relation to that of what it was.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

That would be interesting to see what are the different definitions.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I am wondering where that unresolved term has come from, I suppose would be good to know.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Also there are higher rates in Infrastructure and Environment. What steps are you undertaking to make sure this is ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Is this in the unresolved?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Unresolved complaints.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

This has presumably come from the pack, has it, that we have sent to you?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes. Obviously, our questions are based on the pack that you have sent to us. It was the definitions that we received so we are using them, and it was not clear what percentage are the numbers that

they represent because we have seen the numbers but we did not know exactly how much was the total handling of services and how many those were.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

I have found it. I was just trying to work out where it was. So, yes, the unable to resolve, that is definitely one that we have looked at the definition to resolve because that makes it ... it comes across that we are unable to resolve the complaint. Not such. Sometimes they are complaints that have come through that are not about government services, so how that was categorised and defined was misleading as such, so the new definition is about ones that we were not able to ... they are not government-related but we have signposted or sent on to a different organisation because the public just provides feedback. So sometimes we get feedback about parishes ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

No, no, I understand, but if there are complaints about the health services, about the hospital provision and they were not resolved would ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I suppose what I think we are trying to ... and I cannot find the bit I am looking for specifically but I suppose we have recognised that we are giving information to the Executive Leadership Team, to yourselves, saying that there is this volume of complaints that are unable to resolve. What we recognise is that that is a misleading title because it is not ... within that bucket of numbers are a few different things within there so we have changed now going forward. It is called something different because ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I think we will need to iron the definition out through our communication. When we write the report we will address this. My question was what steps are you taking to ensure that the number of unresolved or unable to be resolved complaints in Infrastructure and Environment will come down. This is the question.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, and so I suppose for us what is important is we look at it in the same way as we look at resolved complaints or suggestions ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

But what have you done until now to bring down the numbers?

**Mr. P. Taylor:**



I thought we had said 97 per cent of them were now resolved.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That was within the timescale. That is it, so it is a slightly different ... of those that were resolved ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Can I just add to the I. and E. question? With the I. and E. question, those unable to resolve, a significant proportion of them were in relation to Fort Regent queries and feedback. So they are about the movement. So when I. and E. took that feedback there were lots of things in terms of people being unhappy with Springfield gym, for example, so there were things that nothing could be done about as such because the Springfield gym was the Springfield gym that customers had to use. So we saw a peak in terms of increasing feedback received and that is why they fell into the category, some of them, of unable to resolve because that was a decision that had been made and they were not able to change the decision, not that they are not looking at the feedback but obviously it was the movement, it was the physical movement.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

It would be very interesting to see this feedback because we are moving into Fort Regent again and it will be again lots of complaints. If the feedback has not been addressed and people did not take into consideration what the public thinks about Fort Regent or Springfield we will come again ...

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

It was listened to, so I. and E. have listened to it, but that is why it is misleading, the category of where it has fallen into on the system. That is all.

**Deputy R.S. Kovacs:**

Particularly to this volume of complaints with Infrastructure and Environment, do you have the breakdown of the unresolved ones, how many were normally directed to the parish but came through Infrastructure and things like that? Because I think that also adds up to the ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

I think we will follow up to make sure that we are on the same page and we are asking the correct question. We will follow up with our written question. There are 2 more questions for the next 2 minutes that remain on a different theme. In the letter that you sent to the P.A.C. from the chief executive on 25th October it was stated: "There is no central record of how government has responded to the complaints brought and recommendations from the perspective of your department which has ownership of the department complaints." Would there be any challenges in maintaining a central record for the government responses for the complaints board recommendations?

[14:30]

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes, from my perspective I think now we are ... yes, over 5 years was probably thinking our team has evolved; we have changed a lot over the last 5 years. Certainly, now when I think of the States complaints board's findings this year, for example, my understanding is there have been 2. Both of those have had the recommendations taken on board and that is something as a Customer Experience Board as well we make sure we look at those and are there any wider learnings from that corporate angle. I think it is important that the findings from any States complaints panel are looked at, lessons learned. I think we can. I think it was probably over the last 5 years suddenly it was like, well, crumbs, there is not a ... no one person has a list of every recommendation, but I think going forward that is something certainly from our perspective that we can look at. The ones that have taken place this year we are aware of and we read, even though we are not responsible for the response or recommendations we still will look at through a certain lens, so we would be happy to keep that going.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Now that we do not have a centralised record would your department start to take ownership and to file and to address through the board or through E.L.T. meetings or is it something that you would need to discuss to see how we are keeping a track of recommendations?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

We do already with E.L.T. have a state of play with the States complaints board.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Who is in charge? Who has the ownership?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is it. We see that almost the States complaints board is very much with each chief officer, as it were, but I can see that it might make sense to have within our remit that we have also got a ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

You have so much already ...

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

That is it. For us to almost keep a remit we are not responsible for solving and acting on those recommendations. That rests still with relevant Ministers and departments but we can certainly keep

a ... and there is not that many of them, fortunately, that this would become something that is too onerous, I do not think.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

We hear a lot of improvements that were made and they are welcome over the last 3 years following recommendations, implementations. If I would ask about 3 top improvements around the handling of the feedback and complaints system that you are working currently or are planning to work in 2025 what would they be?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

As in things that we still want to do?

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Yes.

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

As I referred to before, the accessibility piece. One of the things is making sure that our policy and how people provide feedback on Island is as accessible as it can be, so we are looking ...

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

What is missing?

**Head of Customer Experience, Customer and Local Services:**

Currently, the next step is we are looking at an easy read version, so that is the next one. But this is about the continuous feedback to make sure that it is as accessible as it can be. That is one area.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. I think a continuing focus for the year ahead. As you know we are in early days with child-friendly feedback and schools and working with them, and I think we know that with all these things it takes time to get those through so I think that remains a key priority to focus on. I also do think something that is very easy, so when we talk about feedback, to get very focused on complaints but I think there is a really important piece to play about letting the public know even more what is happening. There is so much positivity as well that I think we do not particularly shout about. We have some really good customer satisfaction, but I think that this year based on a recommendation we have published for the first time in an easier format the overview of customer feedback but that is something we want to continue to build on as well, from a positive perspective as well, I think.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you. Are there any other questions from members?

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

So give me 3 reasons, only 3, why we should have confidence in the system? Short and succinct, 3 reasons.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I suppose it is the right thing to do. I think we are all on the same page here. This is not where there is a difference of opinion. We all want to do this better for customers. Ultimately, good service is better for Islanders but also more efficient. When we get things wrong is when it costs government money and so the more we focus on getting it right and getting it right first time, ultimately we are reputationally, financially in a better position.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

You have only got one to go.

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

Yes. It was about something ...

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Why should we have confidence?

**Acting Chief Officer, Customer and Local Services:**

I think we have a track record of when I look back to where we were 5 years ago and how year on year we have kept improving this. We have delivered on the recommendations that have come through. We are getting that positive feedback so I suppose our track record is that you can trust us that we are not going to let this drop. This is important to us.

**Mr. P. Taylor:**

Okay. Thank you. That is fine.

**Deputy I. Gardiner:**

Thank you very much. It is really reassuring. It was helpful for us to hear and I hope that members of the public would be reassured and they will come forward and will submit feedback to the services that they receive. Thank you very much for officers and members. The public hearing is closed.

[14:37]