
STATES OF JERSEY



HANDLING AND LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS – FOLLOW UP. (R.150/2023): EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

**Presented to the States on 28th March 2024
by the Public Accounts Committee**

STATES GREFFE

FOREWORD

In accordance with paragraphs 69-71 of the Code of Practice for engagement between ‘Scrutiny Panels and the Public Accounts Committee’ and ‘the Executive’, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) presents the Executive Response and its associated comments to the Comptroller and Auditor General’s (C&AG) Report entitled: [Handling and Learning from Complaints – Follow up](#) (R.150/2023, presented to the States Assembly on 9th October 2023).

Deputy I. Gardiner

Chair, Public Accounts Committee

***IMPORTANT NOTE** – The following comments are those of the previous PAC prior to the change in the Council of Ministers. They were intended to be presented in their current form prior to this change and it is the intention of the current PAC to honor these comments and present them alongside the Executive Response.*

COMMENTS

The PAC has reviewed the Executive Response to the C&AG report ‘Handling and Learning from Complaints – Follow up’ and has agreed it wishes to make the following comments in relation to the response.

Recommendation Three

Recommendation	Action
<p>R3 Develop an overarching, coherent, prioritised and resourced action plan to deliver on the stated duty to ensure all customers can easily provide feedback on publicly funded services.</p>	<p>Reject. This is already part of business as usual with regular communications through a variety of methods, ensuring all Islanders are aware of and can easily provide feedback. Individual departments also take responsibility for understanding their own customer base which then informs how to ensure their customers can easily give feedback. Progress is regularly reported via CX Board.</p>

The PAC notes within the Executive Response that recommendation three has been rejected by the Government of Jersey. The rationale given within the response for this rejection is that the action plan stated by the C&AG is already part of business as usual and is communicated through a variety of methods ensuring Islanders are aware of the ways in which they can provide feedback. Further rationale is given that individual departments also take responsibility for understanding their own customer base which in turn helps inform how to ensure customers can give feedback. It is also noted that progress is regularly reported via the CX (Customer Experience) Board.

Whilst this is noted by the PAC, it has not seen evidence of these methods in practice

through the response to the recommendation. Furthermore, it is not clear to the reader of this response how these processes are undertaken to ensure they are being tracked and monitored effectively. The PAC will, therefore, be writing to the Chief Officer for Customer and Local Services in order to request further evidence of the following:

- Communications that are made to Islanders and how Islanders understanding of how to give feedback is measured.
- Evidence of how individual departments track the understanding of their customer base in relation to giving feedback.
- Copies of the latest reports made to the Customer Experience Board and how this information is then considered, and any changes or concerns are addressed across the Government of Jersey.
- How these processes are tracked and reviewed in order to ensure their effectiveness.

The PAC would expect to see in further responses a greater level of evidence where a recommendation is rejected due to it being already factored in as business-as-usual work.

General Comments

The PAC notes the following statement given within the introduction of the response:

As you are aware, the organisation is having a stronger focus on prioritisation and is stopping committing to initiatives it does not have the capacity to deliver. Therefore, only the 'recommendations' in the report have been prioritised and included in this response. I acknowledge the additional eight "Work planned that should be prioritised" and a further two "Areas for consideration" and these will be progressed as business as usual when capacity allows.

Whilst the PAC notes the rationale for focusing on prioritizing recommendations, it is concerned that the response from Government has not adequately addressed the areas for prioritisation and areas for consideration set out within the C&AG's report. The PAC is heartened to see that Government is placing more focus on prioritising recommendations and actions arising from C&AG reports, however, it would expect to see further detail provided in the response as to how these areas are being taken forward and addressed within the business-as-usual work. This should not distract from the prioritisation of initiatives, but would assist the PAC and the general public in their understanding of what Government is doing in order to meet the suggestions made by the C&AG.

Conclusion

The PAC intends to undertake follow up on the implementation of the recommendations accepted by the Government of Jersey in the report and will be seeking to hold a public hearing later in 2024 with the Chief Officer of Customer and Local Services in order to gauge the progress made. It will also be writing to the Government in order to gain further assurances over the evidence that backs up the rejection of recommendation three of the report. Finally, the PAC would urge the Government of Jersey to ensure that further information is provided in Executive Responses in relation to areas for

prioritisation and areas for consideration highlighted by the C&AG in subsequent reports.

Additional note: The current PAC would like to highlight that it intends to focus on the follow up of recommendation one of R.150/2023, which is:

“Establish governance arrangements that ensure that all parts of Government implement complaints management procedures that align with the commitments stated in the Customer Feedback Policy.”

In connection with this, the PAC has discussed key finding 24 of the Performance Management Report ([PAC 2/2022](#)), namely:

“There are different arrangements for capturing complaints and feedback in two major Departments. Health and Community Services operates a separate process within the hospital in order to give patients a choice on how they provide feedback and Children, Young People, Education and Skills are due to introduce a separate mechanism in schools due to incompatibility with the Government’s corporate policy.”

Therefore, the PAC notes its intention that, going forward, in addition to working with the Chief Officer of Customer and Local Services, it will also seek to question the Chief Executive Officer of Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES) and the Chief Officer for Health and Community Services (HCS) to examine the different mechanisms and experience for service users (which also links to a key finding of R.150/2023 that there have been inconsistencies in the way and the extent to which the Customer Feedback Policy’s commitments have been adopted by departments). The PAC also intends to explore the interconnection of handling and learning from complaints across Government departments and whether any changes have been made.

The current PAC notes that the Executive Response indicates that the majority of the recommendations are targeted to be actioned by the end of June 2024 and notes its intent to follow up on the status of these after that time.

Chief Executive and Treasurer of the States Response to C&AG Report: [Handling and Learning from Complaints](#) – Executive Response to PAC by Monday 20th November 2023.

Summary of response:

Government of Jersey welcomes the C&AG review into complaints handling and recognition of significant improvements made since her last audit.

We strongly agree that focussing on continually improving the way complaints are handled and learning lessons from the insight at both a local and corporate level will improve the services delivered and we plan to keep a relentless focus on this. The significant progress made in recording feedback, training in complaints handling at all levels, communication and publicity and reporting demonstrates our ongoing commitment in this area.

However, not all recommendations have been fully accepted on this occasion as they are covered by existing business as usual activities.

As you are aware, the organisation is having a stronger focus on prioritisation and is stopping committing to initiatives it does not have the capacity to deliver. Therefore only the 'recommendations' in the report have been prioritised and included in this response. I acknowledge the additional eight "Work planned that should be prioritised" and a further two "Areas for consideration" and these will be progressed as business as usual when capacity allows. There is already an ongoing commitment to an annual review of the Customer Feedback policy and complaints handling manual and the Customer Experience Board (made up of cross GOJ representatives) will regularly review progress against commitments.

Action Plan

Recommendations	Action	Target date	Responsible Officer
R1 Establish governance arrangements that ensure that all parts of Government implement complaints management procedures that align with the commitments stated in the Customer Feedback Policy.	Accept. The two areas currently identified as requiring complaints management procedures that align with the Customer Feedback Policy are HCS and schools. The development and rollout of HCS specific procedures will be overseen by HCS SLT and the Customer Experience Board already exists to provide additional governance.	30/06/24	Chief Nurse HCS, CYPES Service Manager Business Support

	CYPES procedures for schools will be aligned when recommendation 8 and 9 are implemented, and that will include the roll out of procedures.		
<p>R2 Be explicit about the roles, responsibilities and mechanisms for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring robust action plans are in place and effective in mitigating the 'complaints' risk as set out in the CLS Risk Register Ensuring a renewed focus on capturing 'lessons learned' from complaints received communicating and sharing learning across Government including, where relevant, to commissioned services; and evaluating the efficiency, effectiveness and reputational benefits to the Government of ensuring that the learning extracted from complaints is maximised. 	<p>Partially accept. As worded this recommendation is very broad – we propose to the following specific actions in this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department Feedback Managers to collate, analyse and report on lessons learned from complaints received in their area at monthly DFM meeting CX Board to be responsible for reviewing lessons learned and cascading actions within department and evaluation of effectiveness Ongoing communication to colleagues and relevant stakeholders about learning from complaints as part of regular insight cascade Quarterly reporting to ELT highlighting lessons learned, risks and action required 	30/9/24	Head of Customer Experience
<p>R3 Develop an overarching, coherent, prioritised and resourced action plan to deliver on the stated duty to ensure all customers can easily provide feedback on publicly funded services.</p>	<p>Reject. This is already part of business as usual with regular communications through a variety of methods, ensuring all Islanders are aware of and can easily provide feedback. Individual departments also take responsibility for understanding their own customer base which then informs how to ensure their customers can easily give feedback. Progress is regularly reported via CX Board.</p>	n/a	n/a
<p>R4 Broaden the post-complaints follow up process to ensure that all complainants (where contact information is held) have an opportunity to feed back on their</p>	<p>Accept. Post complaints survey will be extended to include telephone and by post to ensure feedback is captured by customers who do not provide an email address.</p>	31/03/24	Head of Customer Experience

experience, not just those that provide an email address.			
R5 Implement a specific workstream to understand and resolve the low level of compliance with mandatory customer feedback training requirements in relevant Government departments.	Accept. A review of statutory and mandatory training is planned by People & Corporate Services. The low level of compliance is not specific to customer feedback training specifically, but a wider issue, which will be addressed through this review and resulting action.	31/03/24	Head of Organisational Development
R6 Ensure that the line managers of DFMs and SFMs determine the need and opportunities for extended training so that DFMs and SFMs can deliver their roles.	Accept. CX team to define and promote opportunities for training appropriate to DFMs and SFMs. CX Board members to ensure that line managers in departments support roles, objectives and development and have confidence in the abilities of their named officers.	31/09/24	Head of Customer Experience
R7 Ensure that the Quality Assurance Framework can be and is applied across all Government departments and that all outcomes can be and are compared and reported together.	Accept. The area identified where Quality Assurance was not actively taking place was HCS. HCS will implement the QAF fully to ensure outcomes can be compared and reported along with all of GOJ	01/04/24	Chief Officer HCS
R8 Require schools to provide information to CYPES on numbers, themes and outcomes of complaints they receive which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are resolved at Stage 1; and • are managed by the Head Teacher or the school's Board of Governors at Stage 2 and Stage 3. 	Accept. CYPES, CLS and M&D will identify a solution and ensure access is available on the schools network. Once a solution is in place a pilot will be actioned to inform where changes to the system or processes are required. Following this the school staff will be offered training and the full rollout will begin. Once the system is live across all schools CYPES will have access to the metrics for complaints across each of the stages.	30/06/24	CYPES Service Manager Business Support
R9 Establish criteria - and report the outcome of their implementation - to guide decisions on whether school complaints that go to Stage 2 and Stage 3 are investigated by:	Accept. The criteria will be reviewed, and any changes will be incorporated into the Government of Jersey Feedback Manual.	30/06/24	CYPES Service Manager Business Support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Head Teacher • the school's Board of Governors; or • CYPES. 			
R10 Update the Customer Feedback Policy and the Complaints Handling Manual to help officers identify whether correspondence they receive should be handled as a complaint.	Accept. In the 2024 review of the Customer Feedback Policy and Manual, the handling of correspondence will be included.	30/6/24	Head of Customer Experience
R11 Develop a clear plan to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expand the information and data published on the Government's performance in handling and learning from complaints, in line with the commitments set out in the Policy; and • ensure the data and information are easily accessible to all stakeholders 	Accept. Publish an annual Customer Feedback review on gov.je.	30/03/24	Head of Customer Experience
R12 In individual staff and team performance management (including as part of the Connect People system) ensure that any information on how well customer complaints have been responded to, is properly used.	Accept. There are a number of key priorities for GOJ, and the Connect People system holds performance objectives but it is important there are not too many areas of focus to make them unmanageable. Where it is appropriate to have a customer complaint specific objective, this will be implemented in 2024 objectives.	31/03/24	Chief Executive Officer