

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

9th September 2004

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**CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE – STAFF TRAINING**  
**PROGRESS REPORT**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide a progress report to the Management Committee on how training in
1. dealing with difficult situations has been implemented.

**Background**

2. Between February and April 2003, Environmental Services Department arranged for an external consultant to facilitate a training course that provided techniques in dealing with difficult situations. Staff from Ringway Parkman were also invited as part of the Wiltshire Highway Partnership, which was being promoted at the time.
3. Following a particularly difficult complaint, it was decided that training should be offered on a corporate level to staff who dealt with difficult situations on a regular basis.
4. The Corporate Complaints Procedure has been established since April 2002 and
4. part of the role of the Corporate Complaints Officer has been to raise the profile of the procedure.

**Implementation**

5. The Environmental Services Department has reported that the staff who attended their training course, had felt that it had been successful and given useful tips in dealing with difficult situations. The course gave participants the opportunity to participate in a telephone role-play exercise. The feedback from staff in the Environmental Services Department has suggested that they had found this particular method of training very good and that they would transfer the skills they had learnt to their own jobs.

The Environmental Services Department confirmed that courses were offered in 2003 and finished in November 2003. Two different courses were run for the department. One was called 'Dealing with Difficult Customers' and was aimed at staff who had regular contact with customers. The second course was called 'Improving Customer Excellence' and aimed at managers. The course covered where there were examples of good customer service and also to identify any areas where there was room for change and improvement.

In early 2004 the Corporate Standards Manager organised another course following a very difficult complaint. The complainant had been threatening and abusive. It was clear that staff were uncomfortable in dealing with this level of abuse and needed to learn techniques that would give them the skill and confidence to deal with such situations. The course was delivered by an external trainer and was called "Handling Difficult Situations. 64 members of staff attended the training course, from across all departments. Department of Adult and Community Services staff have access to this type of training on a regular basis, so there was no immediate training need. Most attendees stated that it had been very useful and that they had learnt skills that could be easily applied back in the workplace. Several people commented that although the training was very useful, they found it a little intense, and they would have liked some tips on dealing with less stressful situations, such as difficult one to one meetings and telephone skills.

### **Further Developments**

As a result of feedback from courses, the Corporate Complaints Officer has arranged further training. It will include an overview of the Corporate Complaints procedure, and dealing with difficult issues. The first of these courses has been arranged for October 2004, and will be attended by staff from the Customer Care Unit.

The Corporate Complaints Officer also contributes to the regular induction courses for new managers, which is a core management competency. From the end of 2004 Corporate Complaints training is now also a core component of the induction procedure for all new staff.

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Unpublished documents relied upon in the production of this report: None

Environmental impact of the recommendations contained in this report: None