

Date of Audit	November 2012
DWQR Staff Present	William Byers
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Summary of Audit

Overall Summary

The purpose of the audit was to seek demonstration of a clear linkage between complaints, determination of causes, commitment to resolving issues, providing appropriate information and confirmation that remedial actions were taken. It therefore also examines the actions surrounding the initial consumer contact to establish appropriateness of responses and to understand the basis for escalation to formal complaint.

This audit selected 6 cases from a number of formal water quality complaints escalated within Scottish Water's complaints process in 2012. They were selected to give a representation of the consumer contact issues and a geographical coverage across Scotland. These cases demonstrate that Scottish Water takes a great deal of care in recording and understanding consumer complaints and that the appropriate reference is made to Operational, Scientific and Engineering functions to initiate investigation and identify actions to resolve issues. They also however, highlight the difficulty of maintaining a focus on the timely resolution of the consumer's issues as the responsibility for implementing solutions lies with different Functions or Teams within the Organisation.

Number of Recommendations: 4

Score (out of 6)

Quality of Response to Original Contact	4	Good
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Scottish Water has demonstrated a high level of attention to the recording of consumer contacts and has shown a high level of understanding of their issues. There are instances however, where the level of attention required to fully resolve issues is diminished as the responsibility for resolution is transferred to different Functions and Teams.

Quality of Complaint Investigation	5	Very good
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In general, the audit shows there is a high level of attention given to the complaints process and the required timescales for responses. All the cases examined showed that in terms of the initial stages, they were compliant with process. Contact team and Service Review team initiating discussions with appropriate Functions and Teams.

Quality of Remedial Measures	4	Good
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These cases show that remedial measures pursued were appropriate although the timescale for carrying out and resolving some consumer issues was unduly long.

Quality of Information to Consumer	4	Good
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The quality of information provided to consumers was good and appropriate to their issues. Examples of clearly setting out the actions being taken and timescales for completion and of provision of contact details for case handlers. There are some cases where the longevity of the issue has shown a loss of focus on the need to provide timely updates on progress. This may be a reflection of contacts not being recorded in the Promise system

Follow Up Action of Responsible Functions/Teams	4	Good
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Whilst in general, there is a clear desire within frontline contact, Service Review Team and field teams to resolve complaints, some of the cases examined reveal a fundamental loss of sight of the consumer aspect behind the often engineering or operations solution to issues. There is a sense that once a project or solution is identified, they take on a life of their own and the imperative to resolve consumer concerns become secondary to completion of the works or project.

Consumer Experience	4	Good
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Staff showed understanding and empathy with consumers in most cases. Focus on the resolution of issues is often diminished or lost as responsibility for arranging the completion of actions lies with other Functions and Teams. There are indications that more thorough understanding of complete consumer contact history by appropriately experienced staff/Teams may identify alternative causes of complaint.