



Annual Corporate Customer Feedback Report

2020/2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council operates a Corporate Complaints policy and procedure which is overseen by the Customer & Cultural Services Division. Complaints, compliments and comments are managed through the corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Oracle Service Cloud. Any member of staff can record complaints and compliments through the corporate intranet using the online form. Customers can log complaints, compliments and comments online or can request them to be recorded through their preferred access channel.
- 1.2 Service Cloud holds records of all complaints, compliments and comments and is used to manage the status and timescales of corporate complaint handling within the organisation. The related data is also analysed to identify trends and lessons learned to help us to improve our services and the customers' experience.
- 1.3 Complaints about Adults Social Care and Support and Children's Services, including Children's Special Educational Needs (SEN) are dealt with by the Adults and Children's Complaints Team. There were 46 further complaints for Children's Services (43) and Adults Social Care (three) that were investigated through this team. Further information can be found in the end of year reports for both Children's & Adults Services.

2. Corporate Complaint Process

- 2.1 The Corporate Complaints policy is reviewed and updated annually. The procedure is as follows:
 - **Stage one**, complaints are investigated and responded to by the appropriate service area. Complaints should be responded to within a maximum of 20 working days. Where complaints are considered more complex, with the agreement of the customer and of the appropriate Head of Service or Complaints team a complaint may be responded to within 30 working days.
 - **Stage two**, if a customer remains dissatisfied with the response that has been given a complaint is escalated to the final stage of the complaint's procedure. The appropriate Head of Service or senior officer will review the complaint and the stage one response and respond to the customer within 10 working days or for more complex complaints within 20 working days, in agreement with the customer.

3. Summary of complaints and compliments we received

3.1 650 complaints were received for 2020/2021, a decrease of 59 (8.3%) compared to the previous year when 709 were received. However, the first quarter of the year coincided with the first Covid lockdown, during which there was a significant fall in complaints compared with historical trends. (See further analysis in section four.)

Of the 650 complaints received 67 (10.3%) progressed to the second and final stage of the complaint's procedure compared to 66 (9.3%) in 2019/2020.

3.2 The preferred access channel for customers to make a complaint is online (44%), with telephone (30%) and emails (26%). Customers are encouraged to use the online forms, where possible.

3.3 The Council also offers a translation and interpreting service for users of Council services where the first language is not English or due to a disability or impairment, the customer requires alternative formats such as British Sign Language or large print.

3.4 Key trends for the year were:

- There has been a decrease in the number of complaints received.
- Service areas that provide services to all residents received the most complaints as forecast and reflected in previous years.
- 56% of all customers choose dissatisfaction with service delivery as the main reason for complaint.

3.5 1104 compliments were received in 2020/2021, compared to 1273 for the previous year, a decrease of 169 (13.3%).

Table one shows complaints and compliments for the last three years. The proportion of complaints compared with compliments is reasonably constant at around 40:60 complaints to compliments.

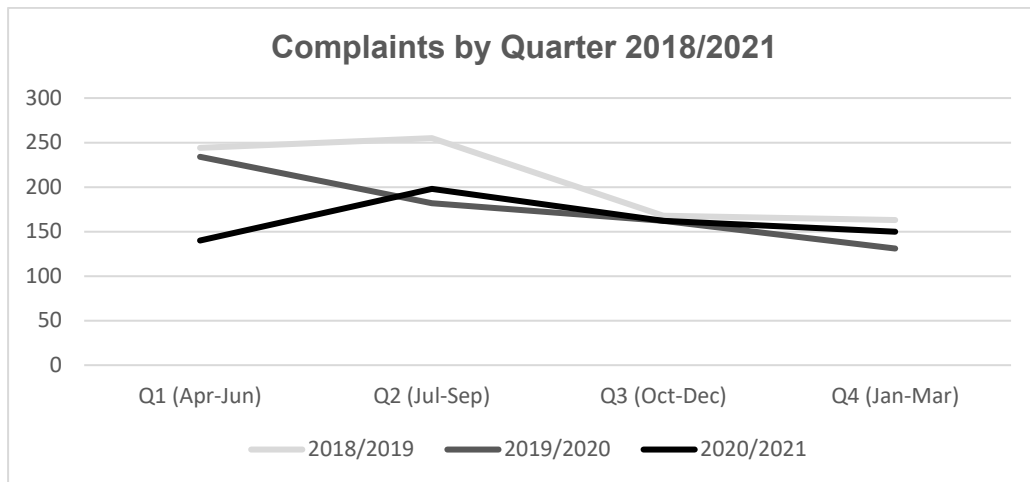
Table One: Complaints and compliments by year 2018/2019 to 2020/2021

	2018/19	%	2019/20	%	2020/21	%
Complaints	830	42.2	709	35.8	650	37.1
Compliments	1137	57.8	1273	64.2	1104	62.9
Total	1967		1982		1754	

4. Corporate Complaints Quarterly Service Area Analysis

4.1 Analysis has helped us to understand how and when complaints are received, it allows us to monitor the impact on seasonal services and trends in service delivery. To demonstrate this, complaints numbers have been broken down further. Graph One shows complaints received by quarter.

Graph One: Complaints by Quarter 2018/2021



4.2 There has been a decrease in complaints compared with previous years, with quarter one seeing the biggest decrease. Due to Covid and lockdown, many services were unable to operate or offered limited services. Had quarter one complaints been comparable with previous years, it's likely there would have been a small increase compared with 2019/20.

4.3 Highways Services have had a decrease across all quarters, probably as a result of the Government's Covid restrictions. Civil parking enforcement was suspended from April to June 2020.

4.4 Library Services have also had a large decrease across all quarters due to disruption to services due to Covid as per Government guidance resulting in libraries closing.

4.5 Bereavement Services has seen an increase across all four quarters with significant disruption due to Covid. Complaints related to various issues, in particular, due to limited access to facilities.

4.6 Waste & Recycling - Bickenhill Household Waste Services saw an increase across all quarters. These related to significant service disruption due to Covid, resulting in long queues and waiting times to access the facility. In September 2020 a booking system was introduced.

4.7 Quarter one also saw a small increase for Waste & Recycling due to the suspension of garden waste collections from April to May 2020.

- 4.8 In quarter four Income and Awards had 29 complaints logged compared to 15 the previous year mainly due to lack of response/communication after applying for government grant scheme. Three different government grant schemes were implemented in 2020/2021 in response to Covid.
- 4.9 For quarter four Planning Services also had an increase with 12 complaints logged which is an increase of seven from the previous year, these related to time taken to approve applications and the lack of communication from officers.
- 4.10 To help put the level of complaints into context, table two shows some of the activities undertaken by key service areas which tend to be the subject of complaints, with the number of complaints received.

Table Two: Key Council Activities 2020/2021

Service Areas	Activity level	No of Complaints
Waste & Recycling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household waste & recycling collections (refuse, garden waste, mixed recycling, glass) Bulky Waste available collections Visitors to Bickenhill HWRC 	<p style="text-align: right;">11,112,584</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4,852</p> <p style="text-align: right;">42,173</p>	<p>267 (.0024%)</p>
Income & Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council tax bills issued New Benefit applications processed Covid Related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation & administration of the governments business grant schemes (11 different schemes in total) Implementation & administration of the governments Local Council Tax Reduction Hardship Fund Implementation & administration of the governments Self Isolation Test & Trace Payment Scheme 	<p style="text-align: right;">167,450</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5,115</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Awarded £54m to eligible businesses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Awarded £1.491m to eligible recipients of Local Council Tax Reduction</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Awarded £1.025m to eligible residents so far. Scheme is in place until 30/09/21</p>	<p>55 (.000003%)</p>
Traffic & Parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Council owned spaces 	4418	

Service Areas	Activity level	No of Complaints
Highways Maintenance Significant Highway schemes implemented	3 New Pedestrian Zebra crossings Upgrade of 5 Pelican to Puffin Pedestrian crossings TROs to manage local parking issues West Midlands Bike Hire Scheme Approval of 4 applications from HS2 for new highway layouts to provide access to the new Station site and Kenilworth Greenway Local Strategic Network Resilience Programme Wildlife Ways Vaisala Trial LED Programme Fillongley Bridge enabling works The Crescent retaining wall Property Flood Resistance Schemes	94 (% N/A)
Streetcare <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintained grass (m²) • Maintained hard ground (m²) 	8,512,463 m ² 4,638,163 m ²	46 (% N/A)
Planning & Building Control <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning Applications • Building Control Applications • Initial Notices* 	3,630 1,351 968	50 (0.84%)
Customer & Cultural Services Number of contacts by channel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Centre • Walk in Centres • Email / Webforms • Live Chats Cemeteries & Crematoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cremations and burials • Memorial headstone permits • Scatters 	258,346 0 25,956 12,265 4193 761 424	57 (.018%)

Service Areas	Activity level	No of Complaints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grave reserves Reassignments Memorial sales 	147 17 213	
Registration Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Births, Deaths and marriages 	1,884	
Libraries & Arts Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor numbers 	6,407	2 (0.03%)
Parks Area of maintained shrubs (m ²)	540,750	43 (% N/A)

*Initial Notices are issued by private companies to advise that they have been engaged to manage Building Regulations compliance.

5. Categories of Complaint

5.1 Complaints are categorised so that we can understand why customers complain. The categories for complaints are provided in Table three. The top three reasons are the same as for previous years:

- Service delivery
- Decision making (policy)
- Impoliteness, rudeness, unfairness, bias or prejudice

Table Three: Categories of complaints

Complaint reason	2018/ 2019	% of total	2019/ 2020	% of total	2020 2021	% of Total
Dissatisfaction in service delivery	618	74.5	441	62.2	364	56.0
Dissatisfaction with the way we apply policy, a decision or a procedure	131	15.8	169	23.8	199	30.6
Impoliteness, rudeness, unfairness, bias or prejudice	60	7.2	71	10.0	54	8.3
Refusal to answer reasonable questions, misleading or unsuitable advice	16	1.9	23	3.3	27	4.2
Inappropriate use of personal information	5	0.6	5	0.7	6	0.9
Total	830	100%	709	100%	650	100%

5.2 Complaints indicating dissatisfaction with service delivery represented the greatest proportion at 56%, a decrease of 6.2%.

- 5.3 30.6% of complaints related to dissatisfaction with the way policy or a decision was applied, an increase of 7% on the previous year. This mainly related to decision making with regards to Bickenhill Household Waste Recycling Centre.
- 5.4 8.3% complaints were made because of impoliteness and rudeness, of which 24 (44.4%) related to Waste & Recycling for Amey crew. There has been a big decrease from previous years for Highways - Parking Enforcement Officers receiving seven. No complaints were logged under this category to do with bias or prejudice.

6. Complaint Timescales

Table four shows the complaints resolved by complaint stage and timescale.

Table Four: Complaint Resolution Timescales 2020/2021

	Complaints at Stage 1	Complaints at Stage 2
Resolved in 20 days	557	
Over 20 days and less than 30 days	64	
Over 30 days	29	
Stage 2 in 20 days		62
Stage 2 over 20 days		5
Total	650	67

- 6.1 Of the 650 complaints registered at stage one, 557 were responded to within the 20 days, 64 were identified as complex and responded to within 20 to 30 days in line with the Complaints and Compliments policy and the agreement of the complainant. 29 complaints exceeded 30 days and a breakdown by service area is provided in table five.
- 6.2 Of the 67 complaints escalated to stage two, 62 were responded to within 20 days with five complaints that went over the 20 days. The complaints team continued to work with the co-ordinators during this period. A breakdown by service area and reasons for exceeding timescale is provided in table six.
- 6.3 If at stage one or two a complaint is more complex, the deadline can be extended which should be negotiated with the customer and agreed by the Corporate Complaints Lead.
- 6.4 The complaints team monitor all complaint timescales to identify those approaching target completion, the team will liaise with the relevant co-ordinators and where necessary speak to the relevant investigating officer or Head of Service.

6.5 There are a number of reasons for a complaint to exceed timescale including:

- A. Complexity of the complaint: complaint relates to multiple services, requires monitoring or site visits.
- B. More information needed from the customer which caused a delay in being able to start the investigation.
- C. Delay in completing the complaint on the system even though a response has been sent to the customer.
- D. Poor response time management of the complaint by investigating officers.
- E. Responded to out of SLA due to Covid.

Table Five: Complaints exceeding 30 days at stage one by Service Area

Service Area Team	Total of Stage 1 out of SLA	A	B	C	D	E
Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services	5	2			3	
Planning Design & Engagement	7			1	6	
Highways Services	4		1		3	
Income & Awards	5	1	1		1	2
Parks, grass, shrubs & Trees	5				5	
Streetcare	1	1				
Customer Services	2	1	1			

Table Six: Complaints exceeding 20 days at stage two by Service Area

Service Area Team	Stage 2 out of SLA
Highway Services	2
Income & Awards	1
Parks grass shrubs & trees	1
Neighbourhood & Regulatory Services	1

6.6 Highways Services complaints over the 20 days: one due to complexity of complaint – customer had been informed and one due to complaint response having been drafted and not sent by mistake.

6.7 The remaining three complaints that exceeded timescales were monitored and the complaints team continued to work with these areas to ensure responses were sent out and customers were kept informed.

6.8 It is also important to note that one of the highest service areas to receive complaints, Waste & Recycling, dealt with all complaints at stage one and two within the timescales.

- 6.9 Despite consistent reminders we are finding some complaints are being responded to outside of the timescales and we will continue to work with the areas concerned and provide on-going training and support.
- 6.10 The complaints team continues to work with co-ordinators to ensure responses where possible are sent within timescale, and customers are kept informed with deadline extensions.
- 6.11 To mitigate the impact of poor response time to the customer and to support investigating officers there is an automated reminder system as part of the complaints process as well as reminders from the complaint co-ordinator.

7. Learning from Complaints

- 7.1 One of the most important outcomes of investigating complaints is to learn from them. Categories of learning are used so that we can understand how feedback can be used to improve or shape services in the future. Table seven shows the categories recorded after a complaint has been investigated.
- 7.2 In line with the Council's legal obligations under part seven of the Immigration Action 2016, the Council's complaint procedure has incorporated a measure in which a customer can make a formal complaint to the Council, should any member of the public feel that a customer-facing council officer has insufficient fluency in spoken English in the performance of their role. Since the implementation of the Act, we have received no complaints in relation to this category which is a positive indicator on the quality of English fluency used by staff employed in the team.

Table Seven: Categories of learning recorded

Learning Category	2018/2019		2019/2020		2020/2021	
	No.	% of total	No.	% of total	No.	% of Total
Improve revised service delivery process	295	35.5	283	39.9	254	39.1
Customer comments included in review of how policies & procedures are applied to inform decision making	165	19.9	199	28.1	211	32.5
Improvements in communication	200	24.1	172	24.3	145	22.3
Review behaviours and/or training needs for individuals or a team	154	18.6	54	7.6	40	6.1
Review of confidentiality procedures. These should be carried out in accordance with the Data Protections Act.	16	1.9	1	0.1	0	0.0
Total	830	100%	709	100%	650	100%

- 7.3 The following learning categories were identified as part of each complaint's outcome and a summary of the trends:
- Improve service delivery process – predominately relates to Waste and Recycling.
 - Customer comments included in review of how policies and procedures are applied to inform decision making – majority relate to Waste & Recycling (Bickenhill HWRC); due to Covid restrictions there were long queues and time taken to get into the site. Parking services – issues with parking on restricted road, parking on pavements and blocking resident's drives/garages. There were also issues with parking outside schools across the borough with footpaths being blocked. From April to June 2020 civil parking enforcement was suspended.
 - Improvements in communication – All areas have had a few complaints for this learning category with the majority for Planning Services, Income and Awards and Waste & Recycling.
 - Review behaviours and/or training needs for individuals or a team – Relate to Waste & Recycling and Streetcare crew behaviour. Refresher training is carried out by supervisors following a complaint.
- 7.4 The complaints team run quarterly reports on recorded learning and work with service areas to discuss how this has been implemented to ensure service improvements.
- 7.5 Most officers advise customers on what the learning has been and how they intend to implement it, which is then recorded on Service Cloud. The complaints team will continue to monitor this and work with the investigating officer to ensure the learning is correct and matches that of the response and to ensure that it is being implemented.
- 7.6 Samples of learning from complaints investigated during 2020/2021 have been included as appendix 3.2 alongside two case studies to show how a complaint is investigated from start to end, including how we learn from complaints.

8. Complaints by Ward

8.1 To gather a further insight into complaints table eight shows complaints by Ward in which the complainant lived. This enables us to see if there are any new trends or exceptions to trends that could be analysed further.

Table Eight: Complaints by Ward

Ward	2018/ 2019	% of Total	2019/ 2020	% of Total	2020/ 2021	% of total	% of the borough's population
Out of borough customers or no address given	89	10.7%	126	17.8%	172	26.6%	
Elmdon	49	5.9%	51	7.2%	31	4.8%	5.8%
Silhill	46	5.5%	49	6.9%	34	5.2%	5.8%
Shirley South	36	4.4%	44	6.2%	32	4.9%	5.8%
Blythe	74	8.9%	44	6.2%	33	5.1%	6.7%
St Alphege	54	6.5%	43	6.1%	33	5.1%	6.4%
Knowle	45	5.4%	36	5.1%	30	4.6%	5.2%
Smiths Wood	22	2.7%	36	5.1%	28	4.3%	6.0%
Shirley West	58	7.0%	34	4.8%	35	5.4%	5.9%
Shirley East	46	5.5%	33	4.6%	28	4.3%	5.6%
Bickenhill	30	3.6%	32	4.5%	31	4.8%	5.9%
Meriden	34	4.1%	31	4.4%	17	2.6%	5.9%
Dorridge & Hockley Heath	44	5.3%	30	4.2%	30	4.6%	5.3%
Lyndon	48	5.8%	27	3.8%	32	4.9%	6.4%
Kingshurst & Fordbridge	42	5.1%	27	3.8%	30	4.6%	6.2%
Chelmsley Wood	44	5.3%	25	3.5%	18	2.8%	6.1%
Olton	44	5.3%	21	3.0%	21	3.2%	5.9%
Castle Bromwich	25	3.0%	20	2.8%	15	2.3%	5.3%
Grand Total	830	100%	709	100%	650	100%	

8.2 There has been an increase in customers logging complaints where no address has been provided. An address does not need to be provided to investigate a complaint.

8.3 Most wards have had a decrease in complaints, no particular trends have been identified.

9. Compliments

- 9.1 1104 compliments were received in 2020/2021, a decrease of 169 (13.3%) compared to 1273 compliments received in 2019/2020. Table nine shows the top five service areas to receive compliments.

Table Nine: Compliments Service Area Top Five

Service Area	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Highway Services	221	427	531
Customer Services	382	610	294
Waste and Recycling	55	79	134
Streetcare	33	48	66
Parks grass shrubs trees	20	21	40

- 9.2 Compliments are shared with service areas quarterly and at year end. Customer Services share compliments received as part of a staff monthly local brief.
- 9.3 Highway Services have had a large increase of compliments. The service has acknowledged the importance of logging compliments when officers are getting compliments for good work.
- 9.4 Table 10 shows the reasons for receiving compliments. The majority of compliments were made for named employee helpfulness at 64%, decreased from 77% during 2019/2020. High standard of service has increased to 20.3% from 13% in 2019/2020.

Table Ten: Categories of Compliments

Category	2018/2019	% of total	2019/2020	% of total	2020/2021	% of total
Named employee helpfulness	779	68.5	980	77.0	707	64.0
High standard of service	161	14.2	165	13.0	224	20.3
Helpfulness of service	182	16.0	106	8.3	121	11.0
Other	15	1.3	22	1.7	52	4.7
TOTAL	1137	100	1273	100	1104	100

10. Customer Comments

- 10.1 Customer comments are captured where a customer has a suggestion for service improvement or is not happy with the way we are currently delivering a service or policy and indicate they do not want to log a formal corporate complaint.

10.2 Customer comments are shared with all relevant service areas for learning and improvement suggestions. In cases where a customer has requested a response this will be provided by the service area responsible.

10.3 Table 11 shows the number of comments recorded over the last three years.

Table Eleven: Number of comments for last three years

	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Number of comments	723	945	1070

10.4 Table 12 shows the service areas that received the most customer comments. Majority of comments relate to Waste and Recycling which is consistent with previous years.

Table Twelve: Top Service Areas receiving the most comments

Service Area	Total
Waste and Recycling	597
Highway Services	107
Customer Services	88
Income and Awards	67
Coronavirus	53
Streetcare	45
Neighbourhood Services	25
Parks grass shrubs trees	22
Planning Services	20

- 10.5 Key trends of customer comments registered in 2020/2021 relate to:
- Waste and Recycling – Various comments made about all services offered - 48 comments regarding visiting and accessing Bickenhill HWRC.
 - Highway Services – Various comments with regards to dangerous/obstructive parking, wildlife ways project and parking charge notices issued.
 - Customer Services – Various feedback and suggestions for improvements around the navigation on the new website and library online services. Comments with regards to waiting times and the message on the telephony system and availability of live chat services.
 - Income & Awards – No exemption for empty property, new council tax bills (increase).
 - Coronavirus – concerns raised by the public with regards to social distancing measures and public not wearing masks.

11. Local Government Social Care Ombudsman

Each year the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) provides feedback to Local Authorities about the complaints it has received about them in the past year. The feedback is for both Children's and Adult's Statutory and Corporate Complaints and can be found in Appendix 3.3.

- 11.1 Tables 13 and 14 show the services areas for which complaints decisions were made by the LGSCO and what decisions were made.

Table Thirteen: Services Areas decisions made on

Decisions Made	Total
Planning and Development	7
Environmental Service & Public Protection	6
Corporate and Other Services	4
Income and Awards	3
Transport and Highways	2

Table Fourteen: Decisions made

Decisions Made	Total
Closed after Initial Enquiries	10
Referred back for local resolution	8
Upheld	3
Not Upheld	1

12. Looking Forward

An annual review of the customer feedback policy will take place during 2021/2022.

- 12.1 During 2021/2022 the complaints team will continue to focus on timescales and improve support and training for those areas struggling with complaint response timescales. An informal pilot has been carried out on complaints timescales so that data can be analysed to look at reducing the standard stage one timescale to 15 working days.
- 12.2 Work with service areas and continue to provide them with performance information/data and comparisons for improvements.

- 12.3 It is important to understand the make-up of the community who use the complaints and compliments service and how council services can be made more inclusive. One positive way of doing this is by introducing equality monitoring. The online complaints form is being developed so that we can capture this information.