



**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -
“Everybody Matters”**

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st April 2013 – 30 June 2013



1. Introduction

This report provides some of the key customer service information for the organisation, including:-

- Analysis of the complaints and compliments received during this quarter and any other relevant feedback, and
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics for information.

2. Customer Feedback Analysis

32 complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

27 complaints (84%) were answered in 15 working days or less.

5 complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to and details of these complaints are listed below.

We also received **54 compliments**.

The number of complaints and compliments received is slightly lower than last quarter; which is consistent with the same period in previous years.

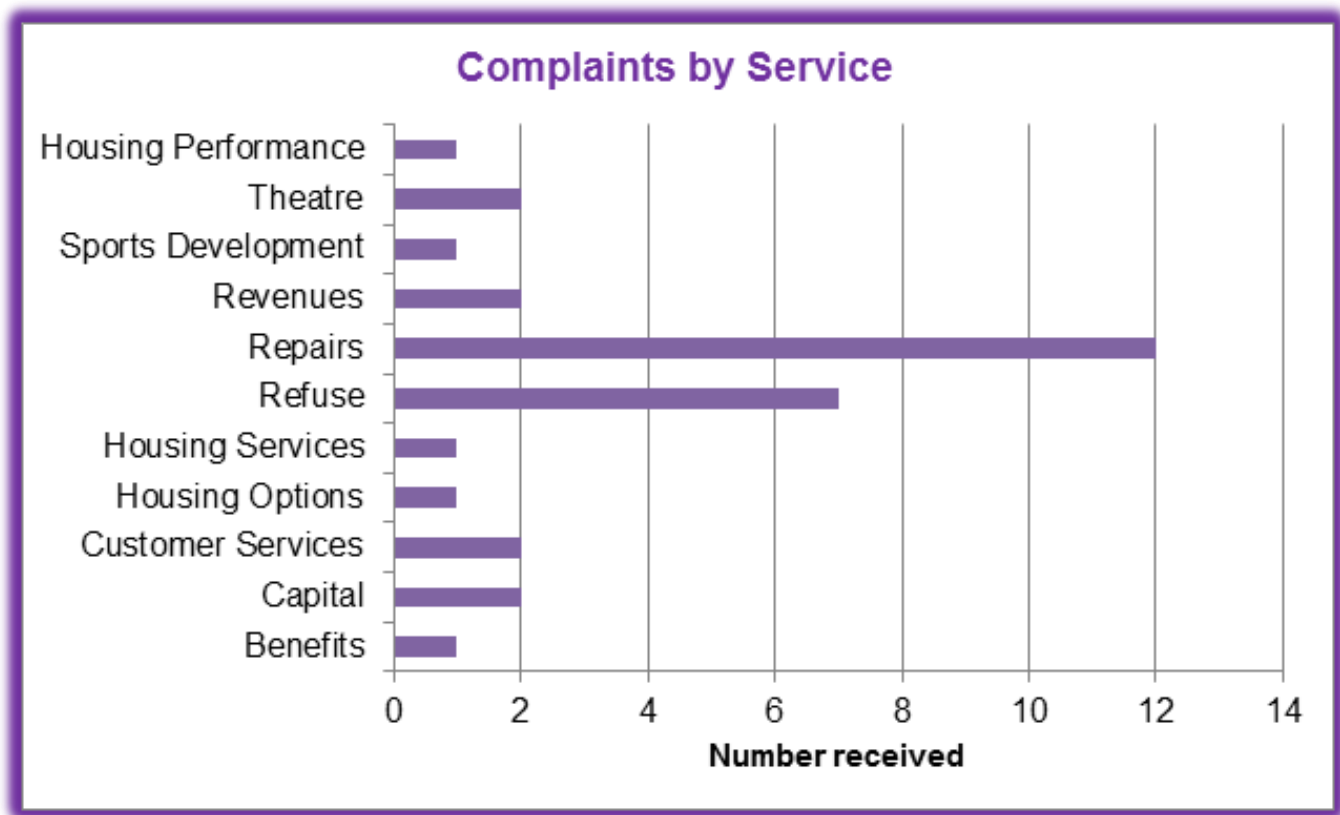
The ongoing trial with the Repairs and Maintenance Team to improve the complaint process through consistent communication with the customer is ongoing and data is showing us that we can resolve the majority of complaints more quickly by taking a personal approach and gaining a greater understanding of what the real problems are. The trial will be rolled out to other departments within the next month.

The common themes in the complaints received this quarter were:

- Automated systems not working properly
- Confusing information or no information received about changes to refuse service
- Missed bins
- Staff being unfriendly
- Not doing what we promised
- Not responding to customers calls and queries
- Unacceptable delays in taking action
- Not keeping customers informed of changes/cancellations of service

Number of complaints by service

The following chart provides a breakdown of complaints by service.



Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and 84% of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, (5 cases) customers were informed that there would be a delay, except where the delay was only 1 day (1case).

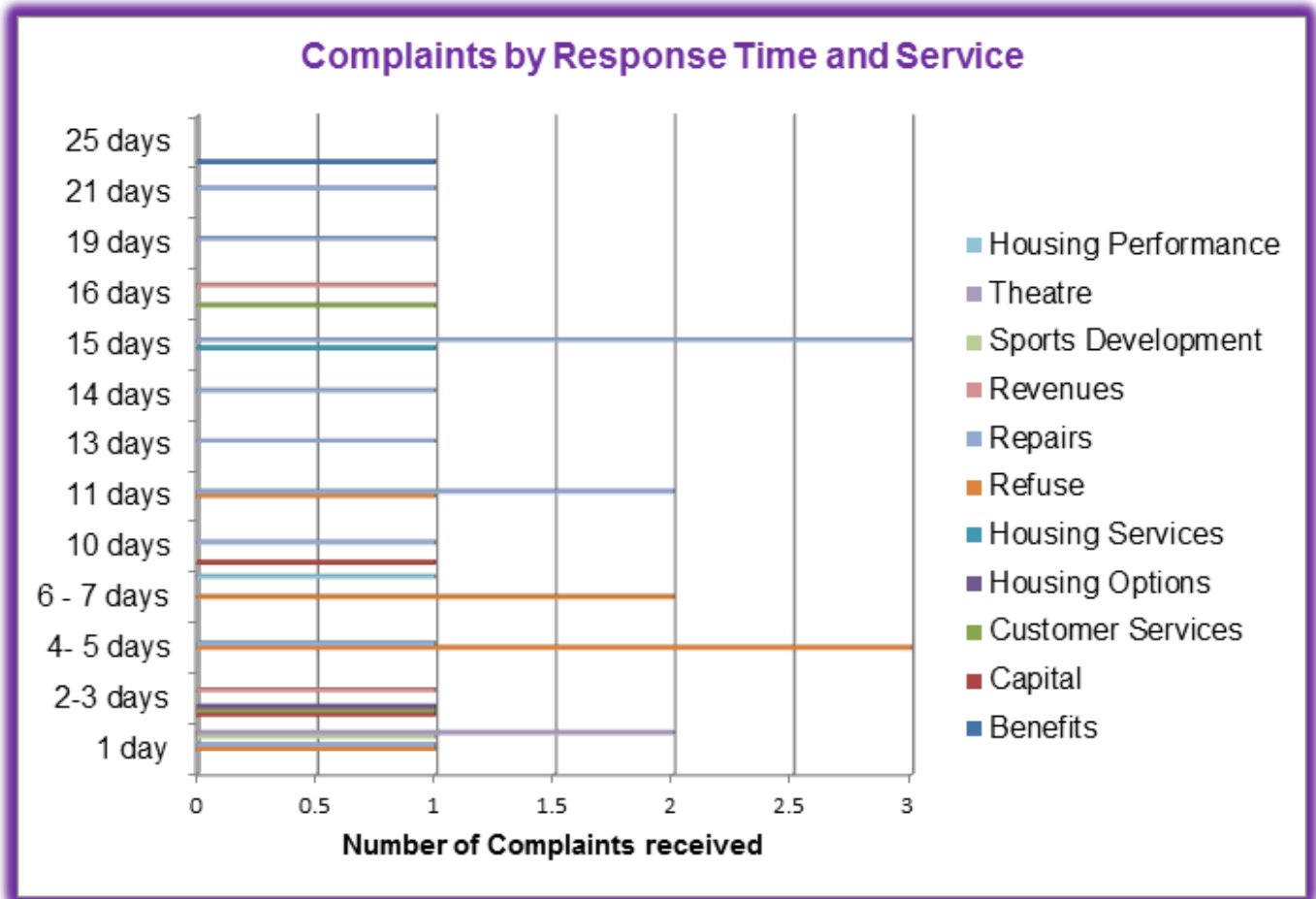
The following table details the complaints which took longer than 15 working days to deal with and why.

Complaint details	Days taken to respond	Action taken	Outcome update from Head of Service
Customer Services			
Customer phoned to pay the rent and the lady adviser was very unfriendly and she sounded more like a debt collector. Customer has been a tenant since 1976 and has never been spoken to like this before.	16	Spoke to customer and she explained that she felt the member of staff she spoke to was rude and very impatient with her. She did not know who member of staff was or in which team. Apology given to customer.	Customer Service training scheduled for August and this issue will be discussed.

Housing			
Customers heating broke down; Council attended and said they would need to condemn the boiler because they did not have the part to repair it. Alternative heating was provided which a very small heater for a family of 5 in a 3 bedroom house. The family were freezing. The youngest being 3.5 years old had a horrendous cold. It has made customers asthma worse and she had to go out and buy two heaters which cost £65.00 with £10.00 of electric per day to run them.	21	The heating has been fixed now and apology given to the customer for only supplying a small heater when heating broke down during the cold weather.	No further action required
Customer unhappy that a leak in her property had been seen by four different tradesmen and they couldn't agree what the fault was. The last person realised that it was a leak in a pipe in the loft and repaired it. Customer came to the Town Hall to make a complaint about the leak not being looked at properly and Reception, telephoned SPI, and organised for an Electrician to come out that afternoon to look at the light fitting and make sure it's safe.	19	Officer visited tenant 14th May to resolve and she was very happy with outcome. He apologised and said that we should have done something differently and investigated the problem further. Staff will be spoken to regarding not seeing a job through to completion.	Training session to be arranged for repair operatives.
Resources			
Customer unhappy that she hasn't received a response to a letter handed in.	25	Letter of explanation and apology sent	No further action
Customer saw a Council Tax Officer and felt she was rude, had no empathy and that she had talked spoke down to them.	16	Apology given and staff reminded to be more understanding of the customers situation	No further action

Time taken to respond to complaints by service.

This chart shows the breakdown of all complaints by response time. This suggests that the end to end time for responding to complaints is generally based on the nature of the service and/or complaint rather than any one service dealing with complaints in an unsatisfactory way.



“You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:-

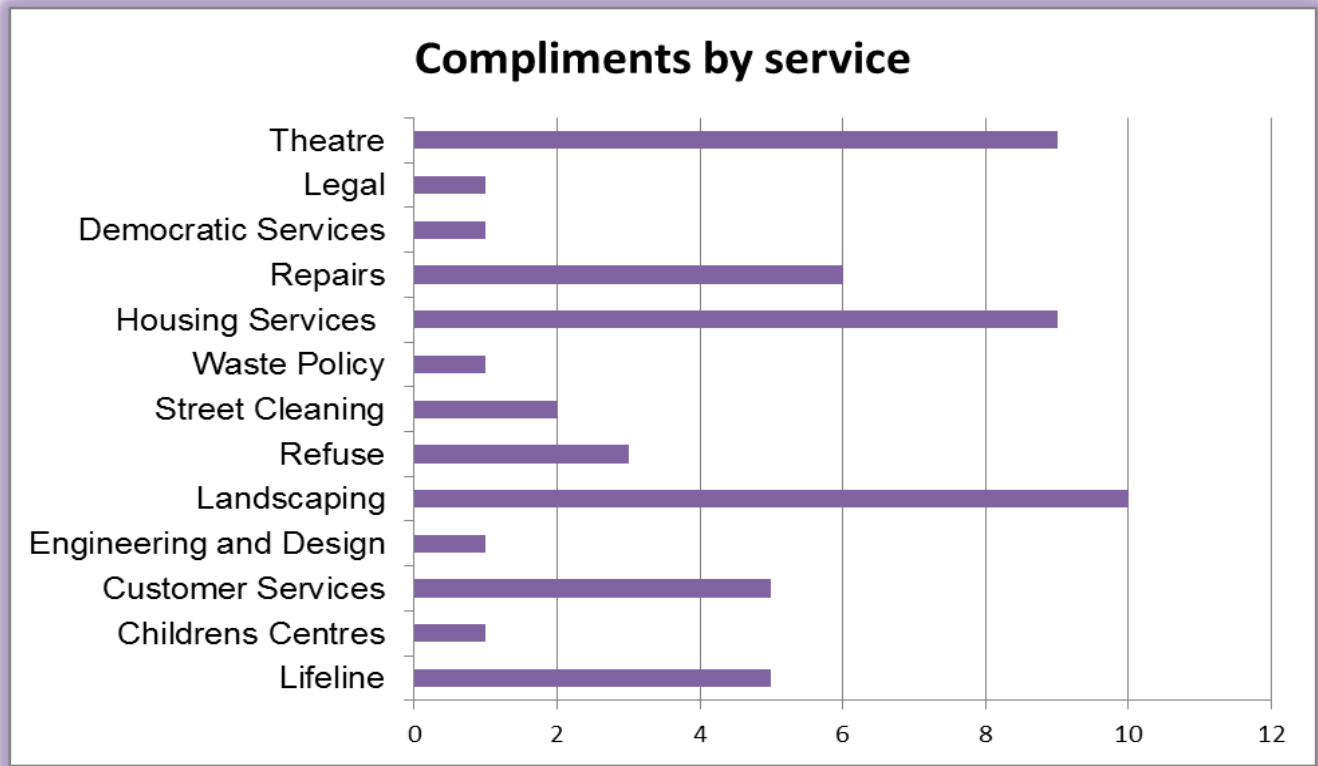
- Training for Repairs inspectors to improve communication with contractors.
- New process introduced to improve communication between teams to ensure changes in tenants housing circumstances are reported promptly.
- Leisure Services introduced new process to ensure they give customers 2 weeks prior notice before cancelling children’s activities/ courses.
- Improvement in Theatre booking system.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There were no complaints escalated to the Head of Customer Services for further investigation or action.

Happy Customers!

From the **54** compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides, especially when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner.



Here are details of some of the compliments we have received for information.

Team	Compliment Detail
Lifeline	Customer wanted to thank us for helping her on Easter Sunday, says we saved her life!
Children's Centres	Customer would like to express how brilliant the Baby Bistro group at Oak Trees Children's Centre is." I just wanted to say the group was there for me at a crucial time and I hope it continues to be available to other moms".
Customer Services	Customer would like to say thank you very much to Customer Services Adviser Sue Trevitt –“ she was extremely pleasant and very helpful and I felt she tried her best for me”.
Customer Services	Customer aged 95 was very upset as she was having many ongoing problems with her heating and was helped by Hilary .Customer came into the Winyates office to thank Hilary in person. The boiler had never been connected properly in the first place and now works perfectly.
Landscaping	Compliment regarding Gavin Boyes from customer to say that he was very happy with the professional and polite way in which the matter

	has been handled (regarding TPO). In his opinion Gavin can be a role model for how the Council should deal with the public.
Landscaping	Customer called to say how pleased he was to the work done to the hedge - the hedge has been lowered and trimmed and has let in more light.
Refuse	Customer commented on how friendly and helpful the Waste collection crew are who collect from her - and that they never leave any mess - she thinks they are fantastic.
Street Cleaning	Customer said she was walking her dog this morning and wanted to compliment the man who was working on the footpath. She said he was very considerate and stopped his sweeping machine to let her young dog pass, She said he didn't restart the machine until she was well in front and wanted to pass on her compliments to him.
Housing Services	Customer emailed to say" I guess that you receive a lot of negative feedback from disgruntled tenants, so I wish to thank you for the very polite and prompt service I received when I phoned up on 2nd April 2013, regarding urgent repairs required to the back door lock at my home. The lady in the housing repairs department was very friendly and courteous, and when I explained that I needed an approximate time for the visit, because I had to take time off work, she provided an excellent response. I spoke to her at 09:50 and she stated that the engineer would arrive between 10.30 and 11.30 on the same day. The engineer, Chris Williams, arrived at 10:50, diagnosed the problem, and affected the repairs within a short time. Chris Williams was also very polite and friendly – and efficient.
Housing Services	Customer phoned to say how grateful she is for the quick response and service you have provided today in repairing/securing the back gate for the safety of her 5 year old disabled son.
Repairs	Customer rang to say what a good service, as plumber was out 20mins after she reported the problem & the plumber was happy and cheerful- 'a credit to RBC' she said.
Repairs	Customer phoned to say" Thank you so much for the speed and efficiency in which the work was carried out, the young workman went to great lengths to ensure the rail was at the correct height". It's changed their lives, they are so grateful.
Legal	Customer called very concerned about boundary responsibility at her property. Linda Craddock carried out search and provided the information sought. Customer said, "Thank you very much. You have been really, really helpful, I appreciate it. Have a good day".
Theatre	Thank you to Tim Mackrill for help regarding the set for the show (Anything Goes coming up later in the year). Really appreciate the time he gave both to Steve and myself – we found it very useful. It was so much easier actually being on the stage to discuss what would

	fit and your input was brilliant. It has helped me immensely to plan the show. You and your team are a real credit.
Theatre	It was a delight to enjoy the beautiful Palace Theatre. We look forward to our next visit. Keep up the good work.

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There was one complaint referred to the Ombudsman this quarter:

- The customer complained about the way the Council dealt with a prior approval application for a monopole near to her property.

The Ombudsman considered that the Council was at fault as it wrongly set the deadline date for deciding the application so it was approved by default. However the Council investigated the matter and corrected the error. The Ombudsman discontinued their investigation and closed the file on the complaint as they cannot add to the Council's investigation.

4. Customer Service Centre Information

This section provides some statistical information in respect of the amount of customer demand received via the telephones, face to face and through our payment channels.

The operational purpose of the Customer Services Team is "Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem". Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service staff act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert.

We use this information to help us understand the demand on all council services.

The following tables and charts show the number of customer transactions recorded and trends over time.

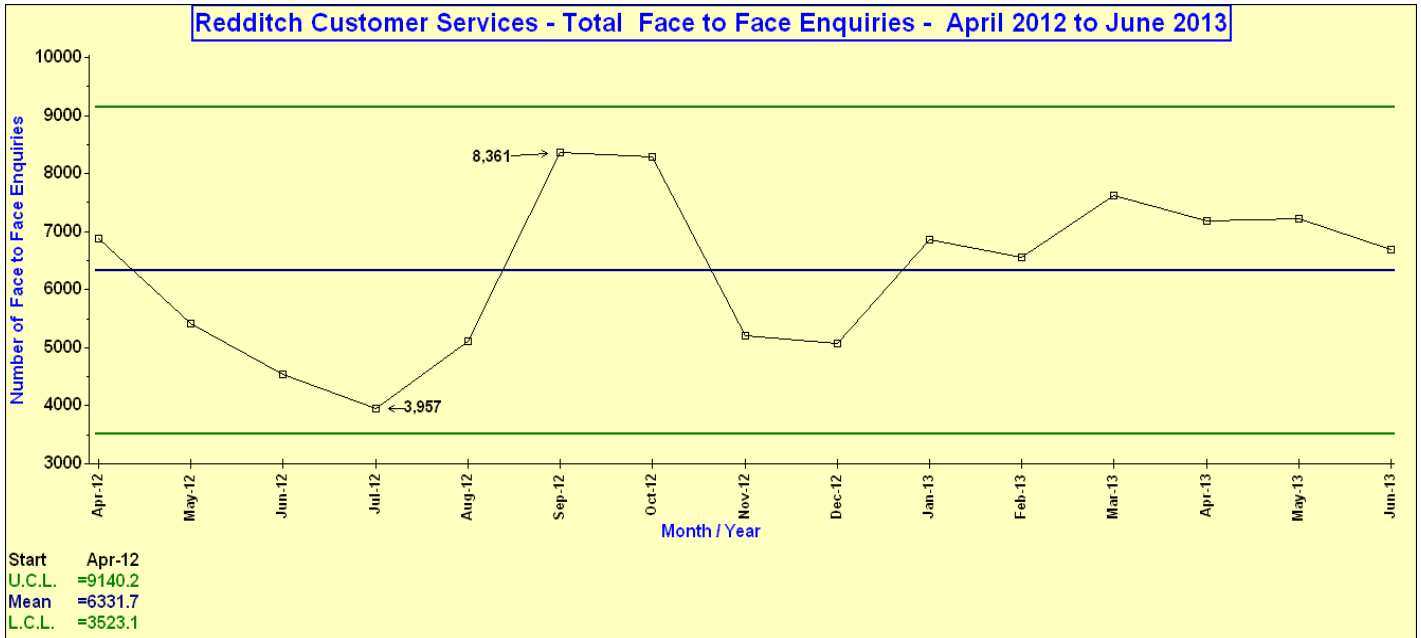
Face to face demand at the Customer Service Centre

The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre and One Stop Shops on a month by month basis from April 2012 to June 2013.

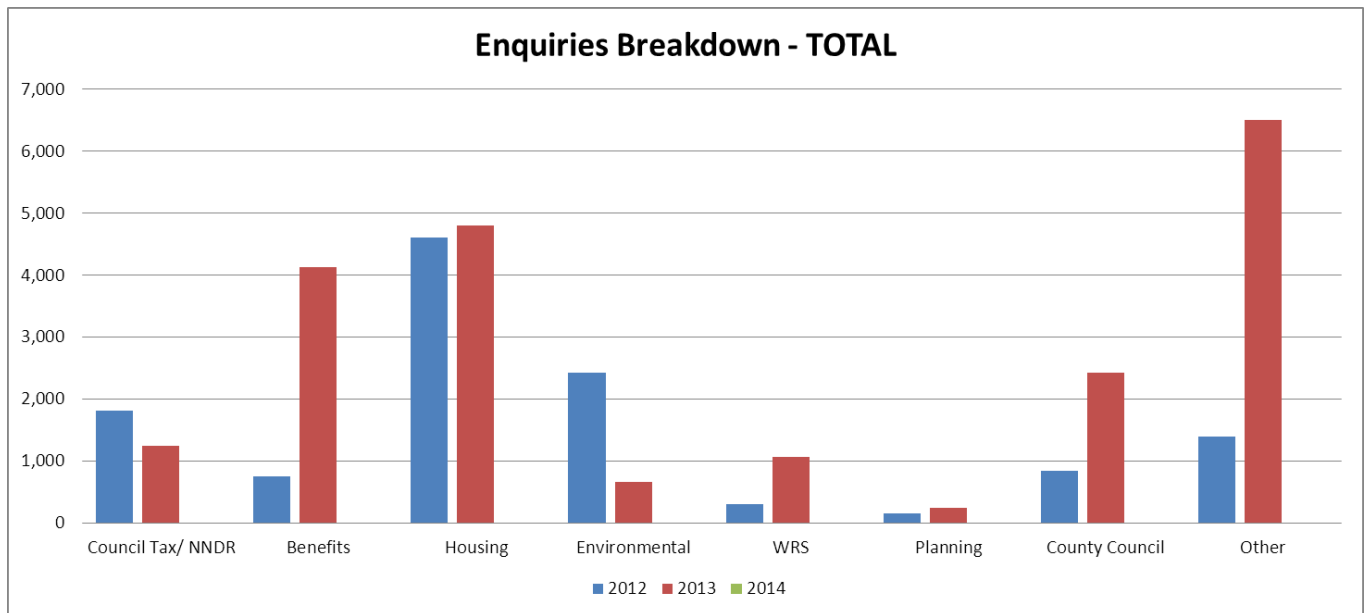
This is showing that there has been increase in face to face business since August 2012, but this is not necessarily the case. In July 2012 we implemented a new queue management system and therefore the data from August 2012 is more accurate.

We do know that during the period September and October 2012 a Housing trial at the Town Hall generated a large number of customers and when the trial ended there was a marked decrease in the number of enquiries. As with most trials when customers are aware they can be seen by an expert they will make the journey to the Town Hall rather than receive the old world service by telephone or in one stop shops.

During quarter 1 of 2013/14 the number of face to face enquiries has been reasonably consistent.



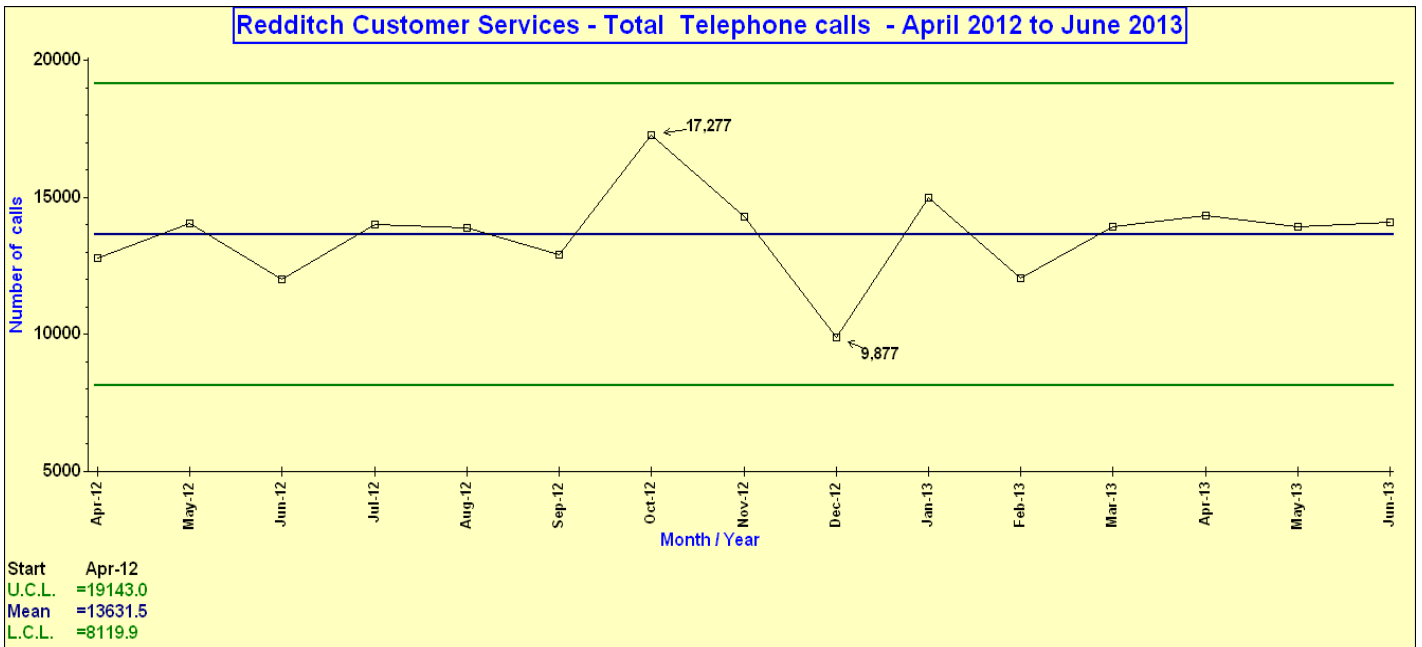
The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face enquiries received during the 1st quarter of 2013/14, compared with the same period last year. Due to the change in recording during 2012/13 the data cannot be used as a comparison, only as an indicator of the spread of volumes.



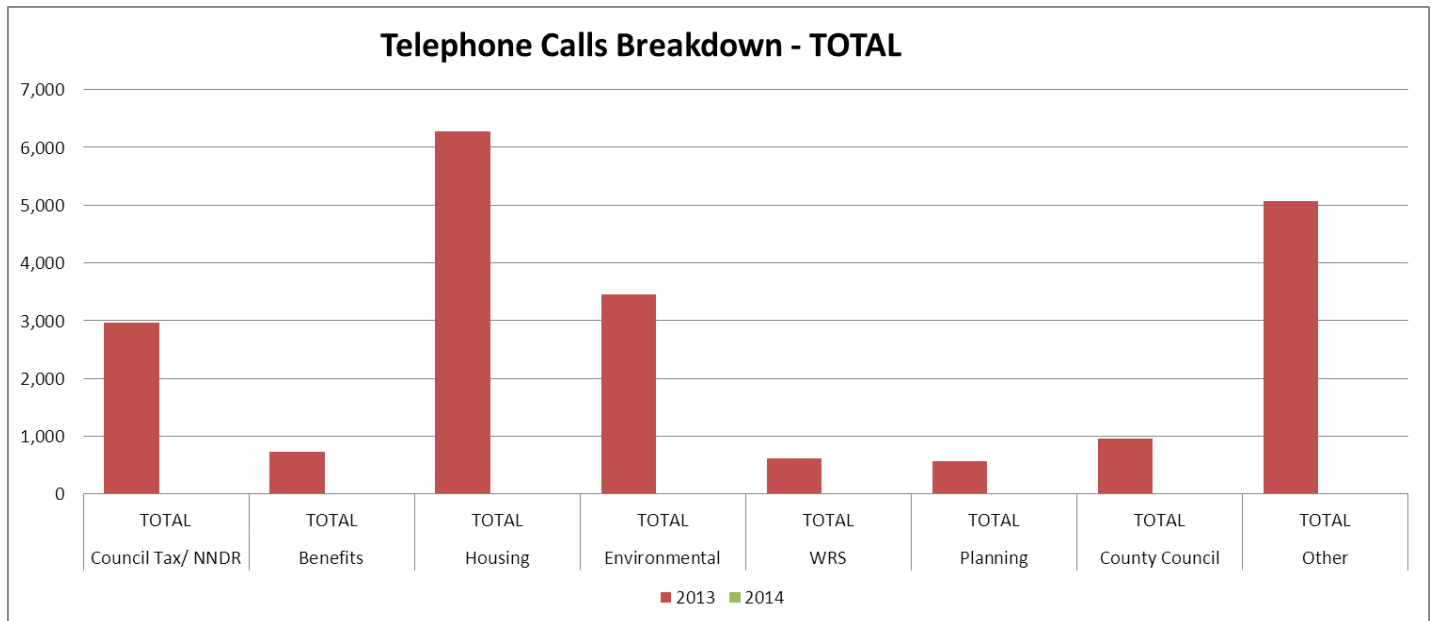
Telephone Demand Received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of June 2013. This shows a peak in October 2012 due to Bromsgrove Telephone failure and calls transferred to Redditch.

As expected the chart shows a reduction in calls during December 2012, this generally is a quiet period, due to a reduction in office opening hours through the Christmas period and generally less contact through the festive season.



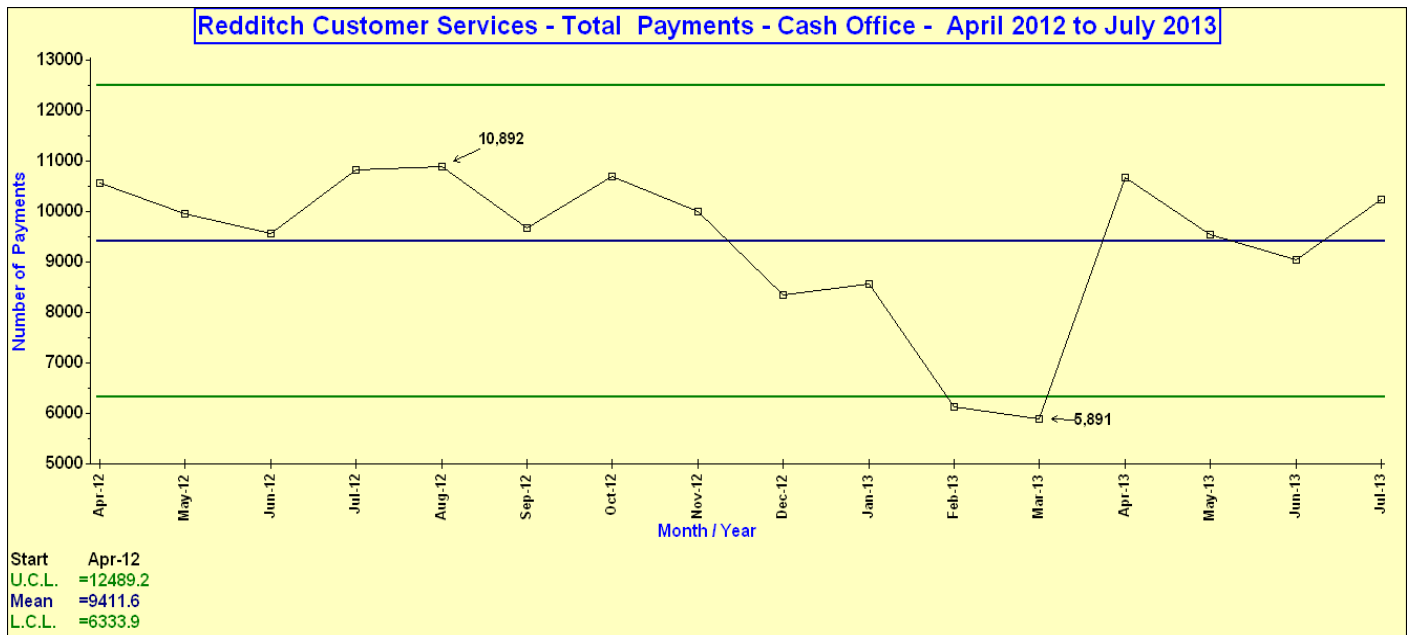
The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer service centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.)



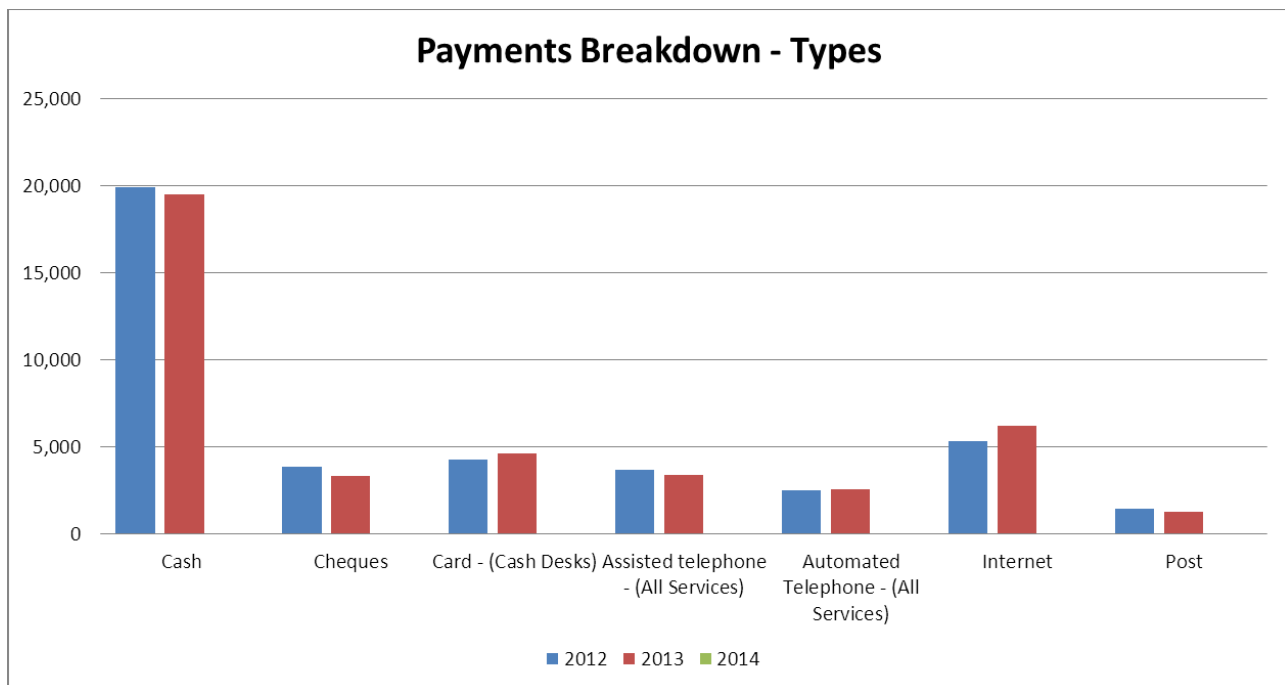
Payments

The following chart shows a month on month comparison of payments received by the cash offices and customer services staff during the period April 2012 to end of July 2013.

The data shows the expected peak in payments during April 2012 and 2013; due to payments for Council Tax bills for the new financial year. February to mid - March also shows that these months are quieter and is consistent with previous years data.



This chart shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels and evidences the high proportion of payments made by cash. We are seeing a small but consistent increase in the use of automated payments channels – online and on the telephone.



Lynn Jones
 Customer Services Manager
 August 2013