



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

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st October 2013 – 31 December 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

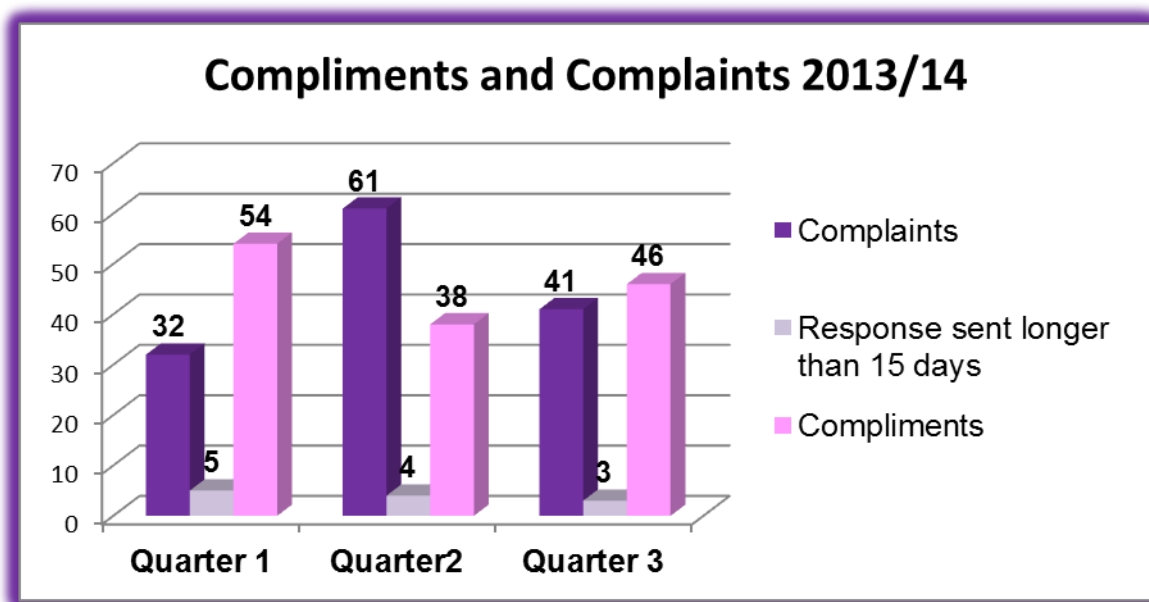
41 complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

32 complaints (78%) were answered in 15 working days or less. **6** complex complaints are still open at the time of reporting - 4 Housing complaints, 1 complaint about a planning application and 1 about a repair.

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

We also received **46 compliments**.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments for Quarter 1, 2 and 3. We will continue to chart this as a comparison through the year.



Complaint figures have reduced since last quarter when we received **61** complaints across the Council.

There has been a marked decrease in complaints about waste collections from **11** in quarter 2 to **4** this quarter. Refuse Crews have worked hard and adopted new processes to make the new collection service work and it seems that customers are appreciating this.

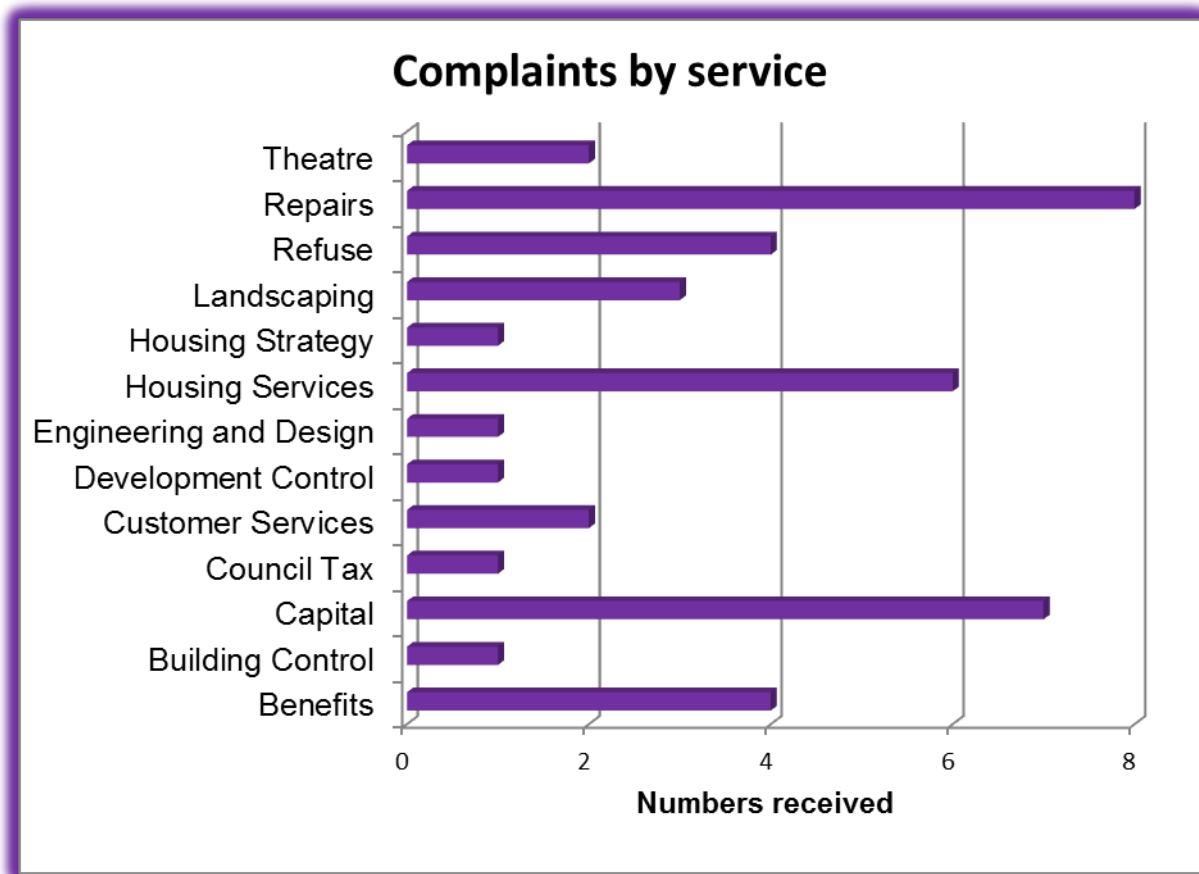
Complaints for services such as leisure and landscaping do normally reduce in the autumn/ winter period and that is evident this quarter.

Although the complaint numbers were low there were some common themes in the complaints received. These include:

- Not contacting customers when we had promised to do so
- Staff being unhelpful.
- Not explaining fully our processes and what we require from customers.
- Unacceptable delays in taking action.
- Not keeping customers informed of scheduled repairs.

Number of complaints by service (detailed)

The following chart provides a breakdown of complaints by service.



Time taken to respond to complaints

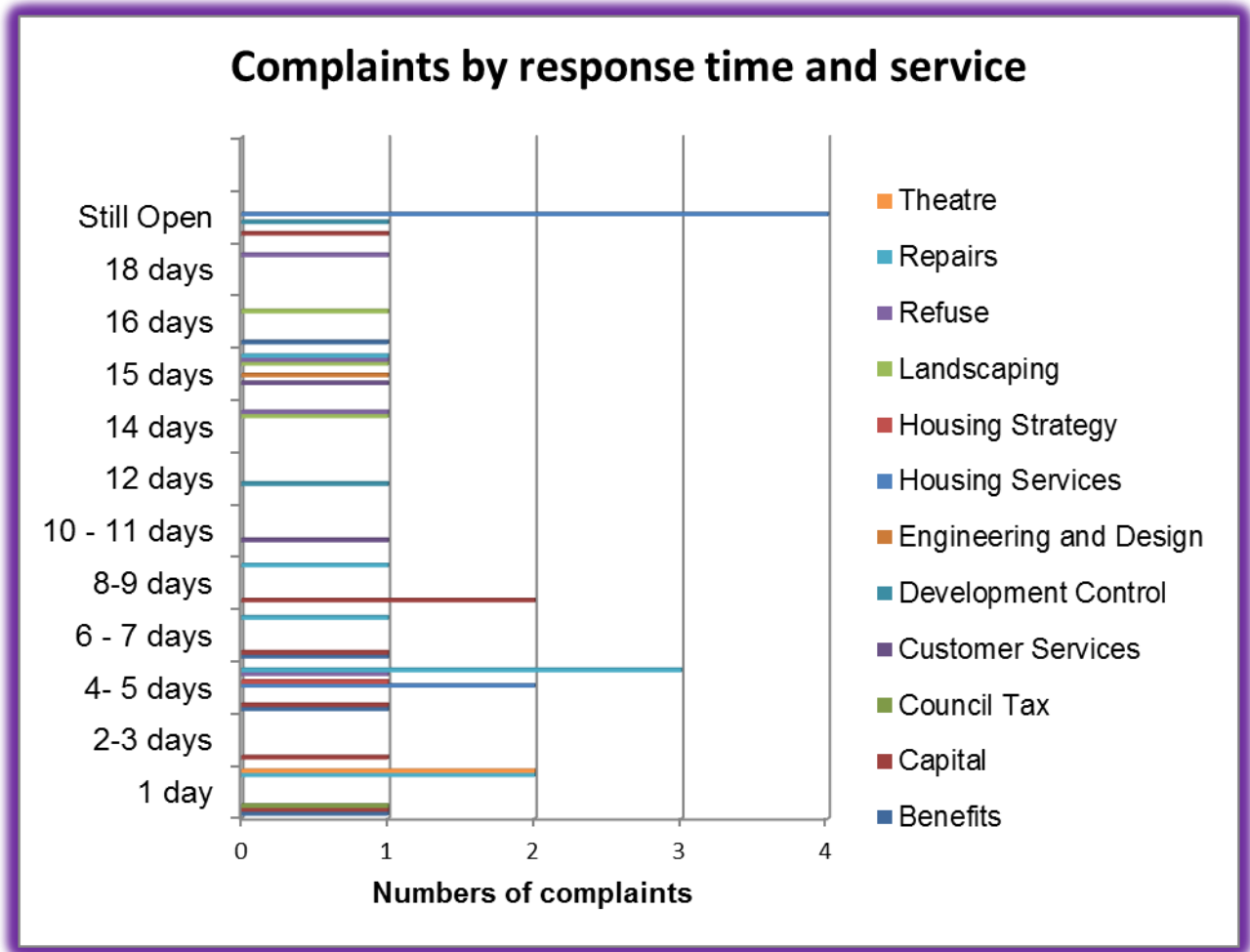
We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and **78%** of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. In the 3 cases where it has taken us longer to respond than expected customers were kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

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
Benefits			
Customer felt that the Benefits Advisor wasn't very helpful when dealing with her claim	16	Several calls were made to the customer to no avail. She phoned the office and her claim was explained to her. She was advised that she needed to bring in confirmation of earning so we could complete the claim for her.	No evidence of the advisor being unhelpful. Still waiting for earnings confirmation and cannot resolve claim without it.
Landscaping			
Customer has complained about tree removal at rear of property. It has taken a long time for us to act and now we have only removed one tree, despite saying we would remove them all. Her fence is damaged. Looking for compensation for cost of fence and neighbours fence.	16	Although we have carried out a lot of work, there were delays. The work requested has been carried out now and an apology given to the customer. The fence would not have been affected by the delay to the tree removal.	Claim passed to Finance Department for insurance investigation.
Refuse			
Customer unhappy that service has changed to wheelie bins. When he purchased his house from the Council there was a covenant in place forbidding owners to place bins in view of the road and he would like to know why we are disregarding our own covenant.	18	Discussions on going with our Legal department as to the lawfulness of the covenant.	Legal services are currently working with Service Managers regarding the covenant. The resident is being kept informed.

Time taken to respond to complaints by service.

This chart shows the breakdown of all complaints by response time. Data 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. We have seen a significant improvement in both response times and outcomes due to increasing direct contact with the customer and discussing the case in more detail.



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

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

- Refresher training in housing back office systems to improve information given to customers.
- Repairs Manager is looking at ways to improve communication between Council, contractors and customers
- New process underway to track equipment/repairs orders with Contractors.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There was one complaint escalated to the Head of Customer Services for further investigation or action during this quarter.

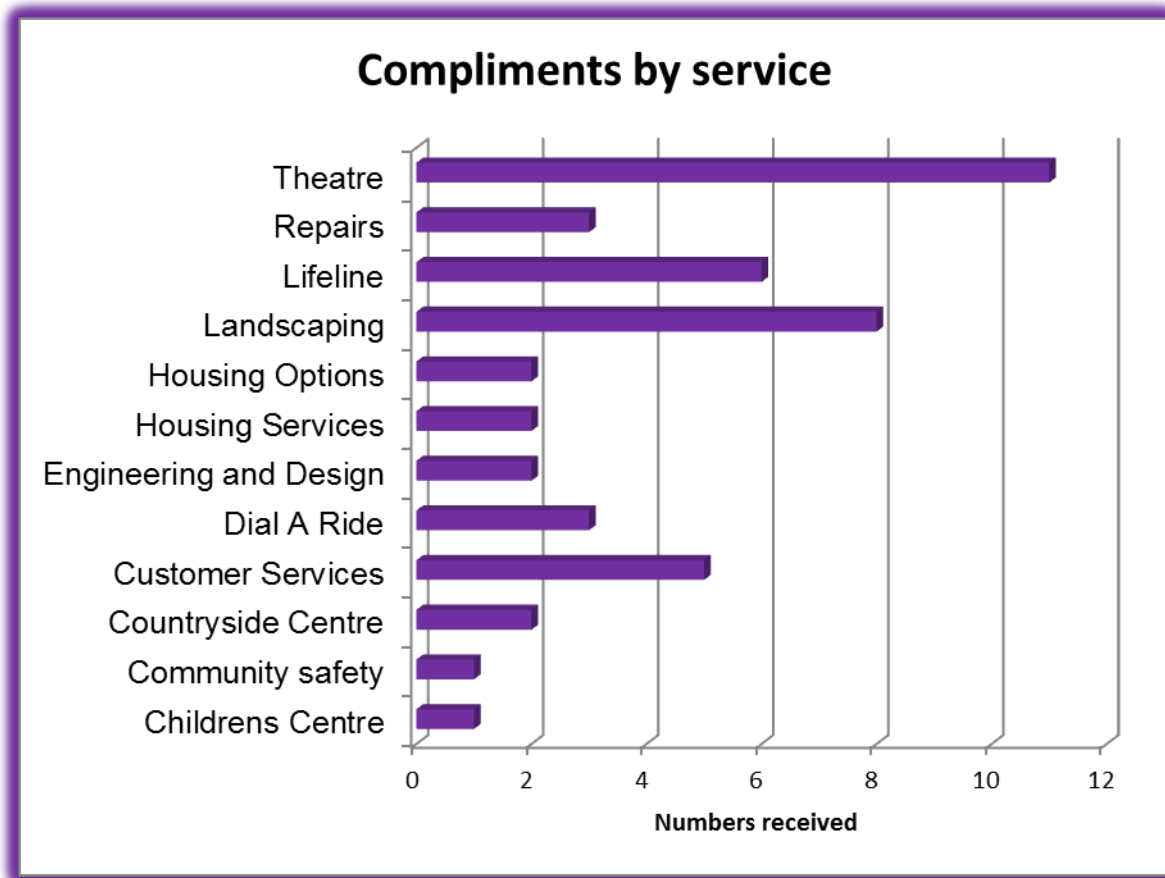
Development Control

Customer wrote to complain that we had breached his confidentiality. He feels that we have covered up a breach of confidentiality.

After a lengthy investigation and several discussions with the customer and the enforcement officer involved, no evidence of a breach of data and confidentiality could be found. However, there were delays in contacting the customer and some of his questions were not responded to which may have led him to be suspicious of our motives.

Happy Customers!

From the 46 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
Life Line	Customer called to say that she never felt alone with Lifeline by her side.
Children's Centre	Customer put on facebook – "Want to say big thank you to everyone at the children centre for looking after my children"
Dial a Ride	Customer rang to say that Dial-a-ride had changed her life since registering with the service. For 30 years she has been unable to lead a normal life due to a fear of not been able to leave her home and other issues that this has caused. With the help of dial-a-ride she has gained her confidence to leave her home and travel to workshops for her phobia. She is very grateful to everyone in the department and has now been able to book her first driving lesson
Engineering and Design	Feedback form completed to confirm very happy with the improvements to the car parking in the area
Landscaping	The work landscape has completed on my garden is brilliant- Thank you.
Landscaping	Customer wanted to thank Colin Pitts and his work colleagues for the excellent job being done on hedgerows and grass verges. Said it has created a lot more space and looks a lot tidier. Work was carried out from Breeches Lane and Frankton Close
Housing Options	Customer was booked in to see Housing Options and Claire Stead interviewed him. Afterwards he came back to reception to say that Claire was 'a diamond'.
Housing Services	A School Early Intervention Officer phoned to say how pleased a customer is with the support he is receiving from his support worker.
Repairs	Customer phoned to thank repairs for quick response to changing lock on front door yesterday after daughters keys stolen and in particular wanted to thank the operative who did the work in such an efficient manner
Events	Customer sent email to say "I want to say a big thank you for tonight's fireworks display at Arrow Valley lake. It was definitely the best display so far and I have seen them all. Please pass on thanks also to the bands who entertained us and the firework display team who had the fireworks and music in perfect sync.I look forward to next years"
Theatre	Customer completed form to say "Can I just say how impressed I was with the Christmas Panto. Absolutely fab! My 5 year old son was clapping along and shouting out the cast, which was lovely to see. Will definitely be booking for next year."
Theatre	Customer completed form to say "We had a fantastic evening at Redditch Palace Theatre on Saturday night. The theatre was rocking. I hope you've had good feedback from your staff. They all seemed to love it. Have to say what a lovely theatre it is and how clean it is too. The girls in the show commented on how lovely and clean all the changing rooms and toilets were"

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were no complaints referred to the Ombudsman this quarter:

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.

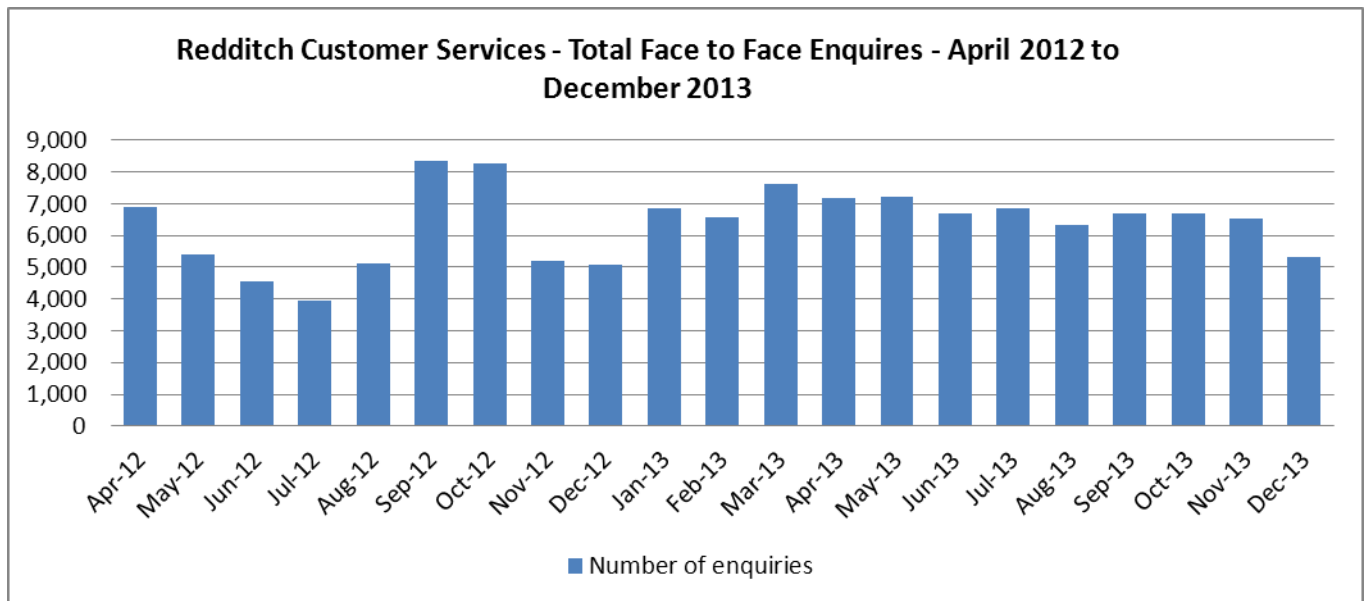
The operational purpose of the Customer Services Team is “Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem”. Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service staff act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert.

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

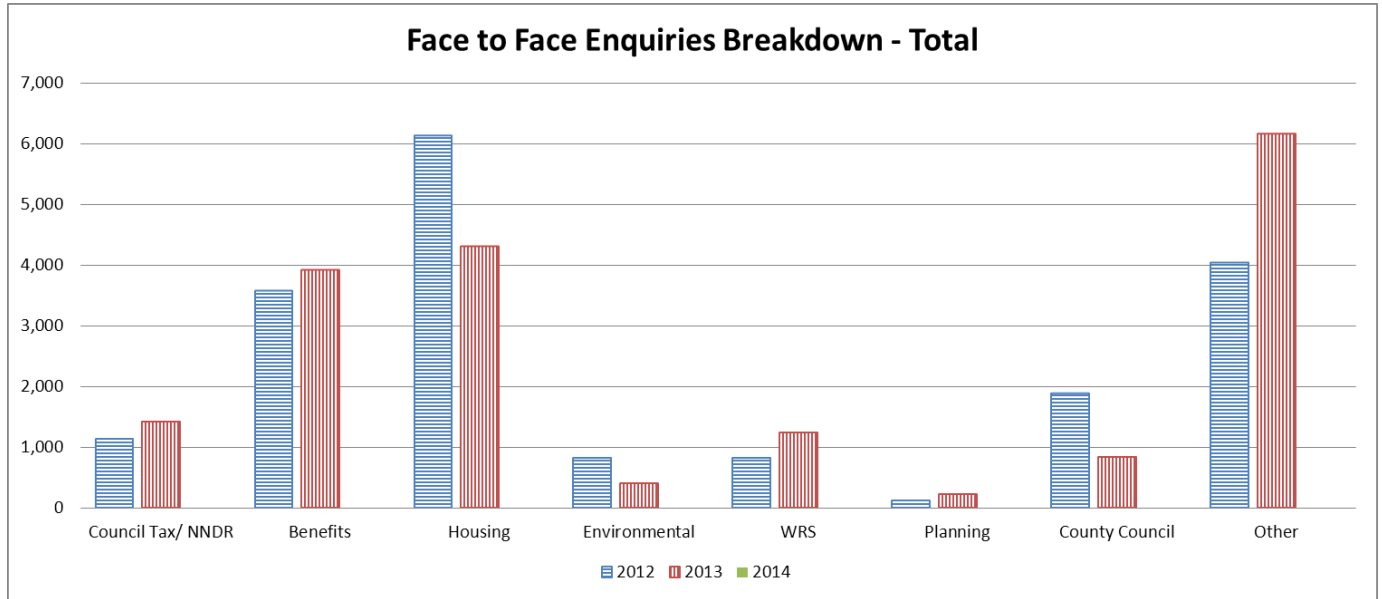
The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre and One Stop Shops on a month by month basis from April 2012 to December 2013. This shows a consistent volume of enquiries through from January 13 to December 13.



The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face enquiries received during the 3rd quarter of 2013/14, compared with the same period last year. We changed how we were recording numbers of enquiries, therefore the data during 2012/13 the data cannot be used as a comparison, only as an indicator of the spread of volumes.

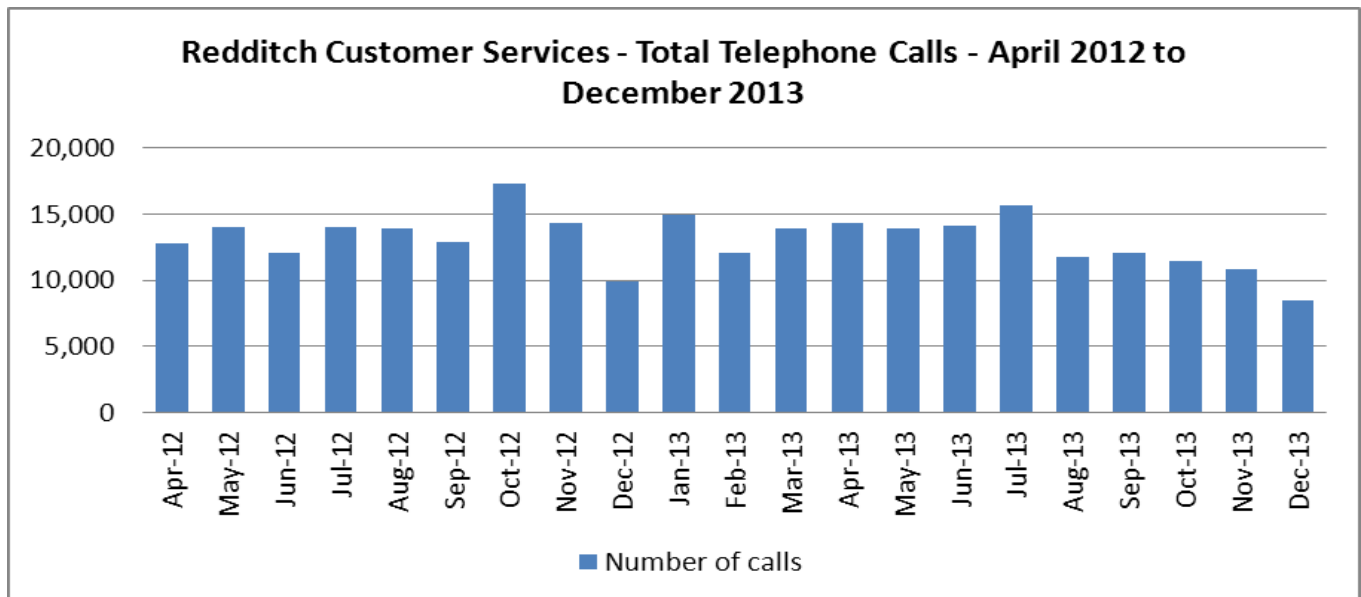
We are seeing a reduction in the number of County Council enquiries since October 2013 when County changed access to Blue Badge, Concessionary Fares and Waste Permits to online access.

The number of "Other" includes enquiries taken by reception in the Town Hall. These enquiries are not always council enquiries but can relate to external organisations, therefore logged as "other". It also includes visitors, car parking, contractors and deliveries which are not always service specific so are logged as "other".



Telephone Demand Received

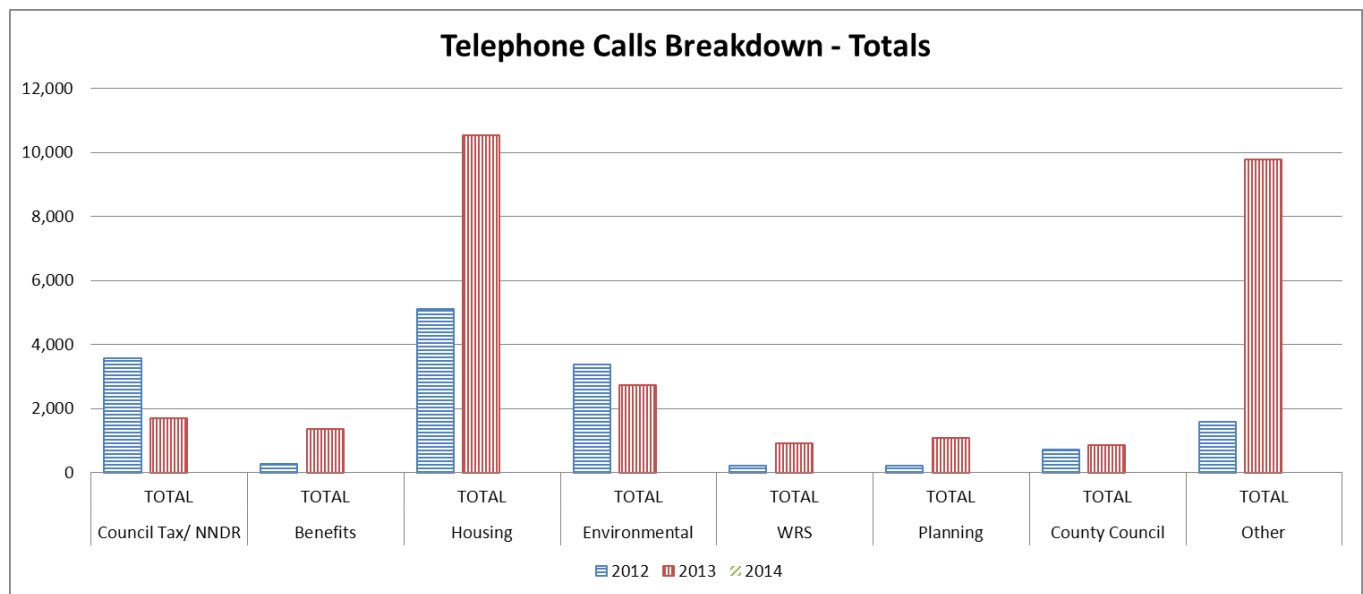
The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of December 2013. The volume of calls through this channel are reducing. This is due to more calls going directly to services but we do not currently have access to that data.



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.) The 2012 data does not include switchboard calls which accounts for the significant difference when comparing years.

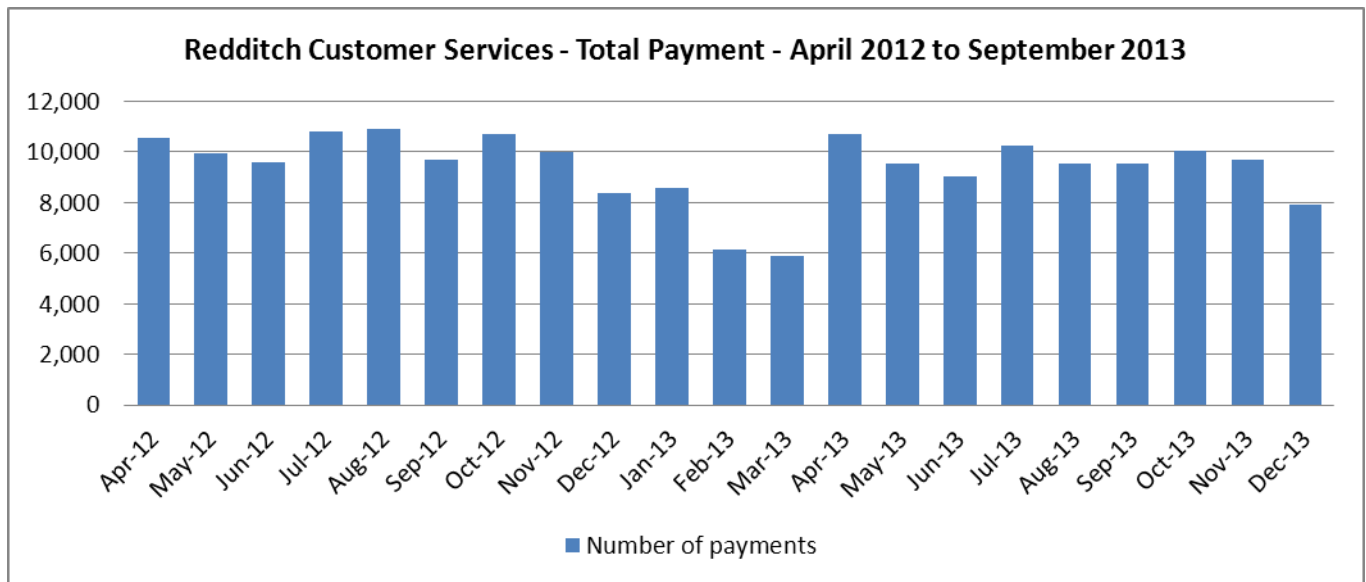
Revenues and Environmental services both opened service specific contact centre's during 2013, so the majority of their calls now go through directly to the offices direct, not through switchboard .The direct calls are not now recorded in Customer Service data.

From October to December 2013 we have identified what staff are recording as "other" and found a significant number of calls are customers wanting general information such as telephone numbers, opening times, address of outside organisations etc. There are also a number of calls logged as "other" when they do relate to a specific service, but staff are not able to quickly identify which one, and staff are working to improve this situation. In December we have seen a decrease in the number of calls recorded as "other" which we expect will continue.

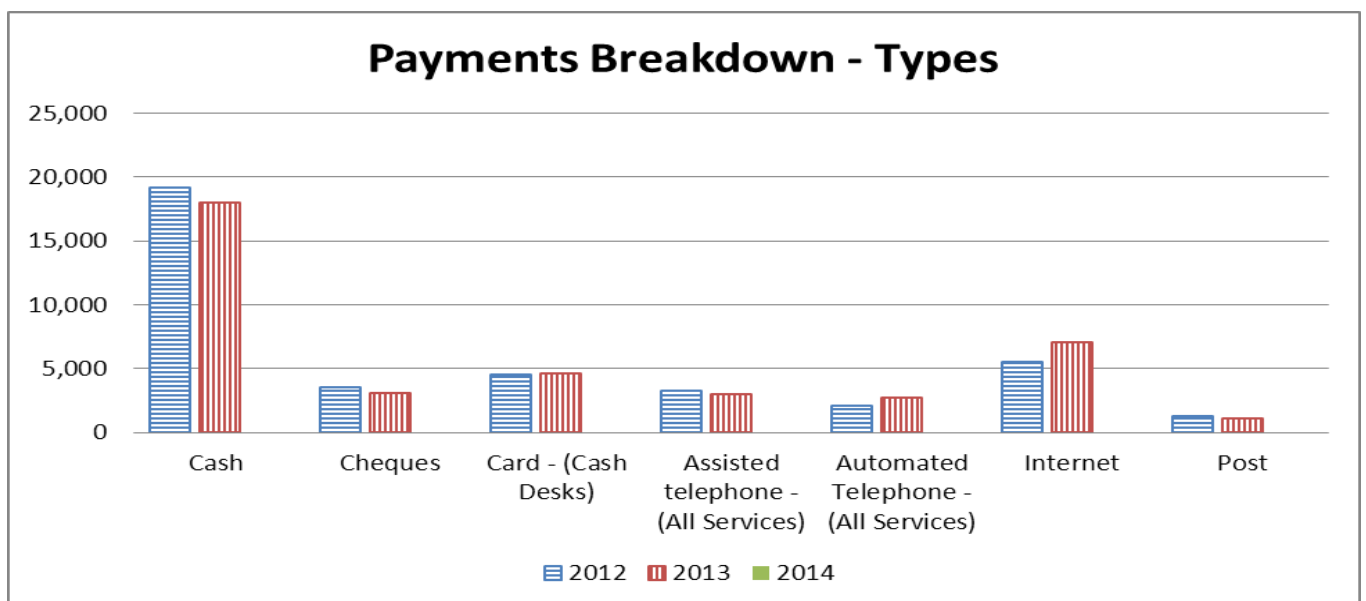


Payments

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 December 2013.



This chart shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels and continues to evidence a reduction of payments made by cash, and a consistent increase in the use of automated payments channels, online and on the telephone.



Lynn Jones
 Customer Services Manager
 January 2014