



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

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st January – 31 March 2014



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

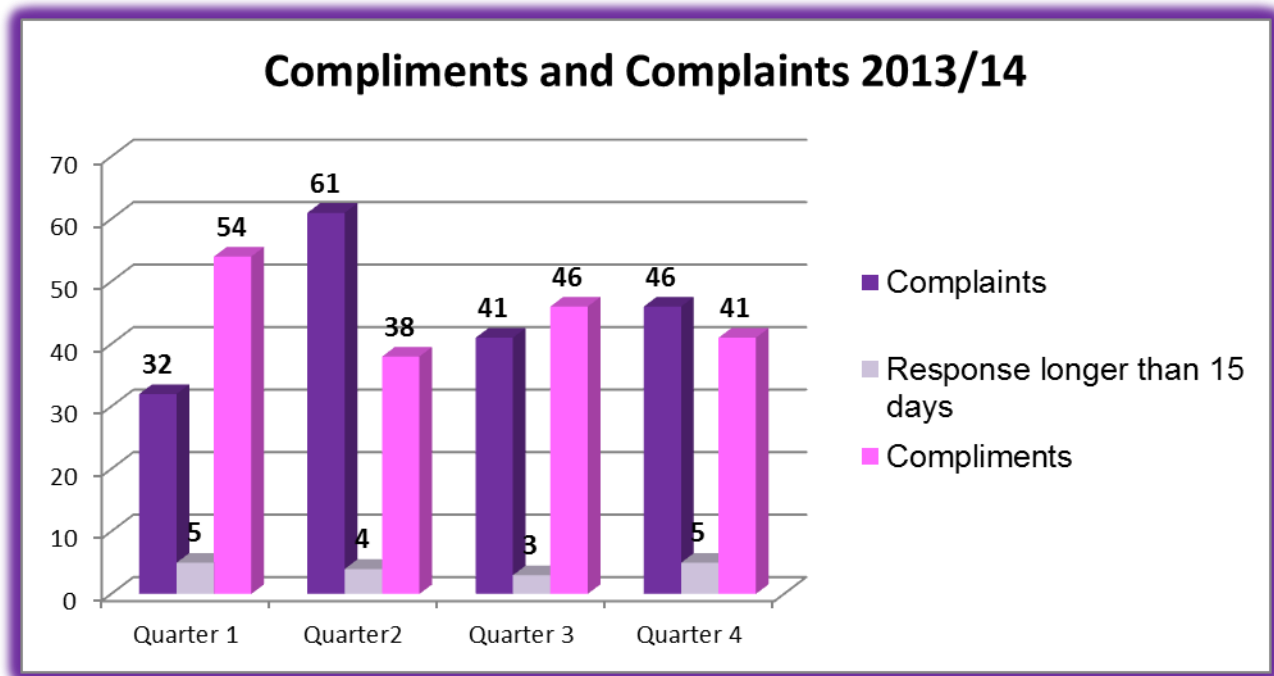
46 complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, or failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome.

41 complaints (89%) 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 **41 compliments**.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments for 2013 -14.



The total figures for last year compared with 2013/14 are as follows:

	Total compliments	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time
2013/14	179	180	163 (90%)
2012/13	316	219	162 (74%)

There has been an **18 % drop** in the number of complaints since last year *and a 24% increase* in the number of complaints handled within a 15 day period

Over the last year, we have been trialling a system thinking driven process to handle complaints differently. This has involved Managers talking directly to the customer in an attempt to resolve the problem. The trial included all services within the Housing Department with Environmental Services taking part during the last quarter of the year. The results have shown us that we can resolve the majority of complaints more quickly by taking a personal approach. It also gives us a greater understanding of what the real problems are. Managers are using this information to improve their systems and services and this has had a knock on effect of reducing the number of repeat calls for complaints.

We have now rolled out this new way of handling complaints to all departments across the Council and will continue to monitor and develop the process.

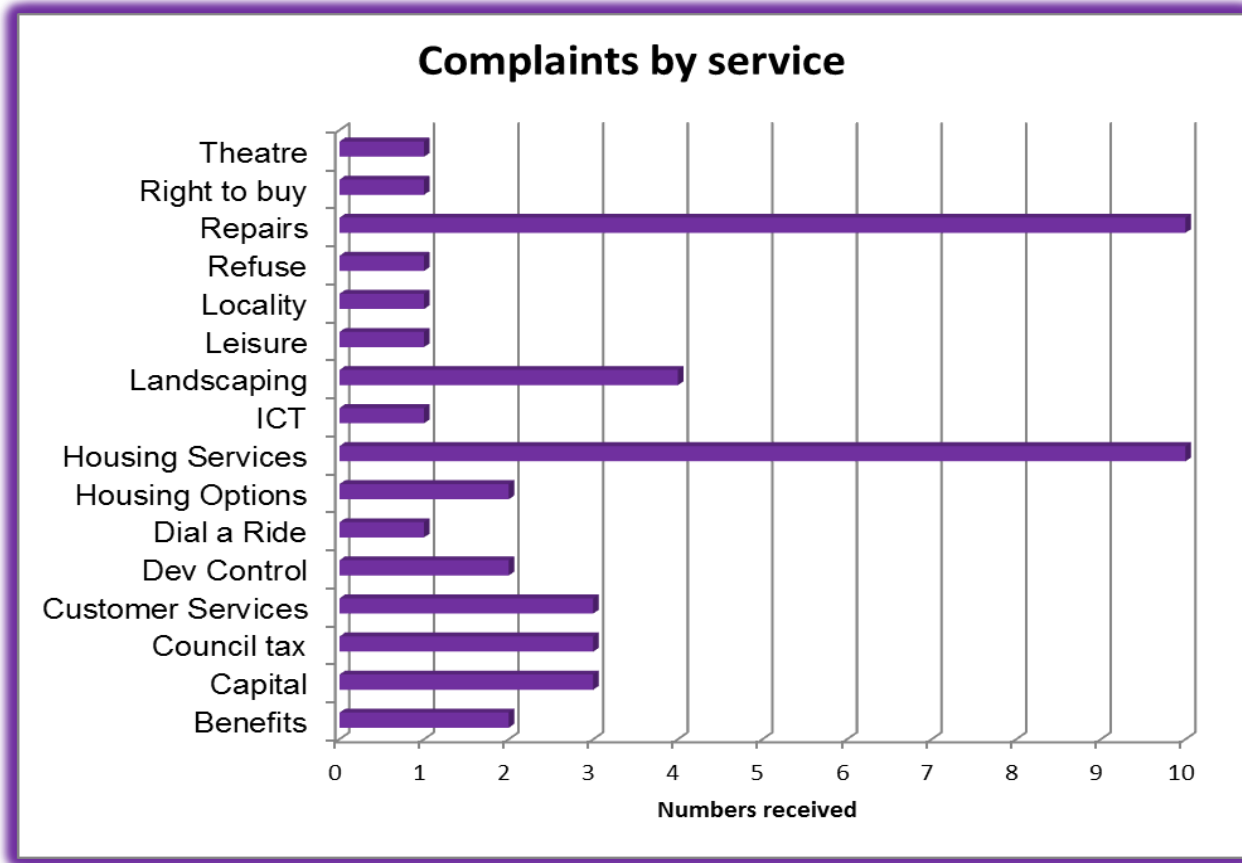
There has also been a very marked decrease in complaints about waste collections this year. This is due in part to the way the Business Support team within Environmental Services is working. They have set up a dedicated call centre and are able to deal with customer queries before they escalate to become complaints. Our Refuse Crews have also introduced new processes to make the new collection service work and it seems that customers are appreciating this

.The common themes in the complaints received this quarter were:

- New payment process doesn't give a balance of monies owing to the customer
- Not contacting customers when we had promised to do so
- Staff being unhelpful and not understanding customers needs
- 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 **89%** 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 have been kept informed of the progress of their complaint.

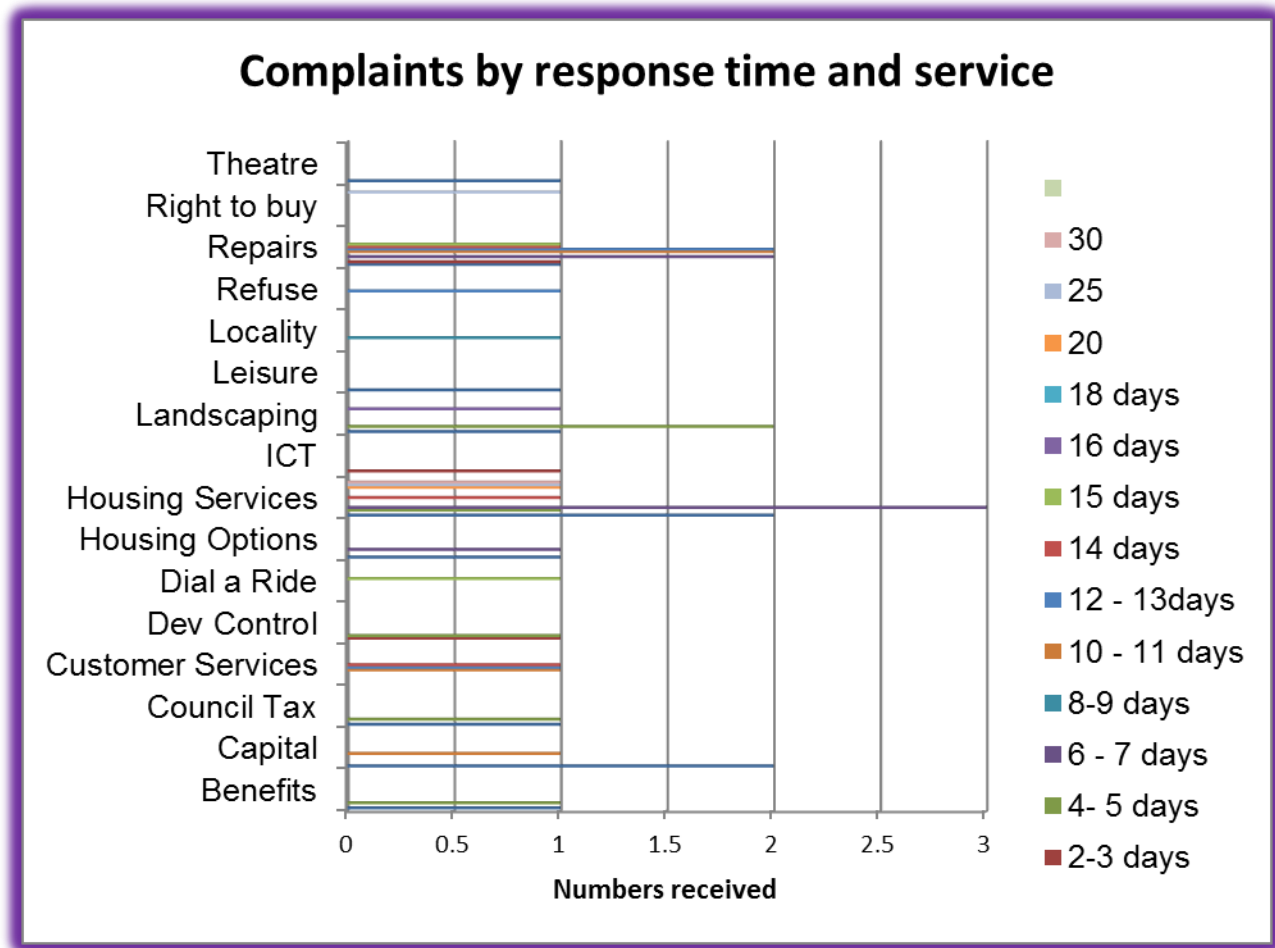
The following table details the complaints which took longer than 15 working days to deal with and why.

Complaint details	Days taken to respond	Action taken	Outcome update from Head of Service
Housing			
Customer sent in a very short note with no details about his downstairs neighbour causing trouble.	30	After trying several times to contact the customer, our anti social behaviour officer arranged a home visit accompanied by a police constable. Customer was not there but in hospital.	Customer's life is very chaotic and the police advise that he probably won't remember writing the letter. Complaint was closed.
Customer alleges she was	25	Apologies given although	Customer has

treated discourteously by staff.		there is no evidence of this. Rent information given to customer in writing.	been offered a home visit to help her with her rent arrears.
Repairs			
Customer unhappy about receiving threatening letters about rent. There were outstanding repairs to the property when new tenancy commenced. Rent charged when the property was not fit to be inhabited.	20	Apologies given.	Credit refund given for the 3 weeks the property wasn't up to standard. We are doing different interventions during the void team transformation to look at an improved standard of property.
Right to buy			
Lady has asbestos in her home and she was not informed of this when she bought the property from the Council.	25	Further asbestos report has been commissioned to find out exactly the amount of asbestos in the property. We have also offered to skim and paint the lounge ceiling. We will discuss the situation further with customer. when the report is received.	The asbestos should have been disclosed when customer bought the property
Landscaping			
Customer unhappy about the maintenance of privately owned trees that have blocked his light and may cause flooding	16 days	Our Tree Officer met with the owner of the Trees and an agreement was made to keep them trimmed to an acceptable level. The flooding issue has been passed to the North Worcestershire Management Team to action	No further action.

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 complexity of the 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:-

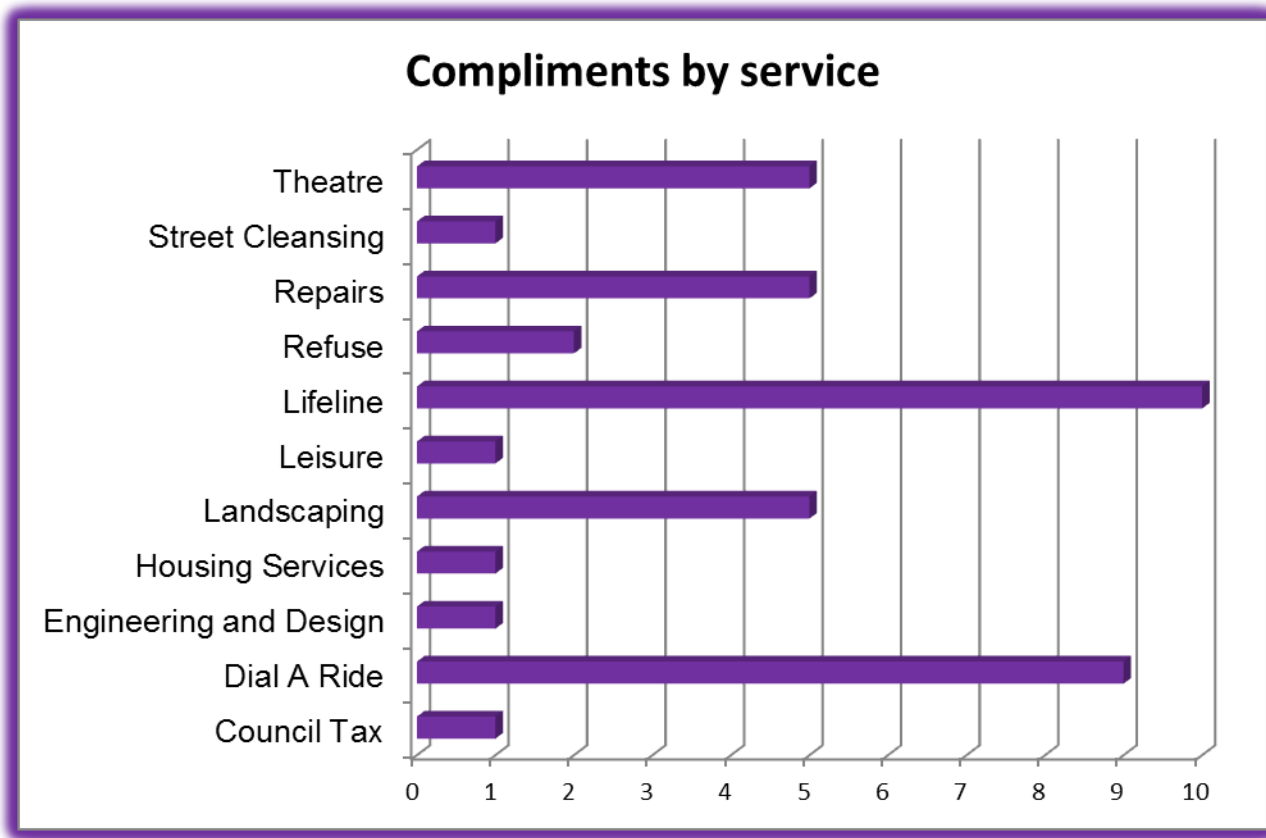
- Customers have been personally assisted through the new online payments system and a payment card is available for those customers who wish to record their balance every time they make cash payments.
- Refresher training in equality and diversity for housing officers and some contractors
- A change has been made to the way we book repairs in after inspections. Previously they were ‘pending’ until a slot became available but now they are booked in straightaway.
- Changes have been made to the voids team working processes during transformation to improve the standard of property for the new tenant.
- Work is ongoing to improve communication between tenants, contractors and Council staff.

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 41 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	Very impressed with the Lifeline equipment and service they received.
Lifeline	Very pleased with the Lifeline Service, in particular the good, fast service they received from Operator Dawn Withers when customer fell recently
Dial a Ride	Customer wishes to express her gratitude towards two relief Dial-a-Ride drivers, who she does not see very often (due to them being relief drivers). The two drivers: Michael Pilkington & Robert Holland have been so helpful and courteous towards her, especially when she had to travel in a wheelchair after an illness, which knocked her confidence
Dial a Ride	Customer would like to say a big thank you for all the help she receives from all the staff. She would like to especially thank Chris Stewart for his help recently when he picked her up she had just fallen in the garden and he took her to hospital. Also to Julie Latham for her

	help in phoning her daughter informing her we were taking her to hospital so she could meet her at the hospital.
Landscaping	Customer would like to pass on his thanks to the landscaping team for the work that was carried out in Pembridge Close. The work was done at the front and side of property and a tree was planted which he says was a very nice touch. He is extremely pleased with the work that was done and would like to say a very big thank you
Landscaping	Customer rang to say what a great job the tree team had done on site and how helpful and polite they had been. Especially the lad with the ginger beard.
Refuse	Well done bulky collection was booked at 2pm yesterday - all gone by 8.15 , helpful quick tidy and courteous service
Housing Services	Compliments for Diana Brown I can't thank you enough for all the support, both practical and emotional over the last 12 months. There have been times when you have gone above and beyond the call of duty, when you've done your job - and so much more - and managed to put up with me with a smile and stoic professionalism. Thank you so much!
Repairs	Customer would like to say that operative Michael Conway did an excellent job repairing her floor and she would like to say a big thank you to him.
Repairs	Customer phoned to thank plumber Gary Harris for the excellent work he did today and to inform us how efficient and polite he is.
Theatre	Well done everyone for the production of Cinderella...and to you Mr Tim Mackrill for bringing it all together
Council Tax	Customer telephoned to ask to pass on her thanks to revenue officer Cheryl Flemming as she was very helpful and understanding at a time when very distressed and tearful Cheryl has started a process which will help her resolve her concerns regarding money owed to the council

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.

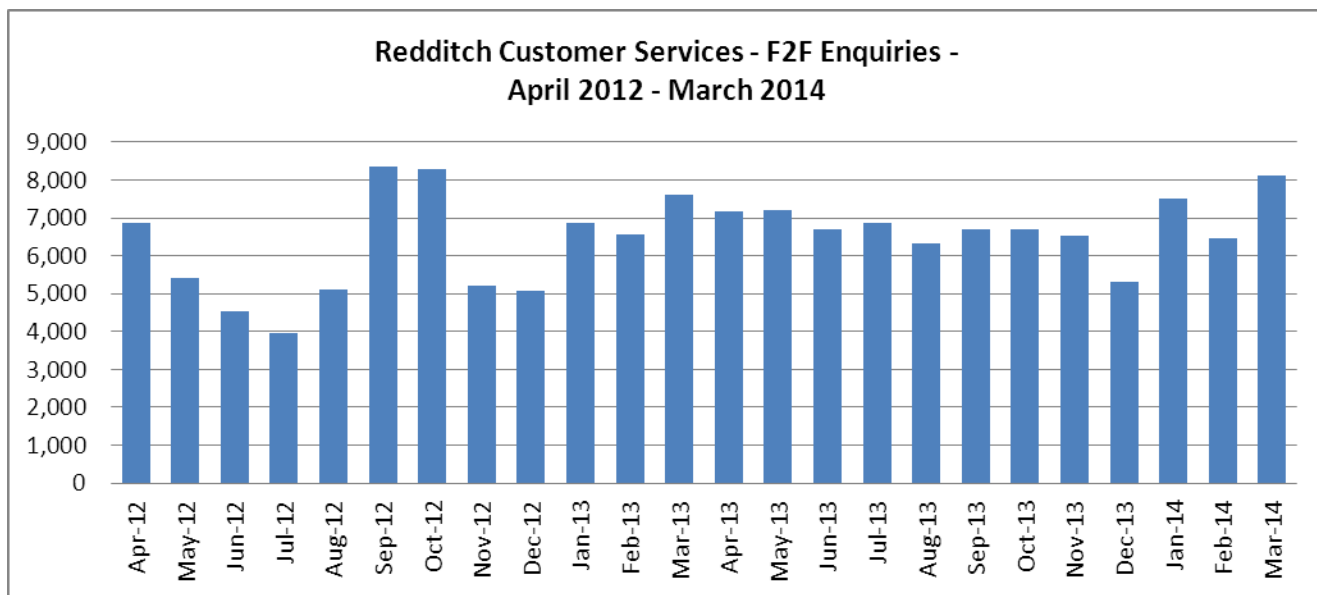
We use this information to help us understand the demand on all council services.

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

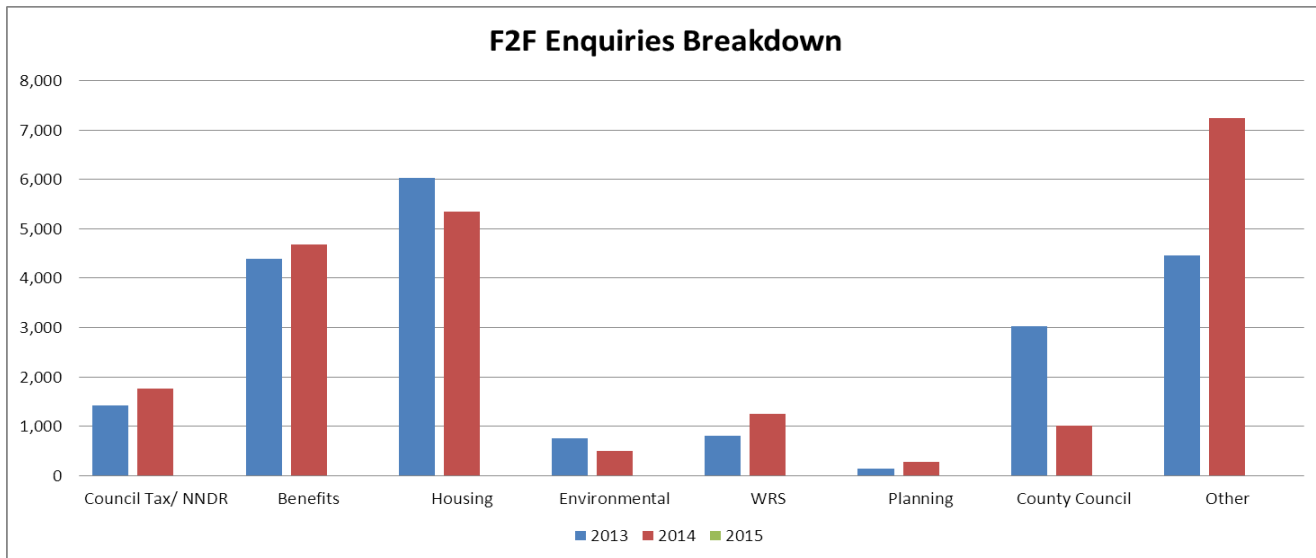
The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre and One Stop Shops on a month by month basis from April 2012 to March 2014. It informs of patterns that occur and the data is then used to plan for busy times and to check the reasons for the peak, this may identify waste in systems which can then be addressed.

Redditch Town Hall has seen an increase of 1'933 enquiries into the customer service centre compared to Qtr. 4 2013. Comparison shows the number of enquiries has reduced in the one stop shops. Locality working sees officers visiting customers so in the future we will see further reduction to the number of enquiries through the One Stop Shops.



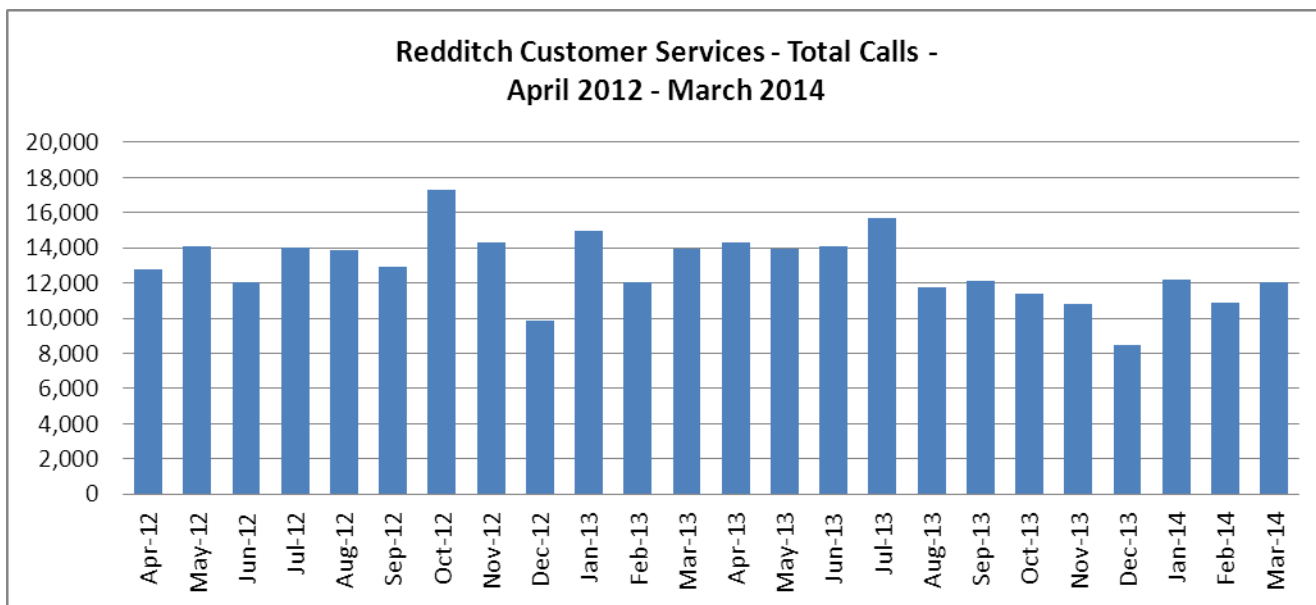
The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face enquiries received during Qtr. 4 2014, compared with the same period last year. The data for April 2013 to March 2014 is collected consistently; therefore now provides us with comparative data.

During quarter 4 we have identified “other” includes the following enquiries HMRC 1,166 enquiries, customer service enquiries 3,824 which includes visitors, deliveries, signposting and general enquiries Staff are now able to use the staff finder to identify the service calls relate to; which will improve the accuracy of data; therefore reducing the number of “other” enquiries.

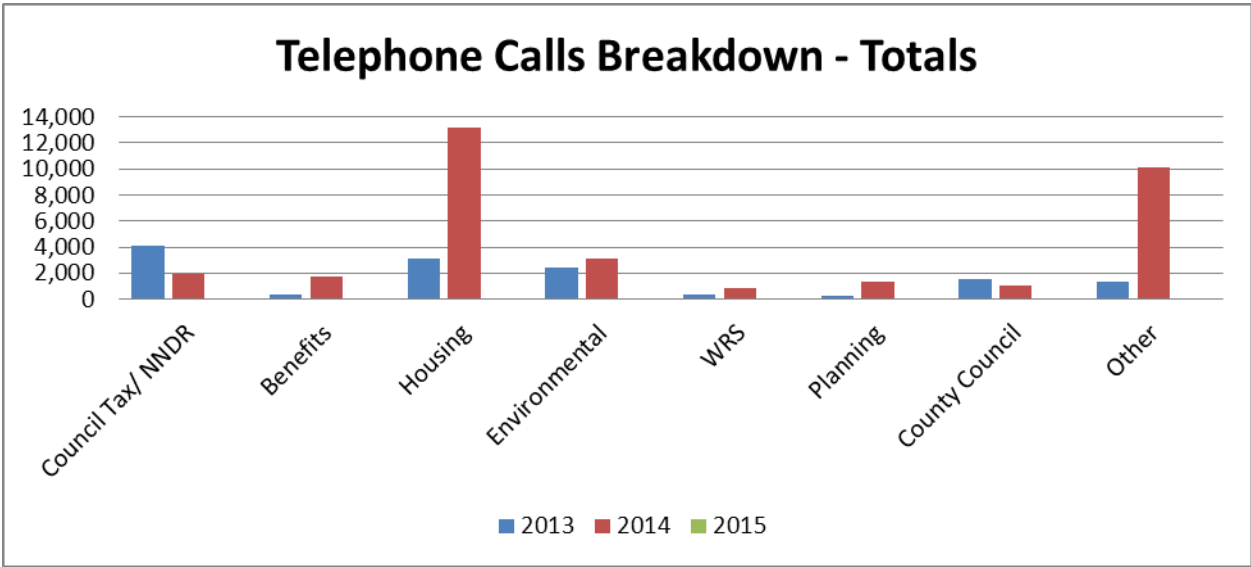


Telephone Demand Received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of March 2014.



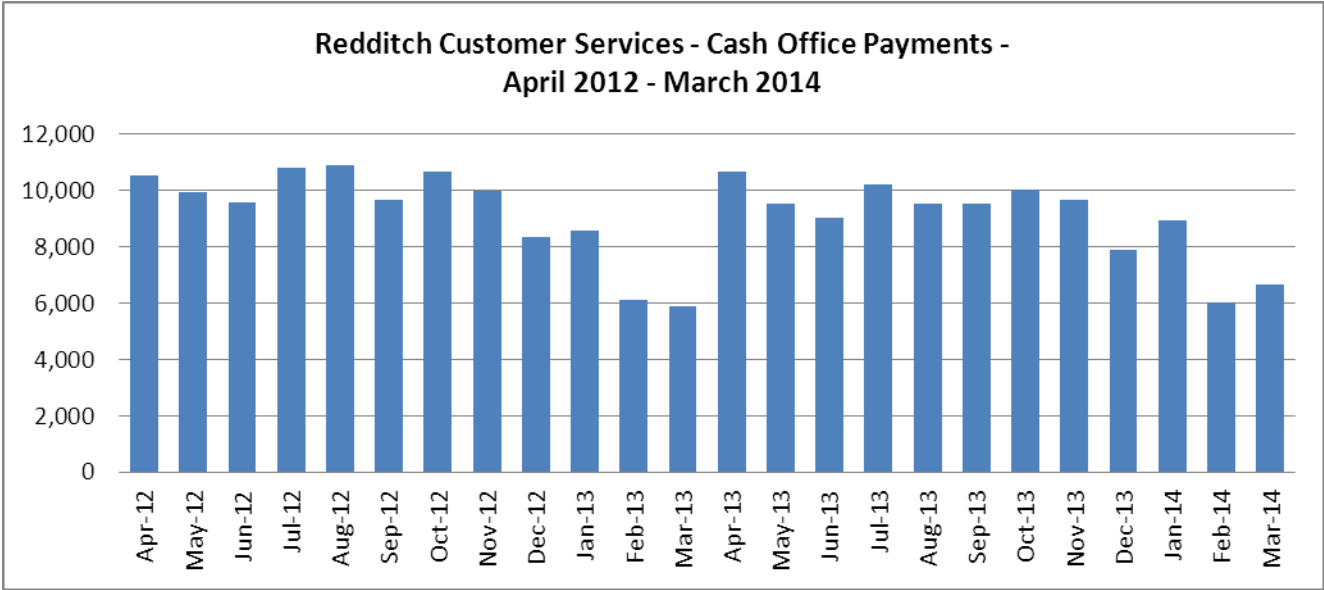
The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer service centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.) The 2012 data does not include switchboard calls which accounts for the significant difference when comparing years.



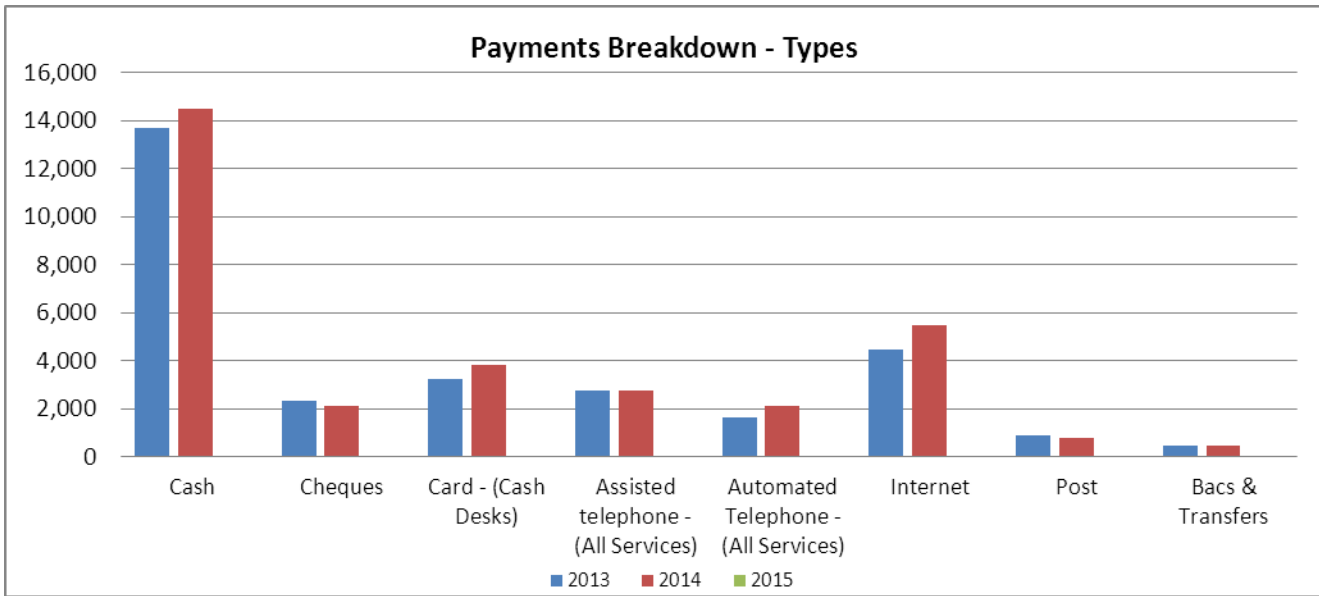
The increase in housing calls relates to calls for locality offices. From January 2014 a telephone trial to route calls into locality offices commenced and Housing tenancy, rents anti-social behavior calls all were answered by switchboard first so they could identify which locality office the customer required. Switchboard identified this by asking the caller their address and then putting the customer through to the right locality office. This trial proved successful and the customer reached the right place for their enquiry to be dealt with first time; this system will now continue as the norm. These are quick calls to deal with on switchboard and the additional calls have not had an impact on answering times.

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 March 2014. On 12th March 2014 a new payments system including cash receipting, on line and telephone payments was introduced, this is a completely new system for Redditch.



This chart shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels in Qtr. 4 2014 and evidences a small increase in cash and card payments to the cash offices compared with the same period 2013. The data shows a steady increase in the use of automated payments channels.



Lynn Jones
Customer Services Manager
September 2014