



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

**Making Experiences Count
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st January - 31st March 2012

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

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, as well as an overview of the year;
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics;
- customer satisfaction; and
- progress highlights in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy;

Customer Feedback Analysis

Compliment and Complaints Received

The following table sets out the numbers of complaints and compliments received during the fourth quarter of 2011/12.

Department	Compliments	Complaints	Complaint target met	Complaint upheld or partially upheld	Complaint not upheld	Still open
Community Services	8	4	4	3	1	
Chief Executives Office	0	1	1	0	1	
Customer Services	4	1	1	1	0	
Environmental Services	14	8	8	5	3	
Housing	15	30	20	21	8	1
Leisure and Culture	14	5	2	5	0	
Planning and Regeneration	1	4	3	0	3	1
Resources	0	3	3	2	1	
Totals	41	56	42	37	17	2

These compare with the following statistics from last year:

	Total compliments	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time	Total complaints upheld as the Council made a mistake or could have done better
2010/11	NOT RECORDED	80	65	20
2011/12	177	204	145	102

As expected this shows that there has been a shift in our reporting of complaints. There has been an increase in complaints reported in Housing Repairs this quarter since they started their transformation, not because the service has got worse but because there is now a greater understanding of the need for this information. Work is continuing to support staff and managers to create a culture where complaints are used for positive effect and reporting complaints is not seen as detrimental.

What did we learn from the Complaints received?

The major trends in the complaints are:-

- not keeping the customer informed;
- giving customers the wrong information;
- delays in dealing with customer requests; and
- not treating the customer with respect.

This is in line with the rest of the year and is also echoed through the findings of the transformation reviews where we have seen significant amounts of customer demand for similar reasons.

Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days. 75% of complaints were dealt with within that timeframe during this quarter, and an average of 71% of cases were responded to within the target time over the whole year.

Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, customers were informed that there would be a delay in all cases. We are learning that sometimes the timeframes can restrict our ability to properly respond to complaints and when we review the process using systems thinking methodology we may find that the timescales need to be more flexible depending on the nature of the problem. The priority during the period between receiving the complaint and being able to fully respond to it is communicating and liaising with the customer. This is often better done over the phone or face to face rather than by letter.

Complaints Received	Number handled within target	1-2 days after target	3- 10 days after target	11- 21 After target
	42	3	7	2
Reason		This is due to users not entering the correct date when closing cases.	Complex and varied investigations- Leisure x 2 Repairs x 5	Complex and varied investigations- Housing Services

Details of complaints and actions taken

It is important that we understand the scope of complaints received and what action was taken to address the issue. We categorise complaints as:-

- ‘upheld’, where we are totally in the wrong, have made a mistake or could have done something better;
- ‘partially upheld’ where we can see that we were partly in the wrong but that there are also issues over which we either had no control or could not have acted differently; and
- ‘not upheld’ where our investigation shows that we have acted appropriately, or could not have done anything more.

The following table provides some detail on upheld or partially upheld complaints.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken/Improvement Action
Dial a Ride	Dial a ride bus wasn't on time, making the group late for the meal they had booked and the driver didn't seem to know the addresses of the pick up.	Apology given to customer. The bus was late because some of the passengers had walking difficulties so the tail lift had to be used. Dispatchers will in future ensure they find out which passengers are booked in so they can take this in to account for the timings. Driver did know the addresses but the house numbers were hard to find.
Children's Centres	Users of Children Centre parking on grass verges opposite causing damage.	Apology given and action taken to inform users to be considerate to community when parking via newsletter, on boards outside centre and facilitators of sessions.
Children's Centres	Baby time session has been cancelled.	After consultation with users of this session it has been re instated.
Customer Services	Customer unhappy with the way his call was handled at the contact centre and felt he was being constantly interrupted by advisor.	Apology given- the contact centre was experiencing sound quality problems with the new Shoretel telephone system, which would account for the customer's perception of the call. Advisors asked to inform customers of the problems we are having until it is rectified.
Waste	Customer unhappy that despite informing the Council of the death of his mother he is still receiving correspondence about her bin.	Apology – investigation found that there was confusion on the form returned as it didn't give address of his mother. However care will be taken in future to ensure that details are thoroughly checked.

Waste	Customer is unhappy about the state of the bins from the communal refuse collection. They are overflowing, have broken lids and cats are getting into the bins strewing the rubbish everywhere.	Changes made to alleviate problems - recycling bin changed to a domestic bin and bin lid now fixed. Waste Supervisor will monitor site weekly and Cleansing team will check area and undertake any cleansing required.
Waste	Customer is on an assisted collection of baskets, and yet again, crew came and did not return his recycling baskets to his bin cupboard, instead they were left strewn across the public pathway and he had to go out in the rain and retrieve them.	Recycling boxes are returned to the bin cupboard as agreed, however, on this occasion there were agency staff on the crew, not aware of procedure Supervisor will ensure this doesn't reoccur.
Waste	Customer reported that the green bin collection had been missed from the previous Monday and was informed that the bins would be collected within 48 hours but they are still there awaiting collection.	Apology given and bin emptied.
Waste	Customer unhappy that her request to replace her stolen grey bin has not been listened to and feels stressed by the amount of rotting food and rubbish she has in her home.	Apology given and bin replaced.
Street Cleaning	Customer alleged that damage to his fence was caused by Council pathway sweeper. He was referred to Council's Insurance Company but as operative has denied causing damage, claim has been rejected.	Operative stated that no damage caused and claim was refused by our insurance company; however minor repair work undertaken to fence as a gesture of goodwill.
Countryside Centre	Customer visited Countryside Centre and was appalled at the very poor state of the restaurant. Dirty windows, food all over the floor, tables not cleared. She is a frequent visitor and was very upset to see this. Also she has noticed a lack of seating around the lake for older people.	Apology given. Regular inspections are undertaken and no cleanliness issues have arisen. However, this may not have been the case at the time of her visit. She has been given the contractors details so that she can contact direct and has been offered a meeting with team to discuss seating.

Leisure	Customer would expect more public swimming time at Abbey Stadium, but taken over by too many clubs and lessons and feel these should be held elsewhere.	Apology given. Leisure Team will be reviewing the pool timetable over the next 2 months or so and making further changes from feedback we receive.
Leisure	Customer unhappy about public swimming timetable at Abbey Stadium. Feel it is very poor and swimming lessons/clubs need to take place at Hewell Road or Kingsley with gala's and competitions only taking place at the Abbey. Object to paying £25 membership to include pool use when you can't get good swimming times.	Apology given. Leisure Team will be reviewing the pool timetable over the next 2 months or so and making further changes from feedback we receive.
Leisure	Customer unhappy about the management of the new Abbey Stadium. He has encountered several problems- no welcome sign, only a sign saying planning to be approved, Reddicards ran out in first week, shower temperature too high, lights left on at all hours wasting electricity, pool temperature very low and time not put aside for disabled swim sessions.	Apology given, Non removal of sign was an oversight and have arranged for this to be removed. There was unexpected delay in Reddicard delivery due to contractor issue. New mixer valve on poolside to control shower units was installed. Thermostatic settings to be reviewed urgently. Pool - low water temperature caused by pool plant failure, which has now been remedied and water temp has remained constant over last few weeks. Acknowledge that during early stages of a new facility there would be some operating issues but working hard to rectify these and provide high quality leisure facility.

Council Tax	Council Tax had been notified someone was moving into customers address as a new tenancy and ended his account. When we found out the address given was incorrect we re-instated his account but his d/debit was missed out in November due to the mix up causing the next 2 payments to rise from £117.00 to £176.00 which is a lot more money to pay monthly on a pension and not due to his fault at all. No written explanation or apology was given.	Apology and explanation given.
Council Tax	Customer unhappy that he has been refused charitable relief for NNDR and the time it has taken for the Council to make this decision.	Apology given. Case was initially held pending receipt of information. Information was not forwarded and case progressed, however the delay was not acceptable, there was then a further delay from the challenge of the decision to notification of outcome.
Capital	Customer unhappy about continual breakdown of boiler and no resolution, and attitude of a member of staff at Contractors.	Apology given. It was unfortunate that the boiler kept breaking down with different problems, but contractor responded on each occasion. The heating is now in full working order.
Capital	Customer unhappy that after speaking to a member of the team who promised to attend and have a look at the problem with the earth bonding on the meter, he didn't hear anything and his subsequent calls were not responded to.	Apology given, gas supervisor had failed to make contact.
Capital	Customer sent in complaint card about lack of communication and action to some proposed remedial work to outhouses.	Apology and update given. Team reminded to keep residents informed.

Capital	Customer had repair done to boiler in January which meant that her hot water and heating were on one switch. This was due to the contractor waiting for a new control for the boiler. Customer is still waiting for this part and is anxious as the warmer weather is coming and she doesn't want her heating to come on when she uses hot water.	Apology given. Delay was due to sourcing problems and gas contractor not picking up referral. This will be monitored.
Housing Options	Agent for customer unhappy about lack of response to letter about homeless application.	Apology given, customer was re-housed before complaint was received.
Housing Services	Customer unhappy that he has received no contact re his report about neighbours not putting out their bins and build up of rubbish in communal areas. The tenants of these properties are using other people's bins. Letters were sent to all tenants about the problem some time ago but some tenants are not adhering.	Apology given as the Tenancy Officer did not keep in contact with the tenant. An alternative option of refuse collection has been proposed.
Housing Options	Worcester CAB complained on behalf of customer about the lack of response from Housing .	The case was being dealt with by the Team; however, the initial approach to the CAB was not dealt with correctly. The member of staff has been advised and will deal with it in a different way in the future.
Housing	Customer going a mutual property exchange which has been turned down has not heard from Housing Officer about how to appeal.	Apology given as wrong information was given. Housing Team now working closely with customer to try and resolve long term problems.
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about information given about her mother to the Pension Fund.	Apology given and member of staff given further training.

Housing Services	Customer unhappy about the time it has taken to action her friends succession application after the death of her husband. A Housing Officer had made a home visit a month ago and promised to action the application but nothing has been heard since.	Apology given and application will be backdated.
Repairs	Customer is unhappy about the delay to complete repairs to her property. She has reported this several but feels like she is talking to a brick wall as nothing gets done.	Apology given as there had been a delay in attending to refit the radiator, although contractor had tried to contact the tenant.
Repairs	Customer unhappy that despite three visits to her property about a mould problem, nothing has been done.	Apology given - this has now been rectified.
Repairs	Customer unhappy that despite a visitor from an inspector about his leaking ceiling, nothing has been done and he had to chase this up several times.	Apology given - although there were some delays in getting the work completed, there were also access issues when the contractor made appointments with the tenant.
Repairs	Complaint about ongoing problem with mould in property and that it is not being addressed.	Apology given and action taken to remove mould.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about damage to plants by contractors which he feels was caused by them rushing to finish the job before it gets dark.	Apology given. Scaffolding company told to be mindful of time of day to ensure enough daylight to complete the job.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about delays to plastering work in her property	Apology given. Delay in getting works done - service improvement to action requests sooner and communicate at all times with our tenants.
Repairs	Complaint about inspectors calling at the property and the works not being recorded and then not completed properly.	Apology given, General delay in diagnosing problem in property. This is now being resolved.

Repairs	Customer unhappy with problem with fencing in back garden at property and the Inspector did not call him back and she had to keep reporting the repair.	Apology given for the delay which was caused by uncertainty of the ownership of the fencing.
Repairs	Customer unhappy about an ongoing problem with his fence not being resolved.	Apology given and chain link fence ordered– all Inspectors will be contacted to reiterate that they need to address issues and communicate with tenants.
Repairs	Customer unhappy with the attitude of a repairs inspector – he was very rude.	The Supervisor has been spoken to and his conduct will be monitored.

Complaints recorded as not justified are generally those where no error was found on the part of the Council, or there was nothing more that could have been done. Nonetheless the issue is still important to the customer which is why we record them and they can result in a change in practice where a trend can be identified.

In future we are planning to categorise complaints in greater detail. Here are details of some of the complaints reported as not upheld by the investigating Officer.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Reasons for case
Anti Social Behaviour Team	Customer feels that the ASB team did not act in a timely and professional way in response to her complaint about a noisy neighbour	After investigation it was found that officers followed the correct process, and through their interventions did everything possible under the circumstances to attempt to solve the problems including installing noise recording equipment for 2 months which on play back showed no evidence of noise and installing noise pads on kitchen drawers and cupboards of her neighbour.
Engineering and Design	Unhappy with how resident's car parking problem is being dealt with.	Although Eng & Design Officers have no authority to restrict parking in this area, they have tried to help by providing signs and written to local residents asking that vehicles are parked elsewhere. Unfortunately this had no effect. Work is ongoing with the Housing Tenancy team to try to resolve.

Waste	Customer unhappy that he is receiving 180L grey bin to replace 240L grey that fell into back of wagon. He feels that he should not have to pay the same as his neighbours who all still have 240L bins and it will cost him to get rid the 60l of rubbish he will have left over each fortnight.	Smaller bin provided within RBC policy as 240 bin is old stock, but customer has been asked if he would like a visit from a Waste Management Officer to discuss his needs.
Development Control	Customer very unhappy about planning application and feels very strongly that he has been treated appallingly and with no courtesy at all. Nobody at all has actually had the confidence or courage to explain why the permission wasn't granted.	Planning Policy was followed. Customer was informed of how he can submit an appeal.
Development Control	Customer unhappy about the garages to the side of her property being demolished which would make her garden less private and also cause safety issues with the road behind.	Consultation was carried out and customer took part in this. A new fence has been erected along with some higher kerb stones on the road.
Council Tax	Customer received a summons with £50 charges. She has been paying every month and states did not get a reminder and not happy about attitude from people that she spoke to. She was not advised about direct debits and doesn't think we are treating people fairly.	Customer was late paying and arrangement was cancelled so summons issued correctly. She did not like the members of staff's attitude as we refused to remove the costs.
Capital	Customer unhappy that Council failed to fit a window lock when she was renting the property and had new windows fitted part of an upgrade.. She contacted the Council and was told that it is her responsibility. She owns the property now but believes that it is still the council responsibility because the work was not completed correctly.	As the property was sold in 2004, the Council is not responsible for repairs.

Housing Options	Customer unhappy about the way her parents have been treated whilst going through the process to be re housed due to special needs.	Customers had been given the correct advice based on their circumstances and the existing allocations policy. Unfortunately the Council cannot meet their expectations regarding the property they want <i>* This complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about the inconsistency of information and lack of response to further phone calls about her complaint of ASB from a tenant living above The situation is that bad she is staying away from her property.	The Tenancy Officer was unable to contact the tenant as she was off sick. On her return she made contact. The Allocations Policy was explained and investigations are ongoing into her neighbour. <i>* This Complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services/ASB	Customer unhappy about a neighbour using his home as a business and riding his quad bike dangerously. He has reported this issue before and thinks the Council is not willing to help.	Ongoing work has been carried out on this case between two owner occupiers. The issue concerning parking of vehicles on housing land is being pursued via Legal. Advice has been given that any incidents which occur should be reported to the Police <i>* This Complaint went to Stage 2 and was re-investigated.</i>
Housing Services	Customer unhappy about a security door not being repaired as she was a victim of abuse and problems with her neighbours not being dealt with. She also is unhappy about not being offered an alternative property.	Door being repaired after vandalism and customer offered help with housing needs. Help has been offered on previous occasions. <i>* This complaint should probably have been recorded as partially upheld.</i>
Repairs	Customer unhappy that the planned repair to his door frame has not been carried out and that he has made several calls and emails to the repairs team which have not been returned.	When double glazing is fitted to Council houses, this includes all windows and one door front and back. In this instance, the front door was replaced. The tenant requested a plastic door to his porch, which is not possible. Remedial work to take place to the porch. <i>* This complaint should have been recorded as partially upheld.</i>

Repairs	Customer unhappy about the lift in the block that is constantly breaking down.	Not upheld by RBC's R&M Team as the lift is the responsibility of the County Council, who will undertake the necessary repairs/replacement. <i>*Complaints is justified but action not required by RBC</i>
St David's House	Customer unhappy about staff member saying that she could not push her in her wheel chair to the table at the luncheon club but other people were being helped this way.	Apology given but the policy is that people attending the luncheon should be able to push themselves. This was discussed with customer and arrangements have been made.

** Comments of Head of Customer Services added after the complaint had been dealt with.*

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

We aim to use complaints as a mechanism for making improvements to our services and changes have been made as result of complaints in the following services:-

Leisure- the swimming timetable at Abbey Stadium will be revised based on customer feedback

Repairs – Inspectors will improve the consistency of communication with customers to keep them updated on planned work. Improvements will also be made to the repairs request system so that they can be actioned sooner. Training on how to handle complaints better is also to be provided.

Capital – Team looking at how they can improve communication with Customers.

Customer Services – work is ongoing to improve the quality of the phone lines.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services

There were three complaints escalated to the Head of Customer Services, for further investigation or action.

Housing Options - The customer was unhappy about the response to complaint on behalf of her parents who had special housing needs. After investigation it was found that communication could have been better through out the case and the response to the original complaint did not clearly deal with the issues raised. However, the investigation suggests proper process had been followed with regard to the housing allocation. The Head of Customer Services met with the customers, along with a Housing Officer and the outcome of this was positive, with the customer being satisfied with the outcome and the response to their complaints.

Housing Options – The customers were unhappy about the response to their complaint which related to the inconsistency of information and lack of response to phone calls to the ASB team. The investigation found that although there was no failing on the part of the Council in carrying out our duties in accordance with current systems, there was lack of customer care and consideration. The Head of Customer Services met with the customers along with a number of other officers and the customers in question have been helpful in sharing their experiences to help improve service delivery.

Housing Services – The customer was unhappy about the response to his complaint about a parking issue. After investigation it was found that all possible action has been taken by the Council and the problem reported is not currently occurring, therefore no further action could be taken.

What did we learn from the compliments received?

From the range of compliments received it is apparent that customers appreciate when we take the time to listen to their concerns and take prompt action. Here are some of the compliments we have received.

Team	Compliment Details
Lifeline	Customer sent in a comment card to say that he has been very satisfied with all the contact he has had with the Lifeline Service. The staff are very polite and friendly and make him feel at ease.
Children's Centres	Customer was grateful for being able to express her views and ideas at the Cherry Trees Parents Forum.
Dial a ride	Customer visited office as she wanted to meet the office staff and thank them personally for all their help and care when she is making her bookings over the telephone. She said Dial-A-Ride is a wonderful service.
Customer Services	Customer would like to thank us for the excellent service provided when she phoned the Contact Centre concerning her door repair which had not been completed. She said the member of staff was very respectful whilst attending to the enquiry.
Customer Services	Customer appreciative of the compassion shown and efforts made by Head of Customer Services on their behalf.
Landscaping	Thank you for the prompt response to a fallen tree. It fell last night and the crew was out at 8am this morning and had it cleared away before the children started making their way to school.

Waste	<p>Resident would like to thank the waste collection crew that returned her wheelie bin to her front door, even though her footpath was completely snow covered.</p> <p>This would have taken quite a lot of effort and this was not expected as this property does not have an assisted collection.</p>
Street Cleaning	<p>Would like to say thank you for removing the graffiti off the sign, it's a great help for the taxi drivers to see where they are going. Big thank you.</p>
Sports Development	<p>Just a quick email to say how well the awards evening went, a credit to your organisation as ever.</p>
Theatre	<p>Thank you for once again assisting us with our production to ensure that we had a successful show. The expertise of the theatre stage staff and front of house staff makes all the difference.</p>
Development Control	<p>Just a quick note to thank you for your efforts in helping with my application. Much appreciated.</p>
Housing Services	<p>Customer wishes to thank Home Support Officer for all the support she has given to their mum, and the support she has given to the family, whilst their mother has been very unwell, she has been visiting daily, it was very re-assuring to know that someone was there when they were unable to go.</p>
Repairs	<p>Carpenter has been out today to carry out works to the fence post to the side of his property and customer would like to say a big thank you and a job well done, very tidy and took time to clean up.</p>
Repairs	<p>Customer called and would like to pass on his gratitude regarding the work carried out on his property; in his own words he said it was a brilliant job. It was regarding kitchen units and the work was carried out today.</p>

Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) Complaints

There were three LGO complaints received during this period.

Complaint 1 related to a planning matter. This was responded to in 22 days. We have not yet received the outcome from the LGO.

Complaint 2 related to a landscape matter and took 25 days to respond to. The LGO found no evidence of maladministration by the Council.

Complaint 3 – was in relation to the administration of a benefits claim and information is currently being gathered in response.

A total of 23 complaints were made to the LGO during 2011/12. Of these 9 were considered to be premature complaints and referred back to the customer to contact the Council. In 6 cases the LGO gave advice but the complaint was outside their jurisdiction.

7 cases were passed to the Investigation Team, 3 of which were resubmitted complaints, because the customer was unhappy with the outcome of the result of the LGO investigation.

Of the cases passed to the Investigation Team, it was found that in 1 case the LGO had no powers to investigate and 2 were not taken any further because the LGO found that it was not justified.

This resulted in 4 cases which were investigated. The Council responded to requests for information regarding these complaints in 24.5 days, which is within the target time. The LGO made the decision in 2 cases that there was no, or only minor injustice and did not pursue the matter further. In the other 2 cases the LGO found that the injustice had been remedied during enquiries. The complaints investigated related to landscaping and Housing.

Customer feedback in respect of complaint handling

Since April 2011 we have been asking customers for feedback on how their complaint was handled. The response to this was extremely low in this quarter with only three feedback cards being returned. Of these 2 were satisfied with how the complaint was handled and the third was not and was referring the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Customer Service Centre Information

The section gives members useful information in respect of the service provided at the Customer Service Centres (CSC) and One Stop Shops (OSS). The purpose of the Customer Services team is **to help resolve customer's problems or requests**. We use measures rather than targets to assess what is happening in the service and this section includes some of the headlines.

The number of customers now being dealt with through transformed ways of working or trials of redesigned service delivery is increasing and therefore some of this data will not be provided in future. The new ways of working are having a fundamental impact on how the CSC's and OSS's operate and as a result a full service review will be necessary in due course. In the meantime the service is supporting a number of other services through interventions and many customer service staff are now operating in other teams.

Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer enquiries dealt with by the Customer Service Team:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter	Totals for 2011/12
Face to face enquiries	20,955	17,724	15,840	18,266	72,785
Telephone enquiries	19,333	19,261	16,946	21,273	76,813
Email enquiries	725	469	882	1,014	3,270
Payments	32,454	31,958	30,383	23,781	118,576
Total customer contacts	73,467	69,412	64,051	64,334	271,444

Waiting Times

Our average waiting times for seeing or speaking to a member of staff who could help the customer (not including payments) were:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter	4 th quarter
Face to Face (not including payments)	33 seconds	5 minutes 28 seconds	3 minutes 35 seconds	4 minutes 6 seconds
Telephones	1 minute 30 seconds	1 minute 7 seconds	1 minute 8 seconds	47 seconds
Email	We always respond to emails within 1 working day of receipt.			

We are now seeing a fairly consistent service in respect of answering the telephones and this is not the full picture as in fact 70% of all calls answered were answered in less than 8 seconds. As I am now confident that the timescale in which we deal with customers is reasonable, although we will continue to monitor the performance this data will not be reported unless there is an issue to advise or update on.

Failure and Value demand

Failure demand is customer contact that is a result of the organisation not doing something, or not doing something right and for the purposes of transformation it is necessary to establish the rate of failure demand within a service. The CSC's deals with customer demand for a range of services and records the failure demand received.

During the 4th quarter of 2011/12 the CSC recorded an average of 23% failure demand.

This is a reduction since the last quarter, and appears to be a direct result of redesigned service delivery through systems thinking transformation.

A study of value and failure during this period shows the variation of value and failure demand in the following services. The data is starting to show that systems thinking interventions are significantly reducing failure demand.

Service	Failure demand (% overall for quarter)
Housing Repairs	56% but dropped to 19% by March due to changes in service delivery brought about by transformation
Environmental Services	37%
Council Tax	36% but dropped to 7% in March due to changes in service delivery brought about by transformation.
Benefits	30% this is reducing as a result of changes to service deliver through transformation.
Housing Options	28%

Cost of service

The average transactions costs based on the total cost of the service for 2010/11 were:

Face to Face	Telephones	Payments
£2.80	£3.29	£0.98

I do not yet have the outturn figures for 2011/12 but expect to have seen a reduction in our transactional costs. As we are now seeing a considerable shift through transformation in how we deal with customers I have many staff in transformation teams and therefore these costs will not be an accurate reflection of transactional costs until we reach a period of stability and have implemented all the changes. For this reason I will not be reporting on this information in future, although the budget will continue to be closely monitored, through the normal budget process.

Customer Satisfaction

The majority of problems or requests received by Customer Service Staff are handed over to someone else within the organisation to resolve. We have established a scheme to gain feedback from customers who have recently made contact with us on how well the organisation (or a part of it) responded to customer's problems and during this quarter we made contact with 54 customers, who had made contact with us with issues relating to Environmental Services. We received the following responses to our questions:

How was your enquiry handled by the Customer Services Adviser?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	1	2	18	33

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the Council?

Yes	No
43	10

If not why not?

- If Dog mess bins were provided the service would be even better

- Smaller grey bin arrived – very dirty
- Trees have not been cut back, no one has contacted to say what is happening
- Not heard from anyone
- Rubbish is still there, it's an ongoing problem.

Customers who were pleased with the service made comments:

- Received smaller grey bin, thank you
- Excellent service

All call back information has been provided to Environmental Services who will be using this to identify improvements and to continue to provide the service to the customer's satisfaction.

Strategy Action Plan Progress

Work has progressed well in respect of meeting the aims set out in the Every Customer, Every Time, Customer Experience Strategy. The vast majority of the action plan has been completed and where we have deferred actions this is because systems thinking is now informing our developments making some of the actions irrelevant.

Some of the areas where more work is still needed include:-

- improving information that we provide to customers, especially letters and on the web,
- further improving how we handle complaints, and ensuring the i-case system is used to capture data about customer concerns not just as a means for responding to complaints,
- use of customer demand information to inform on customer satisfaction.

The action plan has recently been reviewed and here are some of the actions agreed for 2012



Work with the new 4th tier Managers to identify blockages to providing excellent customer service, remind of expectations and provide support for managers who need it in managing performance in respect of customer care provision.



Provide further guidance and support the staff to ensure that customer concerns about service are appropriately escalated and reported as a complaint – even if the customer has not expressly said they want to make a complaint.



Further work with departments to help them improve the quality of responses to customer's complaints, and identifying exactly what the issues are.



.Put in place training for all service managers on advanced customer centric writing skills, managing customer service performance, and handling customer complaints.



Update all staff on progress to date and highlight some of the great work that is going on, whilst also reminding all staff of our expectations in respect of customer care, through staff briefings.

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services
April 2012