



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

Making Experiences Count

Quarterly Customer Service Report

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st April 2012 – 30th June 2012



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.
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics for information; and
- Customer satisfaction information.

2. Customer Feedback Analysis

56 complaints were received during this quarter, with 39 of them (70%) answered in 15 working days or less. 17 complaints took longer than 15 working days to respond to and details of these complaints are detailed below.

We also received 81 compliments.

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.

40 (71%) complaints were considered to be upheld or partial upheld as we could have done better.

Sometimes it is possible to resolve a complaint on the spot and that happened in 8 cases this quarter.

The majority of complaints received this quarter had several factors in common which were:

- Not doing what we have said we will do
- Giving customers incorrect or confusing information
- Not responding to customers calls and queries
- Delays in taking action
- Not having any empathy or respect for customers

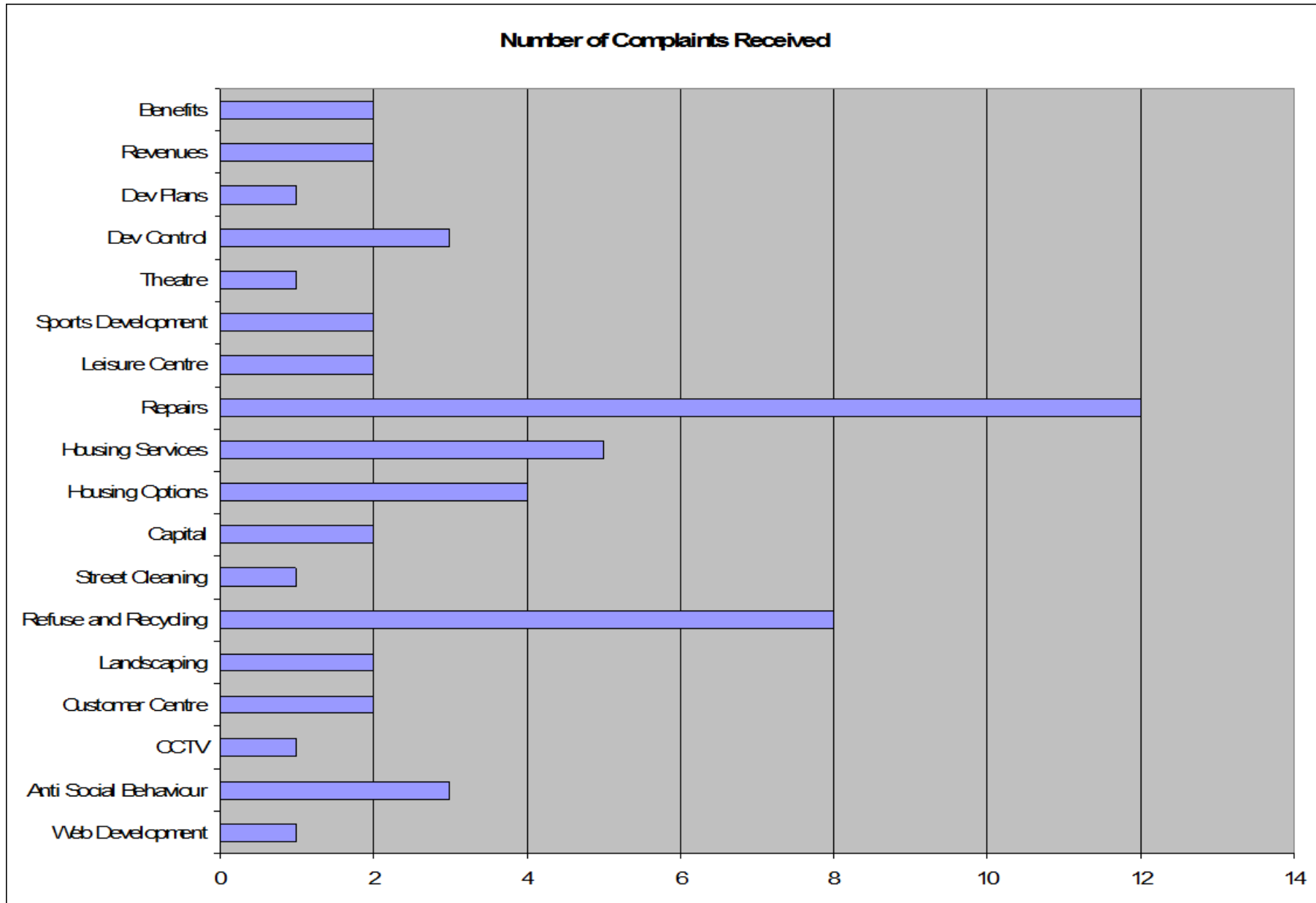
These are issues that we are addressing by:

- Arranging small workshops with teams to discuss customer service issues and then delivering training tailored to their needs.
- Staff briefings have been held to highlight common causes of complaint and how we can improve our customer care.
- Later this year we have arranged a series of courses for managers designed to develop their coaching and communications skills in customer care.

The following table shows a breakdown of the complaints and compliments received by department.

Dept	Compliments	Complaints	Responded to within 15 working days	Complaint upheld or partially upheld	Complaint not upheld	Still open
Business Transformation	0	1	1	0	1	0
Community Services	6	4	3	0	4	0
Customer Services	4	2	1	2	0	0
Environmental Services	13	10	10	7	3	0
Leisure and Culture	31	5	5	3	2	0
Housing	26	26	13	21	3	2
Planning and Regeneration	1	4	3	4	0	0
Resources	0	4	3	3	1	0
Totals	81	56	39	40	14	2

Number of complaints by service (detailed)



Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and 70% of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, (17 cases) customers were informed that there would be a delay in responding.

In the majority of these cases the delay was due to the case being complex, or involving various parties, thus taking a while to investigate. In two cases a breakdown in communication resulted in the complaints not being picked up and the customer was contacted and received a full apology for this. The following table provides details on each of the complaints that took over 15 days to handle during this quarter.

Complaint details	Outcome of investigation	Action taken	Days taken to respond and reason for delay
Community Services			
Customer alleges that the Council is not taking her complaint about a neighbour seriously and is protecting him as he is a police informer	Not upheld – ASB team and Police are actively involved in trying to find workable solutions	This is a long standing dispute between two families who fell out over a personal matter some years ago. The ASB Team and Police are trying a number of interventions to resolve this situation and this is likely to be ongoing.	24 days Complex ongoing case and officer involved not available to comment
Customer Services			
Customer very unhappy about several issues relating to problems he had contacting the Council and the misleading information he was given.	Upheld	Apology given for delays and wrong information. Training issue identified.	23 days Relevant officers on leave
Housing			
Customer is unhappy about various repairs which she has been waiting for.	Partially Upheld	This was a void property and the tenants concerns were not considered when undertaking the works however the customer had unreasonable expectations of what was possible.	29 days Team did try to contact customer on the phone by the target date but couldn't get an answer. All repairs were carried out by the time the customer got back in contact.

Customer unhappy that he was overpaid benefit due to not all payslips being provided by Housing Options.	Upheld	Misunderstanding about the number of payslips to be forwarded to Benefits. Apology given.	19 days Complex investigation involving multiple officers.
Delay in carrying out repairs to the property after a leak from the flat above.	Upheld	Apology given and repairs scheduled.	22 days Customer informed that response would be delayed due to HOS having to also look at insurance issue.
Customer unhappy about delays to various repairs to property and no response to phone calls and emails.	Upheld	Apology given and works agreed with customer.	23 days Reason for delay unclear.
Customer has ongoing problems with plumbing and operative who called to inspect was very rude.	Upheld	Apology given and works rescheduled. Through the transformation process the way repairs are reported and assessed is being changed so this situation should not happen in the future.	17 days Contractor problem-not communicating issues to Council
Customer unhappy about the attitude of the Housing Options staff and the way had to keep chasing them up about bid for a new property.	Upheld	Delay in points being awarded on the application due to transformation work being carried out. Apology given.	21 days Delay due to relevant staff being unavailable.
Customer unhappy about the delay in responding to housing concerns	Not upheld	Customer was informed that the LGO had informed the Council that they would be investigating her complaint but the LGO had failed to get back to her.	19 days Confusion with Ombudsman involvement caused delay

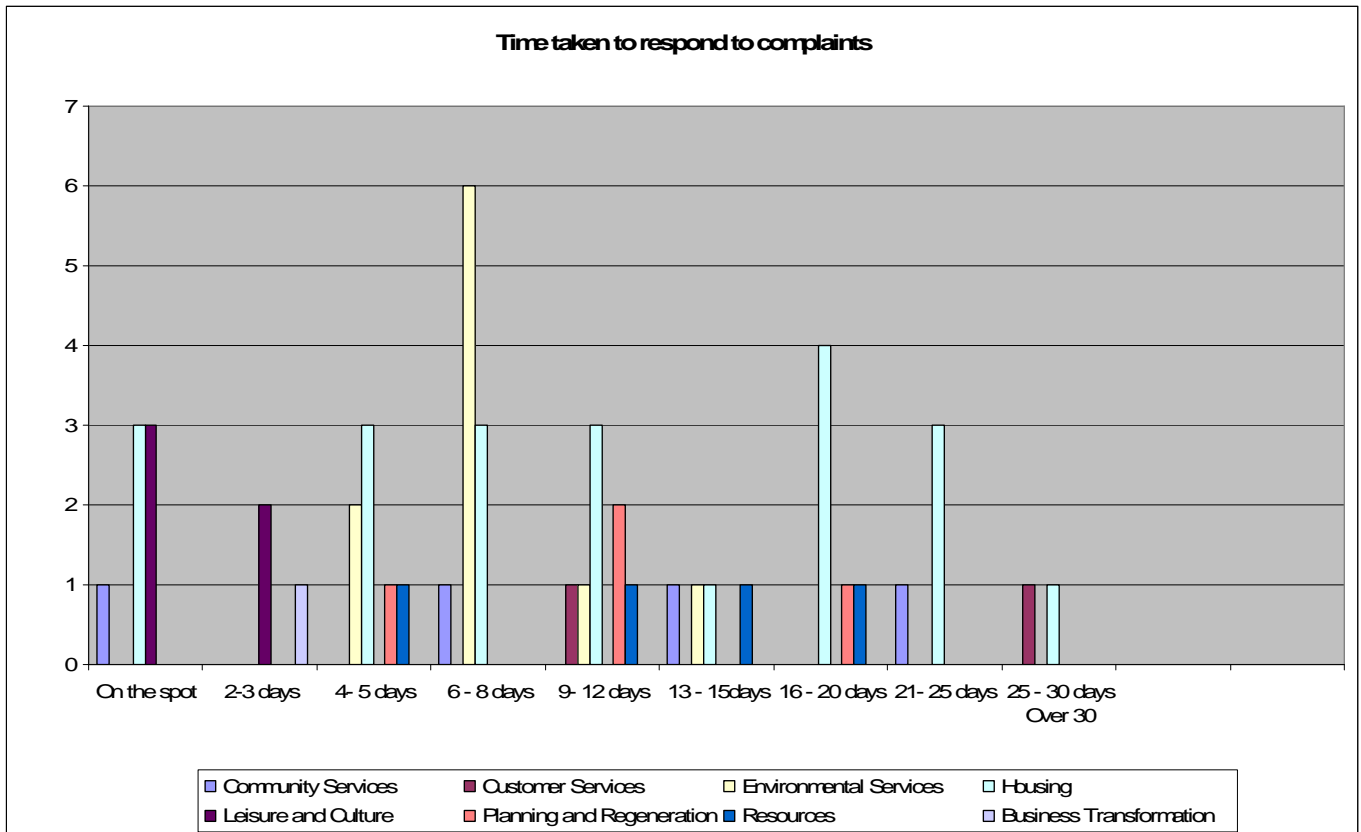
<p>Customer unhappy about the problems encountered getting boiler fixed and the attitude of the workman</p>	<p>Upheld</p>	<p>The repair was difficult, however, the Out of Hours workman's attitude did not show the customer care expected of him.</p> <p>Apology given and customer care discussed with member of staff</p>	<p>16 days</p> <p>Complex repair issue.</p>
<p>Customer unhappy about not being consulted about a green space being turned into a car park on his street.</p>	<p>Not upheld</p>	<p>The correct procedure and consultation had taken place throughout the process. Customer had been consulted.</p> <p>Initial complaint was responded to within 15 days time but customer sent a further three emails which took a little longer to answer</p>	<p>18 days</p> <p>Case not closed down on correct date.</p>
<p>An error by the housing team, informing the council tax team that the customer had left the property led to an incorrect bill and later when mistake realised a very large bill.</p>	<p>Partially upheld</p>	<p>Apology given as partly our mistake but customer did not read advice sent to her.</p>	<p>18 days</p> <p>Complex investigation</p>

Time taken to respond to complaints by service.

This chart shows the break down 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 rather than any one service dealing with complaints in an unsatisfactory way.

The nature of Leisure and Culture complaints is such that they can usually be dealt with either on the spot or within a couple of days. Complaints for the Housing and Resources (Council Tax and Benefits included) Services are more variable. The vast majority of Environmental Services complaints are dealt with within 6 to 8 days.

Time taken to respond to complaints by service



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

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

- Additional training has been delivered to CSA’s to update/remind them on processes and procedures.
- Contractors briefed on required level of customer care.
- Refuse crews to receive regular updates on changes to customer collections

Number of complaint escalated to Head of Customer Services

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

Happy Customers!

From the compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides and when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner. Here are some of the compliments we have received for information.

Team	Compliment Detail
Dial A Ride	Mrs X would like to say what a wonderful service Dial-A-Ride is; the service has changed her life.
Children's Centre	Customer wrote in about one of the children's workers to say she was a pleasure to work with.
Customer Service Centre	Customer sent in a comment card to thank OSS in particular Bev Hopcroft for their time and patience for helping her get on the waiting list and helping her with her homelessness.
Landscaping	Thank you to Chris Franklin and Wayne Beard very much for your help with the flower seed planting this morning at School. I think the children thoroughly enjoyed it and I am sure will be keeping an eye on the results. Our thanks are also due to the Borough Council for providing the seed and your expertise.
Landscaping	Customer would like to compliment the tree surgeons who have carried out the work to the poplar trees at rear of his property. He says they have carried out the work with exceptional professionalism, taken the trees out and tided the area efficiently and effectively with virtually no disruption to the residents.
Street Cleaning	The caller lives in Birmingham, phoned to say she visits her niece in Other road and is very impressed with how clean the area is around Grove Street and Archer Road and that the operative who does the cleansing is always very pleasant.
Housing Services	Customer called to thank Equipment & Adaptations and the team for the bathroom works which were completed today. He is really pleased with the result.
Repairs and Maintenance	Team arranged for a plumbing repair to be done on the same day it was reported. Customer called back to say it was a first class service very quick and a very clean job done and thank you to the team and all concerned.
Housing	Compliment about the Jubilee Party organised by the Home Support Team, which was held at the South Redditch Social Club on the 1st June 2012.

Repairs and Maintenance	Customer wanted to say what a good job Wesley Newman has done with putting up fencing and rails at Eathorpe Close. She said he turned up in all weathers and has done an excellent job.
Theatre	Customer called to say what a delightful lady Natasha is and a great asset to the Palace Theatre.
Sports Development	Customer wrote to say what a caring and professional attitude Hayley has and she has made such a difference to the older people in her area by organising activities and making everyone at ease.
Sports Development	Customer very happy with trampolining event.
Development Plans	Many thanks to Louise Jones of Development Plans for the way she has dealt with my request which has been excellent. Her help has been prompt, efficient and very helpful. She is a credit to Redditch Borough Council and the Planning profession.

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There was one complaint referred from the Ombudsman this quarter. This related to a Housing Options issue. The customer felt that the Council failed to properly consider her housing needs since losing her home. After investigation the Ombudsman found no evidence of maladministration.

4. Customer Service Centre Information

The section provides some statistical 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.**

Customer numbers

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

	1 st quarter 2011/12	4 th quarter	Totals for 2011/12		1 st quarter 2012/13
Face to face	20,955	18,266	72,785		14,130
Telephone	19,333	21,273	76,813		27,180
Email	725	1,014	3,270		825
Payments	32,454	23,781	118,576		28,031
Total customer contacts	73,467	64,334	271,444		69,341

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 1st quarter of 2012/13 we recorded an average of 28% failure demand. This compares with 23% in the last quarter and 39.9% in quarter 1 of 2011/12. We believe this slight increase is may be attributable to the weather which has impacted on the volume of calls as well as the amount of failure demand at the end of June.

5. 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 35 customers, who had made contact with us with issues relating to Council Tax in April. We received the following responses to our questions:

How was your enquiry handled by the customer services adviser?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	0	0	8	27

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the council?

Yes	No
35	0

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services
July 2012