

**CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT
2015 - 16**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &
CUSTOMER SERVICES**

AGENDA ITEM: 3

**PORTFOLIO: CORPORATE SERVICES & PERFORMANCE (COUNCILLOR
GRAHAM HINCHEY**

Reason for this Report

1. To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. The statistics for corporate complaints are set out by service area.

Background

2. Complaints provide valuable information about how we are performing and what our customers think about our services. Most people who complain tell us what we have done wrong and how we can do better; we use this information to improve our services, strengthen our relationships with customers and make better use of our resources. Publishing this annual report demonstrates the Council's commitment to transparency and a positive approach to dealing with and learning from complaints.
3. The Council's complaints procedure reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints. This was further supported by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Complaints Managers record information about the number of complaints they have received and how quickly they acknowledged and responded to the complaints. This information is submitted to the Corporate Complaints Team at the end of each quarter. The Corporate Complaints Team use this information to ensure that the complaints policy is being adhered to. Meanwhile, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales captures detailed information regarding complaints against the Council which is included in his annual report.

Complaints

4. A total of 2,476 complaints were recorded during 2015/16. This is a 2.3% increase from the previous year, when 2,418 complaints were recorded.

Compliments

5. As an organization, we receive many positive comments about our staff and the services we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important to capture as knowing where things are perhaps not working. We therefore keep a record of the compliments we receive as well as the complaints. Good practice and learning can then be circulated across the Council.
6. Across the year 2015-16, City of Cardiff Council received a total of 1,483 recorded compliments, which is a 4.9% decrease from the previous year when 1,560 compliments were recorded.

Ombudsman Complaints

7. Recommendations in Ombudsman reports and observations about our strengths and weaknesses help us improve our processes. The Ombudsman closed 143 cases involving City of Cardiff Council in 2015-16 compared to 98 cases in 2014-15 and 100 in 2013-14. 7 of these cases were accepted for further investigation of which only 3 led to an Ombudsman report. The Ombudsman received 46 premature complaints (defined as when the council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). It is felt this is due to public perception that the Ombudsman can intervene and make decisions without the Council initially considering the complaint. A further 20 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council.

Reason for Recommendation

8. To enable Cabinet to have corporate overview of the complaints and compliments process during 2014/15 and to note the information contained within the report.

Financial Implications

9. This report has no direct financial implications. Any financial implications of future changes made to improve processes and learn from complaints will need to be met from existing resources.

Legal Implications

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

HR Implications

11. There are no HR implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to note the content of the report.

SARAH MCGILL

Director

7 October 2016

The following appendix is attached

Appendix 1 – City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

City of Cardiff Council

Annual Complaints Report 2015-16



corp.compteam@cardiff.gov.uk



Foreword

Welcome to Cardiff Council's Annual Complaints Report for 2015/16. I am extremely proud to reflect on the successes of last year and share with you some of the key headlines. This report is part of our continued drive to provide transparency to the public about the complaints that we handle.

While it is disappointing to learn of instances where customers have been unhappy with the service provided to them, as a council, we recognise the value of lessons that can be learned from complaints. This is as important as ever, particularly in the current financial climate where there is increased demand for our services and rapidly reducing budgets. Complaints can be costly.

The Council has made good progress in achieving its priorities whilst maintaining the standards of frontline services which residents expect. This together with the continued investment in our staff means that we can offer the highest level of support to our citizens. Key amongst this investment has been a £700,000 spend on training and development, an increased focus on staff engagement across the council and the absolute importance, we as an organisation place on the development of our staff.

By investing in our staff, we aim to empower with the skills to understand and deliver excellent quality services, which should reduce complaints. We continue to encourage feedback however in order to continue to improve service provision wherever possible

I'm pleased to note that for the 5th consecutive year the Public Ombudsman for Wales have not issued any Section 16 reports against the Council. Only 3 complaints were referred to the Ombudsman that were investigated, with only 1 complaint being upheld. There is a clearly a theme of continuous improvements and the level of complaints received by the Council remains incredibly low given the breadth, depth and number of services offered across the city.

However, this is not to say that we are in any way complacent, and we know that there is still a lot more to achieve.

I would like to finish by personally thanking the hard working and dedicated staff who work in front-line services and those whom manage complaints on a daily basis. There is much to look forward to over the coming year, and I look forward to sharing news of our continued progress with you all next year.



Councillor Graham Hinchey
Corporate Services & Performance Portfolio

Contents

●	Our Complaints Procedure	4
●	Complaints Summary	5
●	Compliments	6
●	Ombudsman Complaints	8
●	Complaints by Service Area:	
●	Communities, Housing & Customer Services	9
●	Education & Lifelong Learning	13
●	Environment	14
●	Culture, Venues & Events	15
●	Bereavement Services	17
●	Statutory Complaints (Children's Services and Health & Social Care)	18
●	Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation	20
●	Resources	22
●	Governance & Legal Services	23
●	Economic Development	23
●	Welsh Language Complaints	24

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Reason for this report

To report to the Cabinet on the operation of the corporate complaints procedure between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. The statistics for corporate complaints are set out by service area.

Background

Complaints provide valuable information about how we are performing and what our customers think about our services. Most people who complain tell us what we have done wrong and how we can do better; we use this information to improve our services, strengthen our relationships with customers and make better use of our resources. Publishing this annual report demonstrates the Council's commitment to transparency and a positive approach to dealing with and learning from complaints.

Our complaints procedure

The Council's complaints procedure reflects guidance given in the Welsh Government Model Policy and Guidance Paper for Handling Complaints. This was further supported by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

Complaint received. A complaint can be registered via any Council venue and once received, should be forwarded to the Service Area Complaints Manager. Every Council service area has a lead officer for complaints. The Complaints Manager will ensure complaints are acknowledged and recorded and facilitate the investigation of the complaint in accordance with the corporate complaints procedure.



Acknowledgment. The Complaints Managers will aim to acknowledge complaints within 5 working days. At this stage, we can let the customer know who is dealing with their complaint and our understanding of what the customer's complaint entails – this is important so that the complainant's expectations are realistic and they have an indication of precisely the issues that will be looked at. We can also let them know that a full response will follow within 20 working days of our receipt of the complaint.



Full response. At the end of an investigation, a response should be produced depending on how a customer has indicated they prefer to be contacted. The response should include the outcome of the investigation as well as any necessary action taken for service improvement. The Ombudsman states that the aim of every formal investigation should be to **"investigate once, investigate well"**. Advice is also included on what the complainant should do if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome – to contact the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.



Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. Complaints that progress to the Ombudsman will have been thoroughly investigated by the service area. If a complainant remains dissatisfied, it is for the Ombudsman to assess whether there is any evidence of service failure or maladministration not identified by the Council.

Recording performance

Complaints Managers record information about the number of complaints they have received and how quickly they acknowledged and responded to the complaints. This information is submitted to the Corporate Complaints Team at the end of each quarter. The Corporate Complaints Team uses this information to ensure that the complaints policy is being adhered to. Meanwhile, the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales captures detailed information regarding complaints against the Council which is included in his annual report.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Complaints to City of Cardiff Council in 2015-16

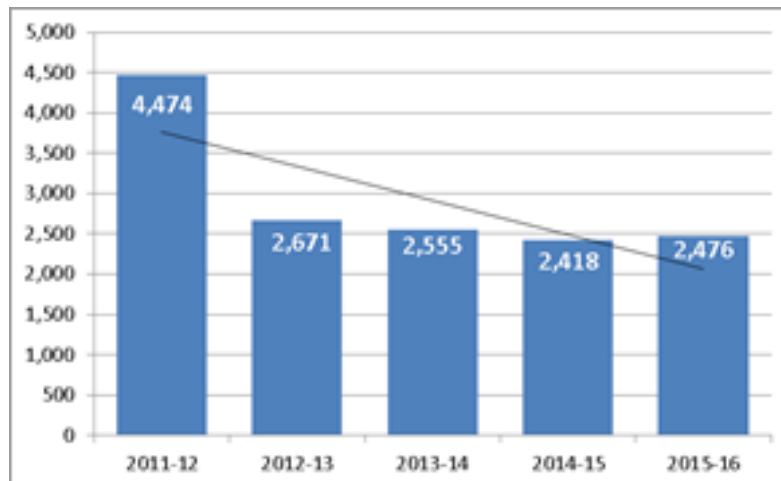
A total of **2,476** complaints were recorded during 2015/16. This is an 2.3% increase from the previous year, when 2,418 complaints were recorded.

COMPLAINTS HAVE
INCREASED BY
2.3%
WHEN COMPARED TO
2014/15

Year	Number of complaints
2015-16	2,476
2014-15	2,418
2013-14	2,555
2012-13	2,671
2011-12	4,474

Complaints received per 1,000 of population					
	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cardiff population (estimate)	345,442	348,493	351,710	354,294	357,160
Total number complaints	4,474	2,671	2,555	2,418	2,476
Number of complaints received per 1,000	12.95	7.7	7.3	6.8	6.9

The population of Cardiff is estimated at **357,160**. In 2015/16, Cardiff Council handled **2,476** complaints from customer, meaning that an average of **6.9** complaints were received per **1000** residents.



The above graph depicts the general decrease in complaints over the last five years.

Complaints breakdown

Service Area	Number of complaints 2015/16	Number of complaints 2014/15
Waste Strategy & Enforcement	941	759
Housing & Communities	425	503
Culture, Venues & Events	296	294
Traffic & Transportation	166	243
Customer Services	115	58
Finance	109	164
Leisure & Play	108	52
Highways Maintenance	79	108
Parks & Sports	55	73
Education & Lifelong Learning	54	23
Bereavement & Registration Services	42	51
Economic Development	37	11
Regulatory & Supporting Services	26	25
Planning	15	19
Harbour Authority	4	6
Governance & Legal Services	3	20
Central Transport Services / Facilities Management / BA	1	9
Communications & Media	0	0
HR People Services	0	0
Improvement & Information	0	0
Total	2476	2418

NB Complaints for Children's Services and Health & Social Care are recorded under their statutory complaints procedure (please see page 17).

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Compliments for City of Cardiff Council

As an organisation, we receive many positive comments about our staff and the services we provide. Knowing where things are working well and are appreciated is as important to capture as knowing where things are perhaps not working. We therefore keep a record of the compliments we receive as well as the complaints. Good practice and learning can then be circulated across the Council.

Across the year 2015-16, City of Cardiff Council received a total of **1,483** recorded compliments, which is a 4.9% decrease from the previous year when 1,560 compliments were recorded. This may be a result of the Council's move to encourage more customers to 'self-serve' – either online or at Council venues, meaning that fewer contacts or thanks are received within certain areas.

A few examples are provided below of the types of compliments we have received:

Bereavement Services: The whole process from registration to cremation was carried out in a friendly, helpful and professional manner. The family is very grateful for everything at this difficult time.

Community Maintenance Services: Customer wrote to thank staff for the work carried out at his mother's home: "With your help we secured a grant to transform her bathroom to suit her needs so that she is now able to carry out everyday tasks and keep her independence and dignity. The quality of the workmanship is second to none and the tradesman showed an empathy to my mother's needs that is very rare these days. He worked well into the evening to get the job done. The house was left spotlessly clean with no traces of bathroom debris".

Culture, Tourism & Events: Could I just extend my sincerest thanks for your support on this fantastic event (Velothon). As a participating cyclist on such a large, inaugural event I must say the organisation was truly exceptional and support from local residents across the route was inspirational. Events like this can only serve to further showcase what Wales has to offer.

Customer Services: You [C2C staff] are all wonderful at your job. I am always calm when I finish speaking to you. I never go away from the phone feeling dissatisfied.

Service Area	Number of compliments 2015/16	Number of compliments 2014/15
Environment	265	275
Housing & Communities	222	215
Culture, Venues & Events	204	367
Customer Services	176	165
Bereavement Services	164	71
Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation	129	242
Economic Development	129	26
Parks & Sports	116	136
Harbour Authority	37	27
Leisure & Play	21	13
Finance	13	12
Governance & Legal Services	2	7
Central Transport Services / Facilities Management	2	2
Education & Lifelong Learning	2	1
Health & Social Care	1	1
Communications & Media	0	0
HR People Services	0	0
Total	1483	1560

NB Internal compliments are excluded from this process and it is worth noting that many of the above service areas will receive a sizeable amount of compliments from internal employees.

Economic Development: Letter sent from Bride and Groom regarding a wedding held at Cardiff Castle: "Our day was exceptionally well organised and we are both incredibly grateful to you and your staff. Please could you pass on our thanks to Cardiff Catering. It is very rare to find a civilian staff that can deliver a dinner service with such military precision. I am very impressed. I must single out the beef wellington which was particularly impressive indeed. Thank you once again for an incredible experience and I would readily recommend your venue and service".

Facilities Management: I just wanted to write and let you know how delighted we are with our new offices, I'd also like to commend you on your excellent workers. I cannot tell you how wonderful they were, they worked their socks off, kept us fully informed about what they were doing and were cheerful and amenable at all times. Nothing was too much trouble for them – they are a credit to you all and I would welcome them back at any time.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Finance: I am writing this letter to yourself as a letter of thanks and appreciation for the way you have helped and supported me during what could have been a very stressful and worrying time. I have appreciated the calm and understanding and professional way that you have dealt with my debt to the Council. Thank you again for everything that you have done and the way you have done it.

Harbour Authority: Customer wishes to thank staff at Barrage Control for the tour of the control room for his students. This will be very useful in their course and they hope to return again to discuss in greater detail. Staff and students are all extremely grateful for the assistance provided by all Barrage staff in supporting them with information and look forward to visiting the Bay and Barrage again to further their studies.

Highways Maintenance: I just wanted to say a big thank you for the recent road surface improvements. I have always cycled both for fun, as a commuter and for work. I am really enjoying riding around on some smooth Tarmac for once not having to swerve dangerously or hold on for dear life and hope that my wheels don't buckle as I hit some bad ground.

Housing: The customer said that the staff at Greenfarm Hostel and Flying Start supported her through a very difficult time in her life, and expressed her appreciation of the staff at the hostel. She felt they were always there to support her, whatever the time of day, especially when she was feeling low and vulnerable and needed to talk to someone. The customer added that the staff helped her to get her life back on track and ensured she had access to services that she needed. She felt that she would not be where she is today without the help and support that she received from the staff at Greenfarm.

Independent Living Services: The customer wrote to express his sincere thanks to the Visiting Officer and Social Worker for their "sterling work" in assisting him to improve his quality of life and enhance his wife's independence. He added: "It was a pleasure to meet two very polite, proactive, positive and very knowledgeable members of your staff who could not do enough for me ... they are a shining example of all that is good within your department."

Leisure: I am writing to say how impressed I was at the level of service I experienced at the pool today. The pool was busy and I had just started swimming lengths when two pool attendants offered to put a lane in for me. I really appreciated this gesture and enjoyed my swim all the more for being able to swim calmly without getting in others' way. I realise that it is difficult to balance everyone's needs in the pool and I would not expect this treatment again but it was a good moment in an otherwise difficult day, so thank you to your staff for having taken the trouble to make a difference!

Libraries: The customer wrote to thank Cardiff Library Services and complimented the staff and services at the Library in particular. She has long-term health issues and is not always able to go out, so she feels very lucky to live near to the Library. The customer added that the book and knitting clubs have provided a social network that is very beneficial for her mental health.

New Theatre: My wife and I came to see the pantomime and had the best night out we had had in years. Everything about the whole pantomime production was of the highest caliber. The whole production and performance were excellent and I want also to mention how good the stage set, lighting, costumes and music were. This area of the theatre often seems to be overlooked and the people responsible never receive the accolades they justly deserve. We wanted to make it known how amazing we thought they all were.

Parks and Sport: I'm not sure which department this should be directed to, but I would just like to tell you how much I have appreciated the "Cardiff Bay Meadow" this summer/autumn. Every morning, after queueing through the tunnels to get to work, my husband and I have been rewarded with the sight of fantastic native wild flowers doing their thing - for month after month. It has really put a smile on our faces every day.

Telecare: A Telecare customer who recently had a fall said that she couldn't speak more highly of the staff who assisted her. She stated that they were marvellous and reassured her when she was very worried.

Waste Management: Customer applauds Cardiff Council for making people think about what they throw away and encouraging recycling. She also passes on the respect she has for the crews who empty the bins, as it's a difficult job but they do it very well. We should be proud of them.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Ombudsman Complaints 2015-16

Recommendations in Ombudsman reports and observations about our strengths and weaknesses help us improve our processes.

The Ombudsman closed **143** cases involving City of Cardiff Council in 2015-16 compared to 98 cases in 2014-15 and 100 in 2013-14. 7 of these cases were accepted for further investigation of which only 3 led to an Ombudsman report. The Ombudsman received 46 premature complaints (defined as when the Council has not had a reasonable opportunity to deal with the complaint itself). It is felt this is due to public perception that the Ombudsman can intervene and make decisions without the Council initially considering the complaint. A further 20 cases were declined because the Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by the Council. The Ombudsman closed the cases for the following reasons:

Reason for closing the case	
Complainants had not exhausted the Council's complaints process - they were referred back to the Council	46
Cases closed after initial consideration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • e.g. no evidence of maladministration or service failure • no evidence of hardship or injustice suffered by the complainant • little further would be achieved by the Ombudsman pursuing the matter 	58
Cases declined because Ombudsman was satisfied with action proposed or taken by Council (Quick-Fix / Voluntary Settlement)	20
Cases out of Ombudsman's jurisdiction	15
Cases withdrawn by complainant	1
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint upheld	2
Complaint led to an Ombudsman's report – complaint not upheld	1
Total	143

Ombudsman Complaints - a yearly comparison

The table below shows the total number of complaints made to the Ombudsman regarding City of Cardiff Council over the last five years.

Year	
2015-16	143
2014-15	98
2013-14	100
2012-13	93
2011-12	90

Investigations leading to reports

The Ombudsman issues a report if he finds that a complainant has suffered hardship or injustice through the Council's maladministration or service failure.

Under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2005, the Ombudsman can issue one of two types of report following an investigation into a complaint by a member of the public: Section 16 and Section 21.

Section 16 Report

The first type of report is known as a Section 16 report. This is issued when the Ombudsman believes that the investigation report contains matters of public interest. The Council is then obliged to publicise the report at its own expense. **For the fifth consecutive year, the Ombudsman issued 0 Section 16 reports against City of Cardiff Council.**

Section 21 Report

The Ombudsman can issue a Section 21 report if the Council agrees to implement any recommendations he has made and if he is satisfied that the case does not raise matters of public interest. The Ombudsman issued 3 Section 21 reports during 2015-16.

Any recommendations as a result of Ombudsman reports have been fulfilled.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Complaints by service area 2015-16

Housing & Communities continue to adopt a constructive and positive approach to complaints. Each case is investigated to establish exactly what (if anything) has gone wrong, with the primary aim being to resolve the matter for the individual if possible. All complaints are also looked at from the point of view of making any changes necessary to improve services and minimise potential future complaints.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Housing	425	503
Community Maintenance Services	227	333
Landlord Services	92	75
Benefits	63	59
Assessment & Support	24	16
Hubs	15	10
Estate Improvement	4	5
Neighbourhood Regeneration	0	5
Number / Percentage of complaints not responded to on time	9 (2.1%)	11 (2.2%)
Complaints about staff	69 (16.2%)	63 (12.5%)
Delay in providing service	93 (21.9%)	208 (41.4%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	19 (4.5%)	25 (5.0%)
Other	32 (7.5%)	52 (10.3%)
Poor quality of service	212 (49.9%)	155 (30.8%)

The detailed reasons for complaints are monitored at monthly meetings by the Assistant Director for Housing and Communities and other relevant staff. Any patterns, such as the types of errors being made, can then be addressed and the appropriate action taken to ensure best practice; for example, changes made to procedure or standard letters being amended.

The role of the two specialised Housing Complaint Officers has expanded as hoped and they now deal with complaints relating to a number of housing teams including Social Lettings, Anti-Social Behaviour and Tenancy Management. This allows for a consistent and thorough approach to all complaint investigations and their roles continue to evolve.

The increase in the number of complaints about **Landlord Services** is primarily due to the increase in complaints about the Social Lettings Unit. This was anticipated, taking into account the change to

the Allocations Policy in early 2015. The policy is now based on housing need rather than time served on the list and as such is much fairer. However, there are inevitably some people who have become less likely to be housed as a result of the change.

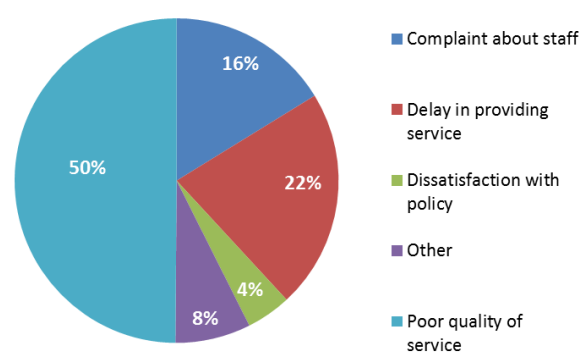
The slight increase in the number of complaints received about **Benefits** may be attributed to the number of Welfare Reform measures the Benefits section has had to implement. These measures have also had an impact on customers' rent accounts and this is a further possible explanation for the increase in complaints received by the Finance Team.

There has also been a very small increase in the number of complaints about the **Hubs**, however it must be noted that in 2015/16 the volume of customers visiting the Hubs has increased by over 25,000 to 925,006.

These complaints focused on the customer service an individual received. However, officers are relaying information that is not always good news so a total of 15 complaints is small in comparison to the number of visits. All Hub officers strive to achieve excellence in customer service; this is an area that is discussed in team meetings and experiences are often shared to enable enhancement of the customer journey. All complaints are addressed with staff, and training/briefing sessions are arranged to assist staff with personal development and technique skills to minimise complaints.

It is positive to report that the number of complaints received by **Community Maintenance Services** has reduced for each of the last 3 years. With at least 85% of repairs being carried out by the in-house workforce and 94% of appointments made, this has had a positive impact on customer satisfaction and complaints.

Categories of Complaints for Housing



City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Customer Services

During 2015-16, Customer Services directorate (including Connect to Cardiff, Adult Community Learning, Libraries and 24/7 Services) complaints increased to **115** from the 58 complaints recorded in 2014-15.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Customer Services	115	58
Connect to Cardiff	22	24
Libraries	76	16
Adult Community Learning	5	13
24/7 Services	12	5
Number / Percentage of complaints not responded to on time	3 (2.6%)	7 (12.0%)
Complaints about staff	30 (26.1%)	17 (29.3%)
Delay in service	0 (0%)	5 (8.6%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	1 (0.9%)	9 (15.6%)
Other	58 (50.4%)	13 (22.4%)
Poor quality of service	26 (22.6%)	14 (24.1%)

Connect to Cardiff (C2C) received **22** complaints in 2015/16 which is a slight decrease from the previous year. The demand for service continues to increase year on year and the fact that complaints have remained fairly static and comparatively low is a very positive reflection of the continuous improvement culture that is embedded in the workforce.

C2C is a multi-channel contact centre and our customers can contact us via telephone, email, webchat or social media. All channels of choice continue to increase in demand and the contact centre handled 669,334 calls in 2015/16; this is an 11% increase from the year before. There was also a 12% increase in emails with 97,631 being offered to the centre. Productivity and customer satisfaction is high and C2C ensures that any customer feedback and suggestions are treated as a high priority. Each of the 22 complaints was dealt with in time. C2C continues to utilise our call recording system to thoroughly investigate customer issues and as a result 3 complaints were not upheld.

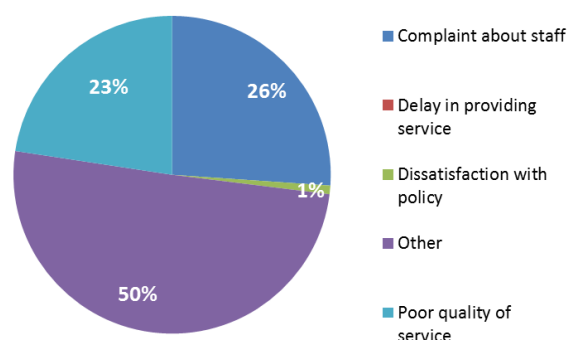
On specific analysis of the 22 complaints over this period, 15 related to complaints about staff. For each of these complaints, further training has been identified and given to Customer Service Representatives to assist and support them in their role to ensure clear and correct

advice is given on every call. C2C delivers an excellent induction programme for new starters which incorporates specific customer care training as well as service area specific knowledge. The remaining complaints received related to poor quality of service, and in each case this was rectified with further training and feedback. Training needs and high standards form part of employees' PPDRs, and quality call/email monitoring is carried out continuously on all Customer Service Representatives.

C2C received 0 complaints about the hold time and this is a positive improvement on the previous year, especially considering the increase in demand.

It is pleasing to note that a total of 176 compliments were received from customers who have taken the time to record their appreciation for both certain members of the team and the C2C service.

Categories of Complaints for Customer Services



Libraries received **76** complaints in 2015/16 which is an increase from the 16 recorded in 2014/15. Footfall remains an upward trend for Libraries and Hubs throughout the city as Cardiff libraries were visited by 2,191,238 citizens during the year, which represents an increase of 5.39% when compared to 2014/15.

73.6% of the total complaints received related to one issue concerning a proposed exhibition at the Central Library. Significant work has been undertaken to review processes and structures are now in place to ensure that appropriate controls are implemented.

The remaining 20 complaints can be categorized as follows:

9 of the complaints relate to staff and customer service. This represents a decrease of 11% when

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

compared to the previous year. The Quality Innovation Standards for the Library Service which include customer care have been updated to ensure that all aspects of customer service are prioritised and all issues are fully investigated and addressed with the staff concerned.

3 of the complaints related to security staff at the Central Library Hub. Security Management have subsequently formulated action plans for improvements and changes to the formation of the teams have been made. This is continually being monitored.

2 of the complaints related to recycling bags. These are largely due to changes in policy regarding the distribution of the bags to the public. All staff have now been reminded of the new procedures.

6 of the complaints related to equipment failures – in particular speed of and access to computers. The public access computers at Central Library have now all been updated fully. There is an ongoing process to replace equipment as necessary. Modifications have been made to logging on procedures to improve speed of access for customers.

The Library Service continues to be valued by citizens and it is clear from the increase in footfall, attendance at Library events and access to digital services that it is gaining in popularity. Every effort is made to ensure that quality is maintained throughout the service and all customer concerns are fully investigated with any appropriate action taken.

The **Adult Community Learning (ACL) Service** received 5 complaints for 2015/16, a reduction from 13 in 2014/15. This is a positive reflection on the team who can receive complaints over the phone, by e-mail or on a face-to-face basis either at the Severn Road ACL Centre or Llanover Hall in Canton.

The Service welcomes continuous feedback from our learners, recognising that a complaint can often help us to consider improvements to the service we provide. The introduction of online enrolment and programme information in recent years has increased accessibility to provision for our learners.

Learning from Complaints

2 upheld complaints within ACL related to the following:

- ✓ Learner complained that tutor was limited in knowledge of their fitness related class, putting learner at risk due to an existing health condition plus felt that venue facilities were not appropriate. Measures were taken to ensure that health questionnaires are completed in advance with instruction sheets for class provided. The learner was also offered an alternative class to attend as they did not like the venue and refunded for the half term that they did not attend.
- ✓ One individual raised an issue around not being able to complete an ACL survey that had been sent to them online, however on reflection they felt it was not relevant and asked to be unsubscribed from future ACL related surveys. For future ACL related surveys we now ensure that any individual not wishing to receive invitations to partake in these are removed from the database.

2 part upheld complaints centered on the Howardian Centre as an ACL venue. These complaints were specifically around the condition of a classroom as it was felt that there was a lack of appropriate furniture, with learners having to get chairs from another room before starting their class. There were also heating issues in the main hall area for a keep fit class which was very cold during the winter period. As the ACL Service hires the venue for use, we expect the relevant materials, furniture and appropriate heating to be provided. This has been fed back to the department that manages this venue to avoid such issues in future as well as alternative venues being considered.

1 complaint was not upheld and related to the following:

Learner complained that there was limited course information available for the Learning for Work programme on 15th July for the new academic year. The Learning for Work programme for 2015/16 was not launched however until August 2015. The recreation based Learning for Life programme is launched every year in July. However Learning for Work is launched nearer to term 1 commencing in September, as this suits the

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

profile of learners who want to access the free classes to gain skills that will lead to further education or employment. The additional time allows learners to discuss options to ensure they are accessing the classes that best suit their needs.

There has been an increase in the number of complaints received within **24/7 Services** from 5 in 2014/15 to **12** in 2015/16. There has been a restructure in the past year which has increased the number of staff within the service. There has also been an increase in the number of customers we deliver the service to, dealing with over 224,000 calls a month in Telecare Cardiff alone. Where the complaints received were due to poor quality of service, amendments to processes and procedure have been implemented and feed-back provided in team meetings / focus groups. We are currently standardising our training plans and are continuing to complete a full review of the processes followed.

24/7 Services deals with every complaint fully and is always looking to continuously improve the service delivered. We have recently updated the quality monitoring used for call monitoring within Telecare and have introduced a quality system to measure the service provided by the wider team. Customer service is paramount and, as in previous years, 24/7 Services has received great customer feed-back from surveys completed and many compliments.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Education

The Education and Lifelong Learning Directorate received **54** formal complaints in 2015/16.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Education	54	23
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	45 (83%)	21 (91%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	24 (44%)	11 (48%)

maintains have adequate complaints procedures in place and that these are published. A governing body complaints procedure may, with the agreement of the Local Authority, include a stage for the Local Authority to consider the complaint. However, the statutory responsibility for dealing with a complaint remains with the governing body.

There has been a 42% increase in the number of complaints for the Directorate received, when compared to 2014/15. From the 54 complaints received, 83% of the complaints were acknowledged within 5 working days. The Directorate responded to 44% of the complaints received within 20 days of receipt.

The number of complaints responded to within 20 working days has decreased from the previous year. Some complaints have involved the Directorate having to commission an independent investigator to undertake and oversee the complaint process. This process has had an impact on the Council meeting its complaint timescales. Where this occurs, the Directorate will send an interim reply which explains the delay and when the complainant can expect a comprehensive response. The Directorate is looking at ways to improve this process during 2016/17.

Typically, the Directorate receives complaints relating to concerns for the statutory functions of: School Re-organisation, School Admissions and Statements of Special Educational Needs.

It is important to note that under Section 29(1) of the Education Act 2002, governing bodies of all maintained schools are required to establish procedures for dealing with complaints relating to the school or to the provision of facilities or services. The Local Authority does not have a role in investigating or resolving complaints about schools. The Welsh Government has issued guidance to support schools in dealing with complaints, entitled Complaints Procedures for School Governing Bodies in Wales (Welsh Government Circular No. 011/2012). Within the guidance, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority to satisfy itself that all schools it

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Environment

The Environment Directorate received **967** formal complaints in 2015/16.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Environment	967	784
Waste Strategy & Enforcement	941	759
Regulatory & Supporting Services	26	25
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	965 (99.8%)	783 (99.9%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	916 (94.7%)	752 (95.9%)
Complaints about staff	60 (6.4%)	78 (9.9%)
Delay in service	415 (44.1%)	319 (40.7%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	216 (22.9%)	90 (11.5%)
Other	166 (17.6%)	122 (15.6%)
Poor quality of service	84 (8.9%)	175 (22.3%)

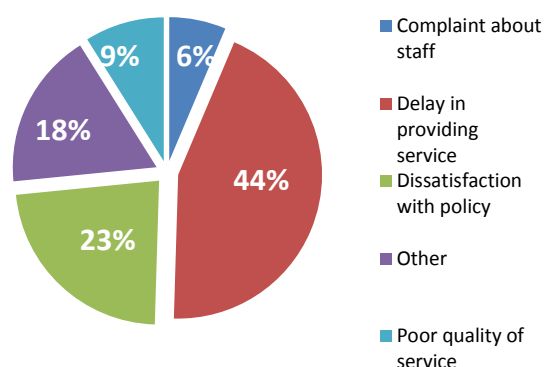
The number of complaints received by **Waste Strategy & Enforcement** has risen from 759 in 2014/2015 to **941** in 2015/2016.

On 27th July 2015, waste management began to implement the “Out of the Black, Into the Green” waste restriction project, with the aim to meet 58% recycling by April 2016. As with any city wide service change, it was anticipated that there would be an increase in complaints during the period of June onwards (when the communication material was issued across the city).

Between June-October, there were 115 complaints relating specifically to these collection changes, of which 92% were responded to within 20 working days or less.

The number of complaints is still considered to be very low when the volume of waste service delivery is taken into account. With approximately 150,000 address points across the city, up to 450,000 waste collections are now done weekly which is equivalent to over 23 million a year. Additionally, Waste Management also provides street cleansing, education and enforcement and bulky waste collection services in addition to providing three Household Waste Recycling Centres during the 2015/16 period.

Categories of Complaints for Environment



It is pleasing to note that a significant number of compliments continue to be received (262 in 2015/16).

Complaints and trends are robustly monitored by officers through close liaison with Connect to Cardiff and regular updates from the Service Complaints Manager.

Complaints and compliments are discussed with managers and union representatives at monthly meetings and are displayed on display screen monitors at Lamby Way and Millicent Street.

Compliments are fed back to individual staff members and are regularly discussed at team briefs.

A traffic light system is operated by the Business Support team at Lamby Way to ensure that complaints are responded to within the appropriate response timescales.

The **Regulatory & Supporting Services** section received **26** complaints in 2015/16, compared to 25 in 2014/15. There was no identifiable trend with regards to the complaints which covered a range of issues including noise pollution, private sector housing and trading standards. The number of complaints received is extremely small, given the range of customer facing services provided by the directorate.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

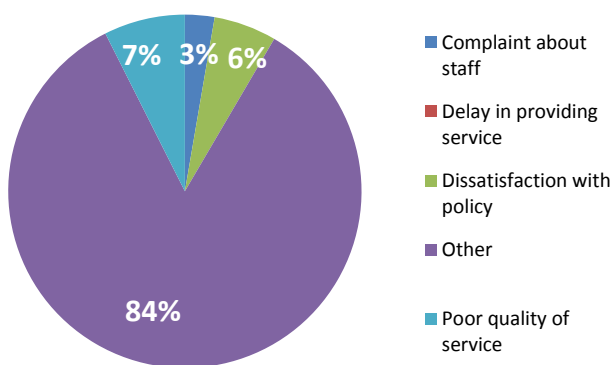
Culture, Venues & Events

Complaints for Culture, Venues & Events have remained consistent, increasing slightly from 293 in 2014/15 to **296** in 2015/16.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Culture, Venues & Events	296	293
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	296 (100%)	288 (98.3%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	296 (100%)	284 (96.9%)
Complaints about staff	8 (2.7%)	3 (1.02%)
Delay in service	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	17 (5.7%)	16 (5.5%)
Other	249 (84.1%)	255 (87%)
Poor quality of service	22 (7.4%)	19 (6.48%)

The Council's online services ensure that customers have a quick, convenient and cost free way to complain or comment on our services. This can also result in compliments and an impressive 367 compliments were recorded for this area. It is important to note that the majority of complaints for this service area can be classified as 'customer preference' rather than service failure.

Categories of Complaints for Culture, Venues & Events



Complaints for **Parks and Sports** have reduced from 71 in 2014/15 to **55** in 2015/16.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Parks and Sports	55	71
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	26 (47.2%)	68 (95.7%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	48 (87.3%)	54 (76.0%)
Complaints about staff	0 (0%)	1 (1.41%)
Delay in service	0 (0%)	5 (7.04%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	0 (0%)	2 (2.82%)
Other	55 (100%)	55 (77.46%)
Poor quality of service	0 (0%)	8 (11.27%)

Monthly complaint statistics for Parks and Sports continue to be monitored at Business and Operational Improvement Meetings. This allows managers to identify trends and, if necessary, take corrective action.

Compliments are also reported at bi-monthly Business and Operational Improvement Meetings.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Complaints for **Leisure and Play** have increased from 57 in 2014/15 to **108** in 2015/16.

The **Harbour Authority** received **4** complaints in 2015/16, which is an improvement on the previous year when the directorate received 6 complaints.

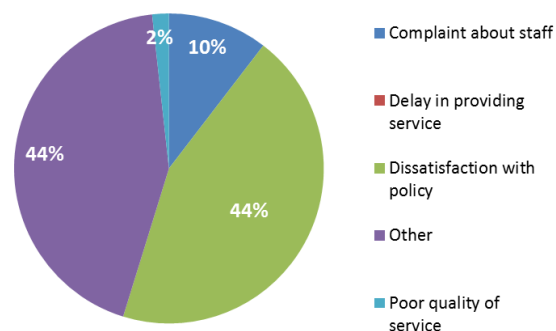
Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Leisure and Play	108	57
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	87 (80.6%)	41 (71.9%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	105 (97.2%)	54 (94.7%)
Complaints about staff	12 (10.4%)	5 (8.78%)
Delay in service	0 (0%)	1 (1.75%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	51 (44.3%)	3 (5.26%)
Other	50 (46.3%)	46 (80.70%)
Poor quality of service	2 (1.7%)	2 (3.51%)

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Harbour Authority	4	6
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	3 (75.0%)	6 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	4 (100%)	6 (100%)
Complaints about staff	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Delay in service	1 (25.0%)	0 (0%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other	1 (25.0%)	3 (50%)
Poor quality of service	2 (50.0%)	3 (50%)

Monthly complaint statistics for Leisure and Play are monitored at Business and Operational Improvement Meetings, which allows managers to identify trends and take corrective action where necessary. 21 compliments were received during the year.

All 4 complaints received were regarding litter that had accumulated on river banks.

Categories of Complaints for Leisure and Play



Learning from Complaints:

Following the complaints about litter within the Harbour Authority's jurisdiction, a benchmarking exercise was undertaken to establish the cleansing operations that similar organisations on comparable water bodies undertake in the UK (in particular Salford Quays, The Canal & Rivers Trust, Bristol Docks and Swansea Marina), to ascertain what the standard approach is. The result is that the Harbour Authority will clean to the highest possible standard within its resource capability and throughout its jurisdiction. It is encouraging to note that 6 compliments were received about litter clearance.

Learning from Complaints:

- ✓ Customers have complained about the use of swimming lanes in leisure centres by other users. As a result of these complaints, bilingual information flyers and notices have been produced and displayed at all pools.
- ✓ A complaint was received that the Welsh Language was treated less favourably than English on the social media sites for Western and Fairwater Leisure Centres. Officers are now working closely with Bilingual Cardiff to establish ways in which the service can ensure that it fully complies with the Welsh Language Standards in future.

The Harbour Authority was pleased to receive 37 compliments from customers for all sections of the organisation. These compliments were received from statutory bodies, local business and water users. Compliments were received across all areas of the Harbour Authority, with 22% received for the Flat Holm RSPB Big Wild Sleep Out, 19% regarding the CBWAC World Indoor Rowing Championship, 14% for the Barrage Tour and 16% for the service's work with regards to litter clearance.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Bereavement Services

There were **42** recorded complaints via questionnaires, emails and letters for this area in 2015/6 compared to 51 in 2014/5. Bereavement Services actively encourages the bereaved to contact them should they experience any issues with a grave or a service at the crematorium.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Bereavement Services	42	51
Number / Percentage of complaints not responded to on time	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Complaints are received by email, via C2C, in writing and also via Bereavement Services' reception area where service monitor forms are completed. All complaints are recorded on a database and dealt with as soon as possible. Service Provision Questionnaires are also sent to all those who use Bereavement and Registration Services which provides an additional avenue for people to advise us of any issues with the services they have received.

It is important to note that due to the high number of visitors to the service – with over 4,000 funeral services per annum, approximately 500,000 visitors to our sites, 9,000 registrations for births and deaths, and 1,500 marriages – the complaints are very minimal.

Bereavement and Registration Services is a 'right first time' service in which our customers, the bereaved, or those carrying out life changing events are our ultimate priority. Customer requests and comments via service monitor forms and questionnaires are scrutinised and service standards have been developed to inform the public. From these standards, monthly performance data is monitored to ensure that we are meeting our commitments to Cardiff's citizens. Annually our level of customer satisfaction averages 99%.

The complaints reported would equate to under 0.01% of all visitors to our sites. Visitors come to us, in the main, in quite a vulnerable state and at differing points in their grieving process. This can mean that small issues may become of increased importance to them and we actively encourage families to communicate with Bereavement

Services their needs via service monitor forms. These are then monitored via our monthly statistics and at operational meetings. Trends in service requirements are then considered at this point as well. Where an error has occurred we will also proactively apologise in writing to the family concerned to try and stop an issue escalating.

Due to the sensitive nature of the service, 100% of complaints received a full response within 5 working days.

An impressive 99 compliments were recorded via emails, questionnaires or letters and 65 further compliments recorded via our service monitor forms for works carried out in response to requests for services. 411 instances of requests for services such as families being taken to grave locations and grounds maintenance works were recorded.

Learning from complaints

We are dependent upon third parties to provide information and services to our service users. Where issues occur, Bereavement Services will respond to the complaint in the first instance and copy in the third party having discussed the incident with them. Any issues will then be discussed at stakeholder meetings to ensure that any issues are resolved.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Statutory Complaints - Social Services (Children's Services and Adult Services)

It is a statutory requirement under the following items of legislation for Local Authorities to have in place a Representations and Complaints Procedure for Social Services.

- Representation Procedure (Children) (Wales) Regulations 2014
- Social Services Complaint's Procedure (Wales) Regulations 2014

This is in line with the Model Concerns and Complaints Policy and Guidance and the NHS Complaints procedure Putting Things Right.

The following provides information about the operation of the Social Services Representation and Complaints Procedure between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016. The report contains information about the number and type of complaints received and also provides details of the activities undertaken by the Complaints Unit during that period.

Background

Complaints are treated as a vitally important part of the business of Social Services in the City of Cardiff Council and integrated into organisational learning in both Children's and Adult Services' functions.

In particular, complaints provide an opportunity to learn lessons where a service has fallen short of an expected standard. In such cases an action plan is developed in partnership with the service area, which is reviewed regularly to ensure improvements to services are made.

The Representation and Complaints Procedure is widely publicised and specifically to people who use our services. This provides people with an opportunity to:

- Voice their concerns when they are dissatisfied in order that the issue can be rectified to their satisfaction wherever possible.
- Make a complaint.
- Suggest improvement.
- Challenge decisions.

Cardiff's Advocacy Service supports all looked after children who make a complaint to ensure they are listened to and play an active role in their planning.

The aim of the City of Cardiff Council Social Services Complaints Procedure is to secure better outcomes for adults, children, young people and families using social care services and is underpinned by the following key principles:

- Commitment to providing quality services.
- Accessible and supportive to those with particular needs.
- Prompt and responsive with resolution at the earliest opportunity.
- Enabling individuals to be independent.
- Operated without prejudice or discrimination.
- Adheres to the principles of equal opportunity.
- Empowering the voice of individuals and augmenting that voice with advocacy wherever individuals want or need it.
- Good corporate parenting for looked after children.

Stage 1 – Informal Resolution 10 Day Timescale

Complainants should be offered a discussion to resolve their complaints within 10 days of receipt of the complaint. The majority of complaints are dealt with at this informal resolution stage and most are concluded without the need for a formal investigation.

Children and young people who make a complaint are all seen on an individual basis, normally with their advocate, within 48 hours of making their complaint. Where the child's personal circumstances allow, the Children's Services Complaints Officer meets them in person to support them through the process.

Stage 2 – Formal Considerations 25 Day Timescale

Where an initial investigation has not achieved a resolution, complainants have the right to make a formal complaint. In these circumstances, Social Services will commission an Independent Investigator and an Independent Person to undertake and oversee the complaint process. These investigations are subject to statutory response from the Council, detailing findings, conclusions, recommendations and actions to resolve the complaint.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Making a complaint

Making a complaint is not difficult and general advice about the procedure can be found in complaints leaflets and on the Council's website. Alternatively, service users can contact the Complaints Unit (or the Council's Connect to Cardiff service) for help and advice. There is a separate leaflet for children's complaints.

Translations of the Representations and Complaints Procedure can be provided on request and the Complaints Unit can also arrange interpretation services when required. Welsh Language complaints can be dealt with immediately.

Children who are looked after by the Local Authority are informed of the services of Tros Gynnal Advocacy Service. These children are therefore able to access this service if they need independent support and wish to make a complaint.

Children's Stage 1 Complaints

Children's Services received **135** complaints during 2015/16, a 44% decrease on the 195 complaints received during 2014/15. 20 complaints were received direct from children and young people (or an advocate) during the year compared with 26 in 2014/15.

The most common aspects of the services complained about were:

- Complaints about quality of care e.g. service delivery / missed calls.
- Case management and review e.g. unhappy with service provided by social worker and / or assessment outcome.
- Financial matters relating to Special Guardianship Orders.
- Issues relating to contact between looked after children and their families.

Children's Stage 2 Complaints

9 complaints proceeded to Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure compared with 12 in 2014/15.

Children's Stage 3 Complaints

There were 0 Stage 3 Review Panels compared with 1 in 2014/15.

Children's Services Complaints – yearly comparison

Year	Total complaints
2012/13	142
2013/14	150
2014/15	195
2015/16	135

Adult Services Complaints

Adult Services received **75** complaints during 2015/16, a 25% increase on the 60 complaints received during 2014/15.

There were 3 Stage 2 investigations in 2015/16 compared with 5 in 2014/15, and there were 0 Stage 3 Review Panels, compared with 1 in 2014/15. Stage 1 complaints were resolved effectively which means that only a small percentage of complaints (4%) proceeded to Stage 2.

The most common aspects of the services complained about were:

- Complaints about quality of care e.g. service delivery / missed calls.
- Case management and review e.g. unhappy with service provided by social worker and / or assessment outcome.
- Learning Disabilities services where college placements have not been funded.
- Time taken to undertake assessment and decision making process.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Adult Services	75	60
Stage 1 complaints	75	60
Stage 2 complaints	3	5
Stage 3 complaints	0	1

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation	260	370
Highway Maintenance	79	108
Planning (including Building Control)	15	19
Traffic & Transportation	166	243
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	211 (81.2%)	341 (92.2%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	201 (77.3%)	277 (74.9%)
Complaints about staff	12 (4.6%)	25 (6.8%)
Delay in providing service	30 (11.4%)	34 (9.2%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	49 (18.8%)	103 (27.8%)
Other	42 (16.1%)	47 (12.7%)
Poor quality of service	127 (48.8%)	161 (43.5%)

Highway Maintenance

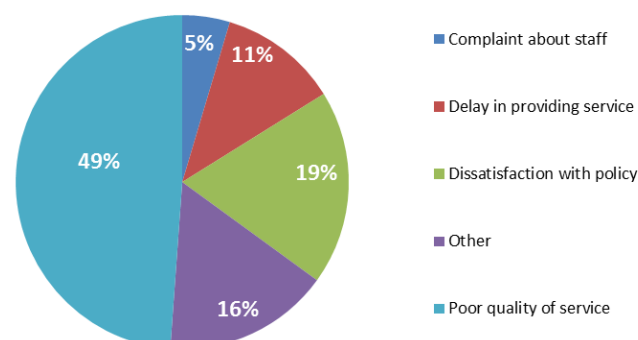
Highway Maintenance received **79** complaints for 2015/16. This is a decrease of 29 on the previous year where 108 complaints were recorded.

The highest number of complaints received was again related to potholes and paving. The number of complaints has stayed relatively consistent, with 21 complaints received compared with 18 for the previous year.

The second highest category related to highway drainage complaints, although only 8 complaints were received compared with 15 complaints the year before. Due to an internal restructuring of the team, this has resulted in improved response times.

The third highest category was carriageway reconstruction. Whereas the past 2 years have seen 12 and 13 complaints respectively, this year has seen a significant drop in complaints with only 7 complaints being received. This can be attributed to the greater communication and publicity that is now undertaken with residents and the general public to inform them of a scheme's implementation.

Categories of Complaints for Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation



Traffic & Transportation

Traffic & Transportation (including what was Network Management) received **166** complaints for 2015/16, which is a decrease of 77 from the total (243) for 2014/15.

The highest number of complaints again related to the Resident Parking Scheme, but it should be noted that the number of complaints had nearly halved from the previous year (complaints dropped from 59 to 32). This can be attributed mainly to the restructuring of the visitor parking permit cost and the introduction of an on-line parking permit application process.

Civil Parking Enforcement saw a slight decrease in complaints, with 20 complaints received compared to 21 the previous year. It should also be noted that the number of complaints against Civil Enforcement Officers has halved from 11 to 5.

Road Safety Scheme complaints fell significantly for 2015/16, with only 8 complaints received compared to 24 for the year before. As with the improvement in carriageway reconstruction complaints, this can be attributed to improved notification for residents and the general public.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Planning (including Building Control)

The **Planning Service** received **15** complaints in total for 2015/16. This is a decrease of 4 on the previous year where 19 complaints were recorded. These complaints covered a range of issues relating to planning applications, the planning consultation process, planning decisions and compliance with Building Regulations. This figure is small considering that Development Management determines approximately 3,000 planning applications per year. Many of these applications will require negotiating with multiple parties to discuss contentious issues and securing decisions using either Delegated Powers or by reporting through the Planning Committee. Planners also investigated approximately 550 Enforcement Cases where planning permission had not been granted, developments had not complied with permissions granted, and unauthorised and alleged unauthorised developments had been undertaken.

For 2015/16, 129 compliments have been received for **Strategic Planning, Highways, Traffic & Transportation** as a whole, which although disappointing compared to the previous year, should not detract from the improvements that have been made with complaint numbers for 2015/16.

Monthly complaints statistics for City Operations are monitored at Departmental Management Team Meetings (DMTs) and this allows managers to identify any trends and take any necessary corrective action.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Resources

There has been a decrease in the total number of complaints received by **Finance** from 164 in 2014/15 to **109** in 2015/16.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Finance	109	164
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	90 (82.6%)	129 (78.7%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	68 (62.4%)	114 (69.5%)
Complaints about staff	18 (16.5%)	7 (4.3%)
Delay in providing service	7 (6.4%)	5 (3.0%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	10 (9.3%)	8 (4.9%)
Other	6 (5.5%)	0 (0%)
Poor quality of service	68 (62.4%)	144 (87.9%)

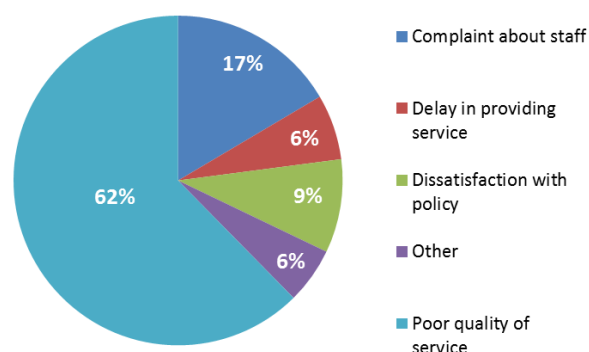
The percentage of complaints considered justified is slightly lower at 15.5% compared to 17% in the previous year. Upheld complaints are further considered by the relevant manager to determine any action that can be taken to minimise similar complaints in future.

As in previous years, the majority of complaints received related to the collection of unpaid Council Tax charges and queries over liability and exemptions.

The Directorate is continuing to take a robust stance in pursuing Council Tax debtors and takes appropriate legal action to obtain Liability Orders and seek prompt payment. As part of this process, the Council continues to use external bailiffs to complement the work of the in-house team. This does lead to some complaints about the recovery action taken. However, in most instances these complaints were considered unjustified when they were investigated, as the complainants were in arrears and were objecting to being pursued over the unpaid bills.

The collection of as much Council Tax income as possible is particularly important in the current economic climate and it should be noted that the approach outlined has resulted in an increase in the percentage of Council Tax collected to 97.28% in 2015/16. This is the highest percentage collected since Council Tax was introduced.

Categories of Complaints for Finance



HR People Services

There were **0** complaints about HR People Services in 2015/16 which is a positive result considering the challenges facing HR and the Council.

HR People Services continues to review its processes on a regular basis, which is based on comments from complaints, customer feedback and our own staff. With reduced resources, HR will develop ways for managers to access HR information via updated Intranet pages and FAQs, together with streamlining processes to enable quicker processing and better accuracy. With the challenges facing HR and the Council we will continually monitor any complaints, feedback and compliments to improve service delivery.

Communications & Media are responsible for Corporate Communication, including the production and distribution of the Capital Times newspaper. There were **0** complaints during 2015/16. Considering the level of coverage, this is a positive result.

There were **0** complaints for **Improvement & Information** in 2015/16. Complaints about the Freedom of Information process and Data Protection issues are not subject to our Complaints procedure or the Ombudsman.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

During 2015/16 **Economic Development** received **37** complaints which comprised 3 for City Centre Management, 6 for Strategic Estates and 28 for Venues and Tourism (this includes Cardiff Castle, the Events team, Cardiff Caravan Park and the Norwegian Church). Projects Design and Development received 0 complaints.

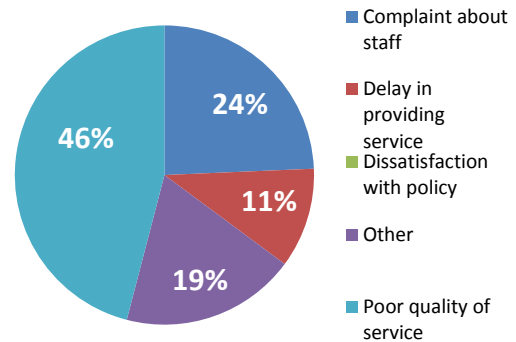
The breakdown for these complaints is as follows:

- Complaint about staff: 9
- Delay in providing service: 4
- Dissatisfaction with policy: 0
- Other – noise pollution/events held in Cardiff Arms Park: 6; anti-abortion protests on St Mary's St: 1
- Poor quality of service: 17

When considering the number of high profile projects and the amount of regeneration activity across the city, this is a very encouraging result.

Service Area	Total complaints in 2015/16	Total complaints in 2014/15
Economic Development	37	11
Number / Percentage of acknowledgments sent within 5 working days	37 (100%)	11 (100%)
Number / Percentage of responses sent within 20 working days	37 (100%)	11 (100%)
Complaints about staff	9 (24.3%)	1 (9.1%)
Delay in service	4 (10.8%)	3 (27.3%)
Dissatisfaction with policy	0 (0%)	1 (9.1%)
Other	7 (18.9%)	5 (45.5%)
Poor quality of service	17 (45.9%)	1 (9.1%)

Categories of Complaints for Economic Development



Economic Development received a total of 37 compliments during 2015/16.

Learning from complaints

- ✓ A complainants' bike was stolen whilst they were staying at Cardiff Caravan Park. The warden of the caravan park subsequently installed new security cameras on site and has been working with Facilities Management to enable better security on site.
- ✓ A complaint was made with regards to the menu changes at the Norwegian Church. The complainant was upset as they are a regular visitor to the church and their favourite dishes had disappeared from the menu. On consideration of the complaint, the Conference & Events Co-ordinator at the church decided to keep the popular staple dishes on the menu and update the menu around these.

There were **3** complaints for **Governance & Legal Services** in 2015/16 compared to 20 the previous year. Two of the complaints related to Electoral Services and 1 related to the Schools Appeal Process. There were no identifiable trends from the complaints.

City of Cardiff Council Annual Complaints Report 2015-16

Welsh Language Complaints

In accordance with Corporate Standards, we monitor the number of complaints in relation to the operation of the Welsh Language Scheme. All public services have a legal obligation to provide their services through the medium of Welsh. In 2015/16, the Council received **28** complaints about Welsh Language issues compared to 24 in 2014/15 and 11 in 2013/14.

This increase may be as a result of a greater public awareness of the importance of Welsh and English being treated on an equal basis. The Welsh Language Commissioner published Welsh Language Standards covering this issue during 2016/17. These are a set of legally binding requirements and Cardiff Council records its compliance with the Standards. Any complaints received regarding Cardiff Council's failure to treat Welsh and English on an equal basis are dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints procedure and also communicated with Cardiff's dedicated Welsh language team 'Bilingual Cardiff'. The Welsh Language Standards also require the Council to produce an annual report which deals with the way it has complied with the service delivery standards and complaints are featured within this report.

The Corporate Complaints policy has been well publicised and all directorates are required to complete a Welsh Language Scheme Monitoring Form each quarter in order to report complaints relating to the Scheme.

Learning from complaints

Bilingual Cardiff has taken a proactive approach to helping departments comply with the new regulation Welsh Language Standards.

The majority of complaints received were as a result of Council correspondence being issued in English only. Whenever this occurs, the forms in question are immediately sent to Bilingual Cardiff to be reviewed and revised. The department can then be reminded of their responsibilities under the Welsh Language Standard.

A further common concern has been the lack of an equal service in Welsh and English for frontline staff of Council venues. Measures have been put in place to combat this, with an action for all managers to assess their team's capacity to deliver bilingual services incorporated into every Directorate business plan since April 2015. As part of the assessment, all frontline staff are offered corporately funded Welsh language lessons as a matter of course, with managers eager to upskill the current workforce in order to meet these requirements in the first instance.

Bilingual Cardiff has created a series of corporate guidelines in order to assist staff in complying with the new Standards and continue to publish the monthly Welsh language brief for all Council staff (distributed via the Welsh Language Coordinators) to update on developments within the Welsh language agenda or any complaints received against the Welsh Language Scheme/ Standards.

The Council has also advertised more Welsh essential posts than in any previous year – 52, plus a further 136 posts where Welsh was a desirable requirement.



corp.compteam@cardiff.gov.uk

