

Bolsover District Council

Customer Services Scrutiny Committee

13th September 2021

**Customer Service Standards/ Compliments, Comments and Complaints
Report 2020/21**

1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021 and Annual Summary

Report of the Head of Corporate Governance

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Head of Corporate Governance

Contact Officer: Customer Standards and Complaints Officer

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To provide information on the Council's performance in relation to its customer service standards.
 - To provide information on the effective management of complaints and customer requests which is central to excellent customer service and the Council can use to improve its services.
 - To provide information on the number of compliments, comments and complaints for the period 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021
 - To provide an Annual Summary on the above.
 - To make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to its Customer Service Standards and the effective management of complaints.
-

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Approved by the Portfolio Holder – Councillor D McGregor

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

Whilst there are no direct financial implications with regard to the report, the Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman if complaints are not handled well. In cases of maladministration, financial penalties can be imposed by the Local Government Ombudsman or the Housing Ombudsman.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

The Council is at risk of recommendations or decisions by the Local Government Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman and, in the case of complaints about Freedom of Information, Data Protection and Environmental Information requests, the Information Commissioner's Office can issue decision notices and impose significant fines. There are no Data Protection implications.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

Not applicable as the report is to keep Elected Members informed.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<p>District Wards Significantly Affected</p>	All
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet / Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SAMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	Yes Details:

<p>Links to Council Ambition (BDC)/Council Plan (NED) priorities or Policy Framework including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.</p>
<p>Increasing customer satisfaction with our services Improving customer contact and removing barriers to accessing information Actively engaging with partners to benefit our customers Promoting equality and diversity and supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people</p>

REPORT DETAILS

1 **Background** *(reasons for bringing the report)*

The purpose of this report is to make Elected Members aware of performance in relation to its Customer Service Standards and the effective management of complaints.

1.1 Customer Service Standards

Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the key customer service standards by quarterly period, together with the target and the cumulative performance for each standard.

Telephones

Target - 93% to be answered within 20 seconds

Appendix 2 shows the performance between 1st October 2020 and 31st March 2021 by quarterly period. The report identifies 99% (in both Q3 and Q4) of incoming calls are being answered corporately within 20 seconds cumulatively. All departments achieved and exceeded the corporate target of 93%, except the Leader's Executive Team where only three calls were answered out of time, and because the total number of calls received was small, achieved 75% in Q3.

Cumulatively performance is 99% over 2020/21.

Contact Centres

Target - 80% of incoming calls to be answered within 20 seconds

Contact Centres achieved 94% and 99% for quarters 3 & 4 respectively (96.5% cumulatively).

Cumulatively performance is 97% over 2020/21 which exceeds the target of 80%.

Revenues & Benefits

Target - 60% of incoming calls to be answered within 20 seconds

Revenues & Benefits 'direct dial' achieved 79% and 78% for quarters 3 & 4 respectively (78.5% cumulatively).

Cumulatively performance is 76% over 2020/21, which exceeds the target of 60%.

E-mails

Target 1 - 100% to be acknowledged within 1 working day

Target 2 - 100% to be replied to within 8 working days

For this reporting period, 1st October 2020 to 31st March 2021:

- 8,510 email enquiries (3,356 in Q3 and 5,154 in Q4) from the public were received through enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk
- All were acknowledged within one working day
- 99% were replied to in full within 8 working days.

There were more e-mails compared to the same period (6,488) in 2020/21 and this remains a popular method of contact, particularly because other contact channels were not available for some of the period of monitoring (e.g. face to face and webchat).

Face to face monitoring

Target – 99% not kept waiting longer than 20 minutes at a Contact Centre

No monitoring undertaken due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic arrangements.

1.2 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Compliments

Appendix 3 (A) shows the number of written compliments received for the period by department. In total 105 written compliments were received. Compliments were received from customers who appreciated excellent service.

Comments

Appendix 3 (B) shows the number of written comments received for the period. 100% (all 39) were acknowledged and passed to the respective department within the target time of 3 working days, for consideration when reviewing their service.

Complaints

Frontline resolution (stage one)

Appendix 3 (C) shows the number of Frontline Resolution complaints received by the Contact Centre service and recorded on the Customer Information System (Firmstep) by department. The customer service standard for responding to these complaints is 3 working days.

Formal Investigation (stage two)

Appendix 3 (D) shows the number of Formal Investigation complaints by department. 123 complaints were received during this period, 97% of which were responded to

within our customer service standard of 15 working days. Covid-19 restrictions did have an impact on performance during the earlier part of 2020/21 where staff were either unavailable due to sickness or redeployed to other duties. However, this appears to have improved.

As some complaints cross cut departments, the number does not correspond with the total above when viewed in this way.

Internal Review (stage three)

Appendix 3 (E) shows the number of stage three complaints received for the period by department. These are complainants who have already made a stage two complaint and still feel dissatisfied. During this period 17 stage three complaints were received, all of which were responded to within the standard of 20 working days.

Ombudsman

Appendix 3 (F) shows the status of Ombudsman complaints for 2020/21 as at 19th August 2021. During this reporting period three cases were received. One decision was received of the 'Ombudsman cannot investigate this complaint. This is because the complainant has already appealed to the Planning Inspector', with the remainder awaiting a decision.

Summary for 2020/21

The following tables provide a summary of performance for compliments, comments and complaints for 2019/20, with comparative data from previous years.

Volume and Performance

Volume by type	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total	2018/19 Total	2017/18 Total
Compliments	228	273	258	266
Comments	97	55	69	58
M.P. enquiries	28	Data not recorded for these periods		
Formal Investigation Complaints (S2)	175	208	193	179
Internal Review Complaints (S3)	35	41	33	46
Total	563	577	553	549
Stage 1 Complaints	217	205	252	213
% Comments acknowledged within standard (target 3 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Stage 2 responded to within standard (target 97%)	94%	96%	99%	98%
Average response in days (target 15 working days)	10	13	11	10
% Stage 3 responded to within standard (target 100%)	94%	88%	97%	98%
Average response in days	16	19	16	14

When comparing 2020/21 to the previous year of 2019/20, the following is noted:

- There were slightly fewer written compliments
- We have received more comments
- We have received slightly more frontline resolution complaints
- Received a similar amount of formal investigation complaints/ M.P. enquiries
- Received slightly fewer internal review complaints

The above would appear to indicate that the Council has an easy to access complaints system, as recommended by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service.

A separate report is submitted for Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman and the Housing Ombudsman Service complaints.

Complaints Feedback

Whilst there were no real trends leading to service improvements during this financial year we have identified some issues around the contracted out services, which have been implemented.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 None – to keep Elected Members informed.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 To note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

4.1 None.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
Appendix:	
1	Customer Service Standards monitoring
2	Telephony performance
3	Compliments, Comments and Complaints: A. Compliments by department 1/10/20 – 31/3/21 B. Comments by department 1/10/20 – 31/3/21 C. Frontline resolution complaints by department 1/10/20 – 31/3/21 D. Formal Investigation complaints by department 1/10/20 – 31/3/21 E. Internal Review complaints by department 1/10/20 – 31/3/21 F. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2020/21
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	