

Bolsover District Council

Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 10th October 2022

**Customer Service Standards/ Compliments, Comments and Complaints
Report 2021/22**

1st October 2021 to 31st March 2022 and Annual Summary

**Report of the Assistant Director of Housing Management, Enforcement and
Customer Services**

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Victoria Dawson Assistant Director of Housing Management, Enforcement and Customer Services Telephone: 01246 242231 Email: Victoria.dawson@bolsover.gov.uk
Contact Officer(s)	Lesley Botham Customer Service Manager Telephone: 01246 242230 Email: Lesley.botham@bolsover.gov.uk Liz Robinson Customer Standards & Complaints Officer Telephone: 01246 242355 E-mail: liz.robinson@bolsover.gov.uk

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 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 2021 to 31st March 2022
 - 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.
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REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 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.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 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 2021 and 31st March 2022 by quarterly period. The report identifies Quarter 3 91% and Quarter 4 88% of incoming calls are being answered corporately within 20 seconds cumulatively. The majority of departments achieved and exceeded the corporate target of 93%, except the Revenues and Benefits and Housing/Community Safety in Quarter 3 and 4, and Planning in Quarter 4.

Cumulatively performance is 91% over 2021/22 which is just below target of 93%.

Contact Centres

Target - 75% of incoming calls to be answered within 20 seconds

Contact Centres achieved 75% and 60% for quarters 3 & 4 respectively

Cumulatively performance is 69% over 2021/22 which is below the target of 75%.

The slight slippage was due to staff resources being below the minimum required.

Revenues & Benefits

Target – Revenues 65% of incoming calls to be answered within 20 seconds

Revenues 'direct dial' achieved 85% and 80% for quarters 3 & 4 respectively

Cumulatively performance is 81% over 2021/22, which exceeds the target of 65%.

Target – Benefits 78% of incoming calls to be answered within 20 seconds

Benefits 'direct dial' achieved 94% and 92% for quarters 3 & 4 respectively

Cumulatively performance is 92% over 2021/22, which exceeds the target of 78%.

During March we issued the new Council Tax and Business Rates bills and also the up-rated Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction letters so that generated a large number of calls

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 2021 to 31st March 2022:

- 5290 and 8054 email enquiries (in Q3 and 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 (10,811) in 2020/21 and this remains a popular method of contact.

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. To consider if to re commence as a performance indicator for 2022/23.

2.2 Compliments, Comments and Complaints

Compliments

Appendix 3 (A) shows the number of written compliments received for the period by department. In total **59** 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 10**) 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 **102** complaints were recorded on the Customer

Information System. 93% of which were responded to within our customer standard of 3 working days.

Formal Investigation (stage two)

Appendix 3 (D,E,F) shows the number of Formal Investigation complaints and M.P. enquiries received by department, **107** complaints were received during this period, 84% of which were responded to within our customer service standard of 15 working days.

The flexible retirement of the Customer Standards and Complaints Officer has had an impact on the response times during this quarter.

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 (G) 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 **12** stage three complaints were received, all of which were responded to within the standard of 20 working days.

Ombudsman

Appendix 3 (H) shows the status of Ombudsman complaints for 2021/22 as at 31st March 2022. During this reporting period **7** cases were received and there was **7** decisions made.

Summary for 2021/22

The following tables provide a summary of performance for compliments, comments and complaints for 2021/2022, with comparative data from previous years.

Volume and Performance

Volume by type	2021/22 Total	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total	2018/19 Total
Compliments	187	228	273	258
Comments	23	97	55	69
M.P. enquiries	126	28		
Stage 1 Complaints (S1)	447	217	205	252
Formal Investigation Complaints (S2)	117	175	208	193
Internal Review (S3)	39	35	41	33
Total	938	780	782	805

Volume by type	2021/22 Total	2020/21 Total	2019/20 Total	2018/19 Total
% Comments acknowledged within standard (target 3 working days)	100%	100%	100%	100%
% Stage 2 responded to within standard (target 97%)	91%	94%	96%	99%
Average response in days (target 15 working days)	11	10	13	11
% Stage 3 responded to within standard (target 100%)	82%	94%	88%	97%
Average response in days (target 20 working days)	16	16	19	16

When comparing 2021/22 to the previous year of 2020/21, the following is noted:

- There were slightly fewer written compliments
- We have received less comments
- We have received an increase in frontline resolution complaints
- Received less formal investigations complaints and more M.P. enquiries
- Received slightly higher 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.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 To note the overall performance on Customer Service Standards and Compliments, Comments and Complaints as per the Committee's Terms of Reference.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 None

RECOMMENDATION

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

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: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i>	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i>	No

District Wards Significantly Affected	All
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details:

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.
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

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1.	Customer Service Standards monitoring
2.	Telephony performance
3.	Compliments, Comments and Complaints: A. Compliments by department 1/10/21 – 31/3/22 B. Comments by department 1/10/21 – 31/3/22 C. Frontline resolution complaints by department 1/10/21 – 31/3/22 D. Formal Investigation complaints (direct) 1/10/21 – 31/3/22 E. M.P Enquiries 1/10/21 – 31/03/22 F. Formal Investigation (complex) complaints 01/10/21 – 31/03/22 G. Internal Review complaints by department 1/10/21 – 31/3/22 H. Ombudsman complaints summary for 2021/22

Background Papers
None