

Annual Report 2014/15 - Customer Complaints & Compliments

Introduction

Complaints are monitored via our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) making them easier to track and follow up. Because the CRM system is fully scripted it enables contact centre staff to record complaints and the system then automatically issues acknowledgement letters. Emails, letters and complaints received using our comments form, are also logged onto the system. We aim to respond to first stage complaints within 10 working days and second stage complaints within 15 working days and over 77% of complaints this year were answered within this target time. In some instances it does take longer than 10 or 15 working days to respond, if further evidence has to be obtained and where this is the case, the customers are contacted so they are aware that there would be a delay in responding. The system automatically issues emails to the relevant officers and also follow up emails, to ensure that response times are adhered to.

Complaints

During the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 a total of 86 complaints were received and dealt with under the corporate complaints scheme. This shows an increase from 2013/14, when we recorded 55 corporate complaints. The complaints were split as follows:

People & Places	55
Resources	31

The borough of Wyre has approximately 110,000 residents and this therefore constitutes 0.08% of our customer base.

Nineteen complaints, (21.8%), were advanced to the second stage of the complaints procedure during 2014/15. This second stage allows customers who were not satisfied with the initial response they received, to request a further investigation, by a senior officer from another service area. If the customer's complaint has been investigated under both stages 1 and 2 and they still feel that the complaint has not been satisfactorily resolved, they can pursue it with the Local Government Ombudsman.

Common Themes

There are yet again no apparent common themes running through the complaints, as has also been the case in previous years. Customers will always complain if they are unhappy with the collection of their rubbish or the recovery of a debt. However in some instances it can give a warning of a service that may have a problem or not be performing at the level that is expected.

Compliments

A total of 205 compliments were received from customers during the year.

These were split as follows:

People & Places	156
Resources	49

So What Are We Going To Do Differently?

We are committed to providing the best customer service we can even in difficult times. Complaints are dealt with by individual departments and any lessons learned can then be implemented by the department.

We take comments, complaints and compliments by telephone, letter, email, text and also by speaking to a member of staff, to ensure that the process of making complaints and compliments is as easy as possible for customers.

We are always looking at ways to improve our service to residents and welcome customer feedback to help with improving our services.

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Complaints/Compliments

Quarter 1, 2015/16 – 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015

Directorate	Number
People & Places	12
Resources	8
Total	20

People and Places Directorate received 12 complaints this quarter, 10 dealt with at the first stage of the complaints procedure and 2 at the second stage.

Planning received 3 complaints from customers unhappy with planning applications, a complaint in respect of the handling of an event at Marine Hall, a resident who was unhappy that paving flags behind her property had been damaged and a resident of a property near Jubilee Gardens who was concerned about disruption caused by events being held on the Gardens.

In addition there were complaints about a fixed penalty noticed issued to a dog owner, an issue with noise nuisance from a barking dog, a customer who was concerned about a kennels business in her area and a customer who had been refused a larger grey waste bin as she did not fit the criteria for the issue of a larger bin.

Two complaints were escalated to second stage, one concerning a planning application for a neighbouring extension, the first stage complaint having been dealt with in quarter 4 of 2014/15 and the second concerning the dog noise nuisance.

Resources Directorate received 8 complaints this quarter, 7 at the first stage and one that was escalated to the second stage.

Three complaints concerned council tax accounts that had been passed to enforcement officers for recovery. The other complaints included a complaint received after a customer visited the mobile advice centre, an error on a council tax bill, a customer who was unhappy after telephoning our contact centre and an issue with an attachment of earnings letter that had been sent to the wrong employer.

The complaint escalated to second stage was in relation to an error on a council tax bill.

Shown below is a summary of the number of recorded compliments received during the same period.

Directorate	Number
People and Places	40
Resources	20
Total	60

Customers contacted us to show their appreciation for the efficient, helpful, professional and courteous service they received from staff in all departments of the council.

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Complaints/Compliments

Quarter 2, 2015/16 – 1 July 2015 to 30 September 2015

Directorate	Number
People & Places	14
Resources	10
Total	24

People and Places Directorate received 14 complaints this quarter, 10 dealt with at the first stage of the complaints procedure and 4 at the second stage.

Planning received 4 complaints concerning an extension to a neighbouring house, a resident who was unhappy with a planning application, the handling of a planning enforcement issue and complaint about the local plan. The other complaints included a neighbour dispute, a customer who was unhappy with the way that the boat berths at Stanah were allocated and a customer who believed that there had been problems with his wedding booking at the Marine Hall. In addition there were 2 complaints from residents who had not been allowed a second grey bin as they did not meet the appropriate criteria and finally a resident who had received a letter about side waste left by his grey bin. He was unhappy as the “waste” was a charity bag that had been left out for collection by the charitable organisation.

Four complaints were dealt with at the second stage of the council’s complaints procedure. These included the neighbour dispute, one of the complaints concerning the non-issue of a second grey bin, the complaint concerning the local plan issue and also a complaint regarding planning consent that was dealt with at first stage of the complaints procedure in quarter one.

Resources Directorate received 10 complaints during this quarter, 9 dealt with at the first stage of the council’s complaints procedure and one at the second stage.

Three complaints were in relation to summonses that had been issued for council tax accounts, in the main customers being unhappy about costs being applied, one where a resident had been issued with a council tax bill going back some months as we hadn’t been informed he had moved, one concerning the behaviour of enforcement agents in recovering a council tax debt and one about an issue with the recovery of a Housing Benefit overpayment as the customer did not agree with the procedure, with regard to the correspondence she had received.

Further complaints included an issue with a visit to a benefit customer where an investigation was being carried out, an issue with a nomination for the local

elections, and one from a relative of a customer who was unhappy with the care and repair service.

One complaint was dealt with at the second stage. The complaint was in relation to contact that a resident had with a council officer over the setting up of computers in an area of the borough for the use of older residents.

The majority of the complaints were dealt with within the time limits stipulated in our complaints procedure, however where there was going to be a delay in the response, all complainants were contacted to keep them informed.

Compliments Q2 2015/16:

Shown below is a summary of the number of recorded compliments received during the same period.

Directorate	Number
People and Places	37
Resources	13
Total	50

Customers contacted us to show their appreciation for the efficient, professional and courteous service they received from staff in all departments of the council. In some instances individuals were named as having gone the extra mile in carrying out their duties and others were complimenting departments as a whole on the service that had been received.

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Corporate Complaints Quarter 1, 2015/2016

Date Received	Date Responded	Area	Directorate	Notes
01/04/2015	21/04/2015	Pilling	People & Places	Complaint regarding a dog kennels and concerns over the way it was being run.
05/05/2015	29/05/2015	Hambleton	People & Places	Concerns over dog noise from an adjacent property.
13/05/2015	19/06/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Damage reported to paving flags behind a property caused by lorries at Marsh Mill during the ongoing renovations.
19/05/2015	05/06/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Fixed penalty notice issued for allowing a dog on the beach when restrictions were in place.
20/05/2015	27/05/2015	Out of Area	People & Places	Event held at the Marine Hall by the scouts, where they felt that service they received was not what they expected.
21/05/2015	15/06/2015	Forton	People & Places	Planning application where the complainant felt they had been misled over the details of the application.
21/05/2015	27/05/2015	Cloughton on Brock	People & Places	Customer who believed that planning enforcement had given out his details when he objected to a breach of planning in his area.
28/05/2015	10/06/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Complaint about the way the planning application for a development in Thornton had been handled.
30/06/2015	01/07/2015	Fleetwood	People & Places	Customer who had been refused a larger grey bin as she did not satisfy the criteria.
18/05/2015	29/05/2015	Poulton le Fylde	People & Places - Second stage	First stage complaint dealt with in quarter 4 of 2014/15, regarding an objection to a neighbour's extension.
04/06/2015	24/06/2015	Hambleton	People & Places - Second stage	Problem with the handling of an issue with barking dogs at neighbour's property.
02/06/2015	03/06/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Resident unhappy with events being held on Jubilee Gardens
21/04/2015	22/04/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Council Tax debt passed to enforcement agents, complainant was not happy with the process.
24/04/2015	30/04/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Customer who visited the mobile advice centre and was unhappy with the service she received.
24/04/2015	13/05/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Enforcement agents involved in the collection of a council tax debt that the customer believed should have followed different procedure.
01/05/2015	07/05/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Error made on a council tax account when the customer's account was ended incorrectly and a refund made.
14/05/2015	19/05/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	Resources	Complaint regarding the way a telephone call was handled by the contact centre.
18/05/2015	19/05/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	Resources	Enforcement agents being used to collect a council tax debt.
27/05/2015	28/05/2015	Poulton le Fylde	Resources	Attachment of earnings letter sent to the wrong employer when recovering a council tax debt.
12/05/2015	22/05/2015	Fleetwood	Resources - Second stage	Council Tax account ended in error and a refund made. The customer then received a further bill with increased installments.

Corporate Complaints Quarter 2, 2015/16

Date Received	Date Responded	Area	Directorate	Notes
29/06/2015	02/07/2015	Cloughton	People & Places	Complaint regarding the glazing on an extension to a neighbouring property.
13/07/2015	14/07/2015	Poulton le Fylde	People & Places	Objection to a planning application. The resident had been into the Civic Centre and had been told they needed an appointment to look at plans and discuss with a planning officer. This had not been included in the letter they had received.
09/07/2015	15/07/2015	Out of area	People & Places	Wedding at the Marine Hall where the caterers were not allowed onto the premises as they did not have any health and hygiene certification. The council had been asking for the correct documentation for some time.
20/07/2015	07/08/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Planning application and local plan issue with regard to a site in Thornton.
28/07/2015	07/08/2015	Catterall	People & Places	Complainant unhappy with the way his planning enforcement issue was being handled.
27/07/2015	31/07/2015	Fleetwood	People & Places	Resident who had sub let a berth at Stanah and wanted to be allowed to continue using it although they were not the licence holder.
14/08/2015	17/08/2015	Fleetwood	People & Places	Neighbour dispute - resident felt they were not being treated the same way as their neighbour.
25/08/2015	25/08/2015	Fleetwood	People & Places	Complaint regarding the refusal to issue a second grey bin as the resident did not fit the criteria.
11/09/2015	15/09/2015	Poulton le Fylde	People & Places	Complaint from a resident had been refused a second grey bin as they did not fit the criteria.
30/09/2015	02/10/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places	Complainant received a letter regarding a bag left by his grey bin that had been identified as side waste and would not be collected. The bag had been left out for a charity collection.
28/07/2015	31/07/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	People & Places - Second stage	Local Plan complaint with regard to a site in Thornton.
03/09/2015	06/10/2015	Fleetwood	People & Places - Second stage	Neighbour dispute - unhappy with the first stage response wanted a further investigation.
16/09/2015	23/09/2015	Poulton le Fylde	People & Places - Second stage	Resident who could not be given a second grey bin but as they had two young children had been offered collection of nappies if they were left in sacks. However they now wanted a container to store the sacks in.
23/09/2015	27/10/2015	Forton	People & Places - Second stage	Complaint regarding a planning application in Forton and the explanations that had been given to the first complaint.
13/07/2015	14/07/2015	Upper Rawcliffe	Resources	Dispute over summons costs on a Council Tax account although the complainant had not made payments as asked for and they were made late.
08/07/2015	13/07/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Complaint regarding a large council tax bill received by a resident. This was as a result of the council not having been notified that he had moved into the address at the time. Also enforcement agents were chasing an earlier debt.
14/07/2015	13/07/2015	Thornton Cleveleys	Resources	Complaint in respect of summons costs on a Council Tax account that the complainant considered to be incorrect.
21/07/2015	22/07/2015	Bilsborrow	Resources	Complaint regarding a visit by a benefit officer who was making investigations into a claim.
27/08/2015	28/07/2015	Fleetwood	Resources	Landlord who had received a reminder for payment of a Housing Benefit overpayment and was unhappy with the wording of the reminder letter.
07/08/2015	06/10/2015	Preesall	Resources	Complaint regarding a nomination for the local elections.
19/08/2015	21/08/2015	Out of area	Resources	A visit by Care and Repair staff to a customer that a relative then made a complaint about.
27/08/2015	still ongoing	Preesall	Resources	Complaint regarding the conduct of enforcement agents when visiting a property in relation to collection of a Council Tax debt.
21/09/2015	25/09/2015	Poulton le Fylde	Resources	Summons issued on a Council Tax account that the complainant was disputing as the debt was back to 2010. This was as a result of a recalculation of benefit in 2015 due to a change in income in 2010 that the customer had not informed the council of.
07/08/2015	11/08/2015	Knott End on Sea	Resources Second stage	Complaint from a resident concerning a council officer and the contacts they had over setting up computers for training for older residents on internet banking.