

Economy & Environment Directorate - Appendix 2

Number of complaints by Stage Type, Service, and Targets Met

Table showing summary of complaints by stage type reference

Stage Type	Count	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Stage 1	72	64	88.9
Stage 2	9	8	88.9
Escalated Stage 1 to 2	12	12	100
Totals	93	84	90.3

Table showing how the complaints were received

By source	Count Stage 1	Count Stage 2	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2
Contact Centre	4	1	0
Email	44	8	11
Letter	1	0	1
On-line	21	0	0
Other	2	0	0
Telephone	0	0	0
Totals	72	9	12

Tables showing summary of complaints by service, for each stage type

Service	Count Stage 1	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	51	45	88.2
Infrastructure	13	12	92.3
Property	0	0	-
Public Protection	4	4	100
Regeneration & Planning	2	1	50.0
Other - Combined	2	2	100
Totals	72	64	88.9

Service	Count Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	1	0	0
Infrastructure	4	4	100
Property	0	0	-
Public Protection	1	1	100
Regeneration & Planning	3	3	100
Other - Combined	0	0	-
Totals	9	8	88.9

Service	Count Escalated Stage 1 to Stage 2	Count Completed in Target Times	Percentage Completed in Target Times
Community & Leisure	7	7	100
Infrastructure	4	4	100
Property	0	0	-
Public Protection	0	0	-
Regeneration & Planning	1	1	100
Other - Combined	0	0	-
Totals	12	12	100

More detailed information on the above corporate complaints data, is currently maintained, by the Directors' Secretary on a dedicated database.

There were various reasons identified with regards to response times not being met. Some examples are listed below:

- Insufficient staff to undertake necessary inspections.
- Complexities with regards to landownership.
- Health and Safety issues taking precedence which were beyond the staffs' control.

The Director's PA continues to provide training to all staff where required, which covers a wide range of topics, focusing particularly on compliance procedures and ways to avoid missing the deadline dates. For example, staff are advised that an extension of time letter can be sent to the complainant advising them that more time is required to deal with the matter in question. This keeps the complainant informed of any progress made and an update on any amended deadlines which then avoids missing the compliance date. This training has been very successful as we are managing to sustain reasonable response times.

1. Key complaints - identified by type or theme

List of key specific types, or themes, of repetitive, or pertinent complaints received during this reporting period.

Between April 2022 and Sept 2022 - The main themes or topics (most to least - complaints) were identified as:

Other matters (not included as below)
 Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste - Missed Collections
 Refuse-Recycling-Green Waste-Other
 CA Sites
 Parking
 Poor communications
 General Weed Control-Grounds Maintenance
 Delays in service delivery
 Grass Cutting
 Planning-General
 Trees
 Delays in responses
 Highway maintenance works
 Illicit Tipping
 Cemeteries
 Cleansing
 Drains-Flooding
 Footpath Quality

The type or themes identified above, have been extracted from the following table which shows the incoming number of complaints by specific service sectors or teams during this reporting period.

Service Group or Team	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Green Spaces and Transport Services	10
Sport & Leisure Services	1
Waste Strategy & Operations	47
Engineering Projects Group	1
Highways Operations Group	10
Transportation Engineering	11
Building Consultancy	2
Corporate Property	0
Facilities Management	0
Divisional Support Unit	0
Environmental Health	5
Trading Standards & Licensing	0
Building Control	1
Business Support and Funding	0
Community Regeneration	0
Destination and Events	0
Development Control	0
Planning Administration	3
Strategic Planning	0
Urban Renewal	0
Combined	2
Totals	93

IDENTIFICATION OF TRENDS – Particular to services

TRENDS
<p>During this period the complaints received seem to be quite varied. A number of complaints were received regarding missed collections but given the fact that we collect from 75,000 households of which each will receive a weekly recycling collection so 3.9 million collections per annum, a weekly food and green collection so 3.9 million collections per annum, a fortnightly residual collection so 1.95 million collections per annum a total number of collections per annum across all 3 waste streams = 9.75 million per annum therefore the amount received didn't cause any major issues. A number of complaints were received with reference to challenging the policies around HWRC entry and permit systems. Some examples are detailed below for information.</p>
<p>Examples</p>
<p>Bins not emptied again, regular occurrence. Registered for Assisted Waste Collection – This complaint escalated due to the fact that cars were blocking access.</p>
<p>Tried to apply for permit to take trailer to RC Aberbargoed, Only options are Van, Van with trailer or trailer under 1.8 metres, as the complainants' trailer was over 1.8 metres they were told they were unable to use it to move the items. The complainant begrudged paying £15 per item.</p>
<p>Additional large cardboard boxes out for collection - crew didn't collect as this is Council policy therefore resident complained. The resident was informed however, that there are alternative methods to dispose of additional cardboard i.e.: use of HWRC.</p>

Continuous non collection of waste - Reasons identified and accounted for with both the resident and collection crews to ensure all efforts undertaken in successfully collecting moving forward.

To ensure continuity in collection services the supervisors investigate each complaint to establish why there are recurring instances with regards to missed collections. The teams are addressed and reminded of expectations going forward. Training will be provided if this is identified.

2. Number of complaints by Category

Table showing complaints by category.

Category	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
1 Collaborative Working	1
2 Decision Making	6
3 Delay in Service Provision	39
4 Officer/Contractors Conduct with public (including sensitivity/empathy of staff/politeness)	1
5a Following Council Policies	24
5b Following relevant Legislation	-
6 Accessibility of Services	1
7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information	3
8 Quality of Work	17
9 Openness/ Fairness and Honesty	-
10 Compliance with Complaints procedure	-
11. Combination of Categories (Non-specific)	1
Totals	93

3. Number of complaints by outcome and lessons learned

Table showing complaints by outcome.

Outcome Data	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Upheld	53
Not upheld	38
Totals	91

Two complaints were withdrawn

The following tables shows more information regarding the complaints counts above, that were, Upheld, Not Upheld, by Service Area.

Services – Stage 1	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	32	19
Infrastructure	3	10
Property	-	-
Public Protection	1	2
Regeneration & Planning	-	2
Other - Combined	-	2
Totals	36	35

Services – Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	-	1

Infrastructure	-	4
Property	-	-
Public Protection	-	1
Regeneration & Planning	-	3
Other - Combined	-	-
Totals	0	9

Services – Stage 1 escalated to Stage 2	Upheld	Not Upheld
Community & Leisure	2	4
Infrastructure	-	4
Property	-	-
Public Protection	-	-
Regeneration & Planning	-	1
Other - Combined	-	-
Totals	2	9

List of lessons learned. The table below comments on key findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that may help curtail, prevent, or impede future repeats.

Nature of complaint	Lessons learned	Category
Green Waste sacks not returned - objecting to paying for new sacks	<p>Whilst we cannot determine the exact reasoning for the loss of the original provision it can only be assumed that the sacks had blown away or been taken. It is recognised that there is a potential that the original provision was not secured in a fashion that would have prevented this scenario from occurring.</p> <p>The supervisor has advised the team to take every care in securing the provision as best as is practicable going forward.</p>	5 Following Council Policies/relevant Legislation
Inconsistent food collections	Operative addressed and additional control measures put in place to ensure no further failing of this collection. For example crews are required to be more vigilant and take time while providing the service.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Graffiti not being cleaned off garage	Unfortunately the Waste Management team were not in a position to clean the graffiti due to the services being suspended and only recently being reinstated. Whilst this was seemingly communicated to the resident they did not accept as a valid reason. Graffiti is now being removed at the earliest opportunity following the reintroduction of the service.	3 Delay in Service Provision
Roadworks at Birchgrove, Risca	Highway Engineer to check TM prior to work being carried out to ensure every TM measure in place prior to commencement of any roadworks being scheduled.	7 Clarity/Accuracy/Timeliness of information

Length of time waiting for her daughter to have swimming lessons and customer service provided by receptionist	Errors were made when Risca Leisure Centre moved to an electronic database (waiting list). Names were moved across from the paper waiting list, however, when a name on the waiting list did not have a smartcard, the electronic system would not allow them to be entered. This system has now been rectified.	3 Delay in Service Provision
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Some of the key learnings identified include

- Continuity of service needed, to reduce and prevent reoccurrence's (system failures)
- Need to ensure accuracy of data pre and post communications
- Cross service communications and prioritisation needs enhancing - complaint responses
- Improve citizen engagement and listening first-time
- Staff changes and turnover, could improve with better induction and suitable plant and equipment

4. Identified relationships to Equalities or Welsh Language

Table showing a count and list of findings resulting from the complaints in this reporting period, that specifically relate to the Equalities or Welsh Language protected characteristics.

Characteristic Strand	Count Stage 1, Stage 2 & Escalated 1 to 2
Age	1
Disability	5
Gender Reassignment	-
Marriage and Civil Partnership	-
Pregnancy and Maternity	-
Race	-
Religion/Belief or Non-belief	-
Sex	-
Sexual Orientation	-
Welsh Language	-
Totals	6

Examples of Age and Disability Complaints are

Details of Complaint	Service Area	Lessons Learned	Does the Complaint relate to Equalities or the Welsh Language?
Complaining on behalf of her parents regarding non collection of assisted waste	Waste Strategy & Operations	Failing from team addressed by supervisor. Crew reminded to ensure assisted collections are undertaken.	Age
Bins not emptied again, regular occurrence. Registered for Assisted Waste Collection	Waste Strategy & Operations	Lesson learned is to make every effort to progress the requirement of collection as soon as notified of the difficulty/failed collection to close the	Disability

		loop. Unfortunately, it seems that this particular location, is subject to indiscriminate parking on a regular basis which has exacerbated the situation.	
Non collection of assisted waste	Waste Strategy & Operations	Lesson learned is to ensure continuity in collection service and supervisor to investigate why recurring instances have happened and eliminate. For example, if alternative crews are provided relevant paperwork is required to alert them of residents receiving this service.	Disability
Roadworks at Birchgrove, Risca	Highways Operations Group	Highway Engineer to check TM prior to work being carried out to ensure every TM measure in place prior to commencement of work	Disability
Problems with non-collection of assisted collection	Waste Strategy & Operations	Improvement with communications at this most challenging of times for the Authority when new collection staff have deployed to unfamiliar rounds.	Disability

5. Annex – Referrals to Ombudsman, complaints resulting from appeals and examples of relevant items (points to note) specific to this reporting period

Service Area	Date received	Decision
Planning	05/04/22	Not investigating
Planning	19/05/22	Not Investigating
Planning	21/06/22	Not Investigating
Waste	05/09/22	Not Investigating
Environment	28/04/22	Not Investigating
Highways	11/05/22	Not Investigating
Property Services	23/06/22	Early Resolution – Waive drafting fee
Traffic Management	22/08/22	Not Investigating - Premature
Rights of Way	07/09/22	Not Investigating
Parks	20/09/22	Not Investigating

6. Directors Summary – Overall Assessment and Evaluation

Overall, the Directorate is sustaining service delivery and performance levels, with some specific areas posing more challenges than others at present.

Our front-line and back-office services continue to sustain reasonable levels of service delivery in this post covid recovery period, despite many changes experienced in working practices and public expectations, which has posed some challenges to ongoing services and succession planning. In particular, staff retention and replacement in some services, and plant and equipment in others.

By nature of our front-facing and diversity of services delivered, we rely heavily on public feedback. Public consultation has been limited these past two years, however, intelligence gathered through the Public Services Board wider region public engagements, our compliments and complaints including trends and feedback, direct service contacts, and recent 'what matters to you' programme, all provide us with sufficient knowledge to understand any areas for improvement. In addition, a training programme has been rolled out across the Directorate to improve the timeliness and quality of responses to complaints. The benefits of this training programme are now starting to be experienced. The training programme will be cyclically delivered and kept under continuous review.

For further information, please contact

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