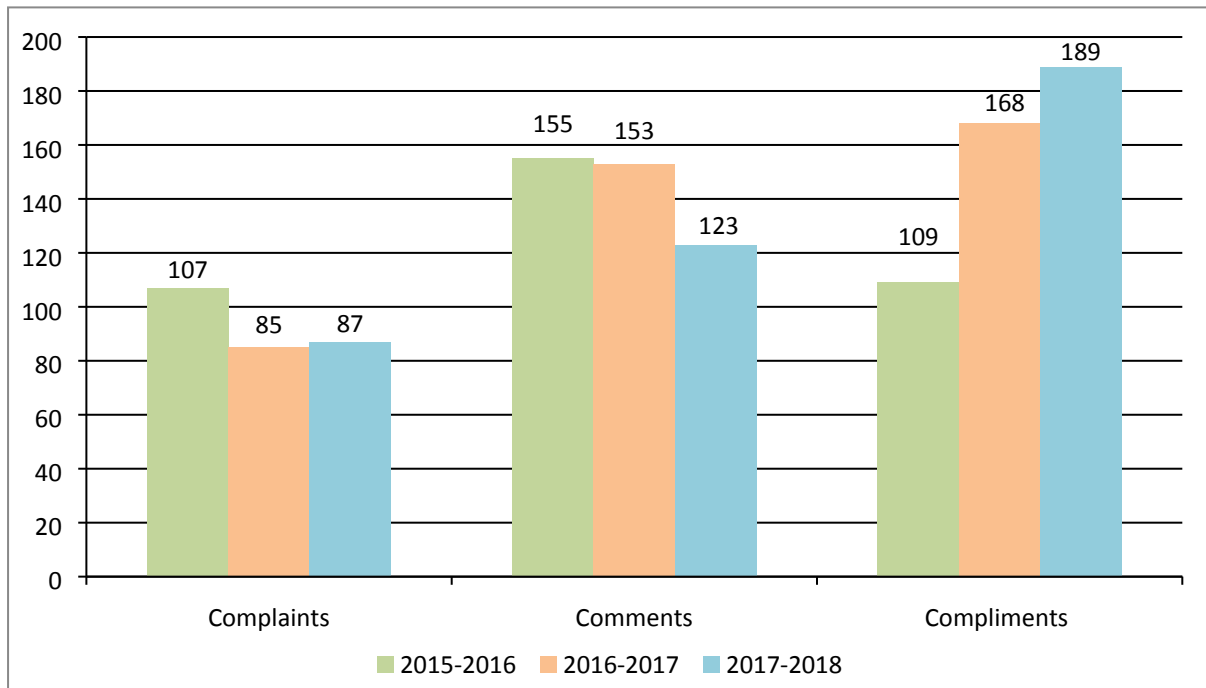




Whole Authority Customer Feedback and FOIA Statistics

April 2017 – March 2018



Complaints

- 87 Complaints received

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 76 Complaints started

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

- 13 Formal complaints
 - 2 escalated
 - 11 new

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Of the above 13 formal complaints received, 1 complainant went directly to the PSOW. He referred it back to us for subsequent investigation

1 complainant progressed their complaint to the PSOW after formal investigation. The PSOW did not investigate their complaints.

Complaints: Examples of most common aspects of services complained about:

- ❖ **Waste & Street Services**

Missed bin and food waste collections; roads not swept; hedges / verges not being cut; issues concerning street lights; staff conduct; speed of recycling vehicles, poor customer service.

❖ **Highways**

Lack of action in respect of road markings; traffic issues; lack of communication with department; tarmac damage to property; oversize vehicles on road; lack of snow clearance. Velothon signs dangerous, some too small to read. Siting of picnic tables.

❖ **Leisure**

Shortage of family changing rooms in leisure centre; dissatisfied service when booking courts. Issues with Defence Privilege Card for swimming at leisure centre; time taken for response to email; dissatisfied with manner in which individual treated; insufficient lighting in room at Leisure Centre; goal nets not being repaired or replaced at Leisure Centre

❖ **Passenger Transport**

Buses late / not arrived. Poor customer service and lack of communication; lack of response regarding school transport application.

❖ **Development Control**

Enforcement issues; unhappy with advice received; staff conduct; issues with planning consent / notice given.

❖ **Community Hubs**

Feel the actions of the Council have been discriminatory; noise issues within Hub; issues with standard of service and staff conduct

❖ **Others**

- General lack of response from various sections of the Council either by phone or email
- Staff conduct
- Issues with cost for wedding ceremony
- Issues regarding Blue badges
- Issues with Council tax demands for payment
- Handling of queues at polling station / postal vote / proxy vote applications issues
- Animal nuisance and waste lack of feedback
- Issues with Parentpay

Stage 2 Formal Investigations concerned matters relating to:

- ❖ A request to work at a Community Hub was not dealt with properly giving due consideration to the request.

There were 6 elements to the complaint, and the conclusion was that they were not upheld.
- ❖ The way MCC demands payment of alleged debt is insensitive, that caused anxiety to the person concerned.

One element was found and one partly found.
- ❖ Issues regarding the process and decision making about funding for a registered charity that receives grant funding from MCC.

The complaint was not upheld.
- ❖ Issues concerning staff conduct towards another staff member.

The complaint was not upheld.
- ❖ Issues concerning a library not actively following up on requests from the National Library of Wales to source books for their customers.

One complaint was upheld, one partially upheld and two not upheld.
- ❖ Issues concerning the regular use of a road by large vehicles that are wider than the tarmac carriageway.

There were 9 elements to the complaint; one was upheld, two no findings were made and 6 were not upheld.
- ❖ Issues concerning allegations that staff failed to act professionally in determining the Listed Building Consent application.

There were 7 elements of the complaint which were not upheld.
- ❖ Issues concerning an incident where it was alleged that the Transport Unit despite having relevant facts and information chose to ignore these facts in defence of a previously assumed stance and not considered them appropriately as part of any appeal process.

There were 3 elements to the complaint which were upheld.
- ❖ Allegation that a building which received planning consent was not being built in accordance with the approved details.

There were two elements of the complaint which were not upheld.
- ❖ Allegations that insufficient actions were taken by Monmouthshire Environmental Health's team in dealing with the health, safety and water situation at a property in Monmouthshire.

There were 11 elements to the complaint, one was upheld and the rest were not.

- ❖ Issues concerning carriageway markings and safety hazards they pose.

The complaint was partially upheld.

- ❖ Allegations that staff displayed a poor attitude to external consultants undertaking ecology work.

There were three elements of the complaint, one was upheld and two were not.

- ❖ Issues concerning a Breach of Condition Notice.

There were two elements to the complaint, one was partially upheld and one was not.

Note: Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. **62** complaints were received, **75** comments and **146** compliments were made about the service.

Distribution YTD

	Total	Access to Service	Communication Issue	Data Protection	Decision Delay	Discrimination	Member Conduct	Quality of Service	Quality of Works	Reduction in Service	Result of Process	Service Delayed	Service not provided	Service Removed	Staff Conduct	Timescales
Overall Total	87	1	14	1		2		43	2		4		2	1	15	2
Community Hubs	4					2									2	
Contact Centre	4			1				3								
Customer Relations	1														1	
Estates and Sustainability	1									1						
People Services	2		2													
Registrars	1							1								
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	2	1													1	
Total Resources	15	1	2	1		2		4		1					4	
GEI not allocated	1							1								
Local Democracy	5							3								2
Policy and Engagement	1													1		
Total Governance, Engagement and Improvement	7							4						1		2
Highways	14		4					7	1				1		1	
Property Services – Maintenance	1								1							
Passenger Transport	6		1					2		2					1	
Waste and Street Services	18		3					11							4	
Total Operations	39		8					20	2		2		1		6	
Attractions – Caldicot Castle	1							1								
Countryside	2							2								
Development Management	5							2		1		1			1	
Housing	3		1					1							1	
Leisure	7		1					5							1	

Total Enterprise	18		2					11			1		1		3	
Environmental Health – Public Health	5		1					3							1	
Total Social Care and Health	5		1					3							1	
Finance	1							1								
Total CYP	1							1								
Total External	1														1	
Not allocated to any SIP	1		1													

Comments

- 123 Comments

Total	123
Resources	32
Community Hubs	9
Contact Centre	1
Estates and Sustainability	2
Internal Audit	2
People Services	1
Registrars	14
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	3
Operations	69
Highways	18
Not allocated	1
Passenger Transport Unit	7
Property Services – Facilities	2
Transport	4
Waste and Street Services	37
Enterprise	13
Building Control	2
Countryside	2
Development Management	4
Housing	1
Leisure	3
Monmouthshire Enterprise	1
External	8
General – covers all of MCC	1

A selection of comments received concerned:

- Registrars section: they send out a questionnaire after customers have received a service from them, therefore we do receive a substantial amount of comments and compliments about that service. A selection of them are below:
 - Car parking - limited and crowded in the day
 - Incorrect / confusing signage to registrar's office
 - The registrar's office was overly hot and cramped
 - Require better instructions on where to go to register a birth, cannot find the information on council or hospital website as to where the registry office is within the hospital

Below are further comments received about the Council:

- Community Hubs
 - Cancellation of cash for Council at The Hub.
 - The Hub was closed at 4pm, website reads 5pm

- More activities and sessions for children.
- Email book due - date reminded two days before due date, not afterwards when a fine is already incurred.
- Reorganise the PC area and seating.
- Comments regarding members of staff and no longer having the freedom and benefit of browsing papers.
- Comments concerning another member of the public using the Hub
- Classes expensive, offer a discount.
- Council Tax issues:
 - Increased amount of council tax
 - Lack of communication
- Development Control:
 - Eyesore storefront, not in keeping with any of the other storefronts on the high street.
 - Footpath onto shared driveway - would like to know when this will be sorted
 - No response to previous letters - issues with neighbour and relevant permissions
 - Access to a lane and meeting held
 - Cannot keep pruning way markers must be reinstated and stiles at Pen-y-World cycle tracks repaired.
 - Issues with individuals living in caravan / tent
 - Issues with condition of public toilets situated on Castle Street and White Horse lane
- Leisure:
 - Format of timetable is confusing - only visiting the area and this meant a wasted 16 mile journey.
 - Rubbish gathering outside leisure centre / Outside environment of leisure centre
- Contact Centre
 - Council's telephone number is displayed as "Private Number"
- Operations
 - Repeatedly road repairs in Monmouth are breaking down to loose chippings in 3 or 4 days. Previously reported seeing unauthorised addition of liquid to repair material on back of vehicle before application. This practice is still continuing.
 - Issues with parking - Newhouse Industrial Estate, lorries parked on double yellow lines, on kerbs and obscuring junctions. Anything up to 10 lorries will be parked on both sides of the roadway thus narrowing it down to single line.
 - Unwalkable pathway due to hedges in garden.
 - Weeds are growing out of the pavements and kerbs all around Caldicot. It is making Caldicot look run down and a mess.
 - When are the roads going to be completed in Ffordd Sain Ffwyst, Llanfoist? It's very dangerous with raised manholes. Footpath onto shared driveway - would like to know when this will be sorted.

- Would like someone to clear the footpath outside the houses in Laurel Close. The trees and hedgerow have completely taken over the footpath and now it is so low and overgrown it is scratching the cars as driving into parking space
- Concerned with road closure
- Weed spray in close proximity to owner and dog
- Following the heavy snow a contractor cleared Bank Crescent, Gilwern. They cleared a channel one side of the Crescent only to bank up the snow to the other side, effectively totally blocking the access to those houses
- Drainage work being carried out - drainage holes outside property with fitted steel cover sheets - these sheets are not fitted securely enough and whenever a vehicle drives over them they make a horrendous noise which is very disrupting
- Lack of response - proposing a 20mph speed limit and 7.5 ton weight limit through certain villages.
- New street light installed and shining into block
- Traffic congestion around school
- Pot hole on Firs Road and reimbursement requested. Also reporting speed bumps which are considered too high on Mill Lane. Council gritter sprayed windscreen causing several small but noticeable chips.
- Issue with snow fall and clearing
- What is going to be done about the significant subsidence on road
- Waste and Street Services
 - Grass area MCC recently took over at Burrium Gate has not been mowed for ages
 - Comments on the garden waste renewal website - Usability and "look" is very poor. Improve website labelling and usability / Online system for paying for a garden waste bag does not work.
 - Tintern Heights in Catbrook - little or no recent road sweeping activity in this small road to a private cul de sac.
 - Red and purple bags are collected by the same vehicle - outline what happens to the contents of these bags, from the time of collection to their ultimate disposal.
 - Old Caerwent road from the bottom roundabout by the entrance to hall park and up to the new roundabout by the entrance to Ebbw Road. Over the last few years this has totally fallen into disrepair with overgrown trees, stinging nettles in abundance, rubbish, glass etc and is becoming a hazard to members of the public and dogs.
 - Lack of grass cutting at Belgrave Park, Abergavenny
 - Dangers in local park - dog waste all over the slide.
 - Comments on Hedgerows and birds nesting - hedge along Millfield Lane should not be drastically cut between April to October.
 - Kerbside maintenance, Holywell Road. Can the briars that are seriously overhanging the footpath be cut as a matter of urgency.

- Children's playground at the Castle Dell, adjoining the car park - litter strewn in every direction.
- Blue food / household rubbish not collected - improve service to property.
- Concerned about the large amount of waste that is appearing every weekend at the collection point
- Issues regarding the Usk recycling site
- Incident with vehicle
- Non collection of waste
- Gates that form entrance to Bailey Park have been dislodged at the bottom and youths are gaining access
- Concerns over dog and owner at pub
- Comments received concerning reduction of months for service - increase in cost and further waste - changing the scheme / no alternative arrangements - unhappy with change - new start date of April 1st is rather late and recommend it starts from 1st March.
- Cloth nappy incentive - the current cloth nappy incentive websites do not work
- Will there be any planned litter picking along the main roads, particularly the A40. The road side to and from Monmouth to Newport is particularly dreadful.
- Litter on the A40

➤ Transport

- Playing field car park at seven tunnel train station that has recently been made pay and display - 1 - incorrect signage- no parking penalty charge cost for not having a ticket being displayed. 2 - no clear bays marked to denote correct place to park. 3 - taking money before giving notice of new charges and dates after it will be enforced.4 - how MCC intend to return money taken under false pretences.
- Issues with car parking / issues with restricted parking bays and fines
- Decision to take away 22 spaces in the expansion of the recycling centre and the Rural Life museum.

➤ Passenger Transport

- Issues with school transport - have requested on occasions in the past that there is some sort of system set up between MCC and the school so they can be informed if the bus is not running.
- Online bus timetables incorrect.
- Concerned regarding bus fares on the Chepstow to Caldicot route.
- Incorrect bus timetables
- Bulwark around Queens Road, Channel View area - an issue with the many home to school minibus pick ups/drop offs.

- Bus for school, from Penperlleni to King Henry school, recently the bus has waited in the bus stop on A4042 trunk road at the beginning of rush hour forcing the children to cross this busy road.

Compliments

❖ 189 Compliments

Total	189
Legal	1
Resources	45
Community Hubs	10
Contact Centre	5
Registrars	30
Operations	35
Highways	28
Transport	1
Waste and Street Services	6
Enterprise	103
Building Control	71
Development Management	4
Housing	1
Leisure	4
Monmouthshire Enterprise	2
Monmouthshire Youth Service	21
Social Care and Health	2
Environmental Health – Public Health	1
Environmental Health – Commercial	1
General – covers all MCC	3

A selection of compliments received:

A range of compliments about the whole of the Council was received – staff thanked for their professionalism, their quick responses, their efficiency and helpful service.

Some examples:

Registrars: many compliments about staff being helpful and courteous at ceremonies.

- Everything was professional. 'Extremely helpful, prompt service. Cannot fault it in any way. I used the telephone to contact the office and lady was helpful, polite and incredibly helpful. Many thanks.'
- "Got married and as well as the family and friends who attended felt that the staff made us all feel very welcome. I am sure the registry office have several weddings a week, if not per day yet we weren't rushed (my son was 20 minutes late) and felt like ours was the only wedding. For this reason I felt the need to write and thank your staff, particularly the Registrar who performed the ceremony who was kind and patient. It made our day that more special. Thank you again.'

- 'I have only positive things to say - I was dealt with sympathetically, did not feel rushed, all of my questions were answered. There were no interruptions during my appointment - I felt at ease, and treated with respect.'
- 'We had lovely, compassionate service.'
- 'Thank you for providing a thoughtful and professional service at a difficult time. The "Tell us Once" procedure was efficient and much appreciated.'

Building Control they send out a questionnaire after providing a service and therefore a large number of compliments received about their advice given and efficient service

- Compliments about Waste/Refuse service – prompt response in putting this right and helping to get queries sorted.
- Community Hubs: - 'Superbly helpful', Thank you ladies, I very much appreciated your help. 'To the generous mind the heaviest debt is that of gratitude, when it is not in our power to repay it. - Benjamin Franklin.'
- 'Light, airy, user friendly, welcoming staff, good range of library books and courses with excellent tutors.'
- 'Excellent cuisine & book ordering service. Staff outstanding!!'
- "Had a very successful visit to the hubs in particular the library. most welcoming and patient explaining how things work and all about books"
- "Brilliant when I called there re: blue badge.... but he got it processed fast track and I am so grateful."
- "It was a pleasant and most welcome visit to Caldicot one stop shop. I can't speak highly enough of their compassion and care. Thank you so much.'

Contact Centre

- Many thanks for your help with my application for my new blue badge. It is appreciated that there are people willing and able to help disabled people when they need help. Thanks for your help and that of your team
- 'Thanks for a really succinct, pertinent and timely response - really excellent thanks.'
- 'Thank you for sorting this out. You guys at the council are different class compared to others where I have lived previously.'
- compliments about helpful, welcoming and accommodating staff

Development Control:

- "It can't be an easy job visiting sites where some of the people involved are bound to be upset and sometimes even hostile but you are clearly very good at managing such situations and I am grateful for your involvement....'

- 'Just wanted to thank you for organising the permission so quickly, given that I know you're so busy and under pressure you've never once used that to dismiss the application but always looked to reach a solution and get me going so I can continue the works needed.
- 'Thank you so much for offering your time to meet with Llanbadoc Community Council members yesterday evening. I know everyone found your contributions informative and helpful. You also provided some useful points for the members of public present which was appreciated by all...'
- 'Thank you for sending through the consent for 1 & 2, much appreciated. If only dealing with other listed building and planning application schemes up and down the country went as smoothly as it does with you and your team. I am truly impressed and heavily indebted.'

Leisure

- "Thank all the staff at Gilwern for the fantastic experience the pupils had. I am so pleased that with one exception all the pupils represented themselves and the school positively and that all involved, had a memorable week. Many thanks
- A big thank you to all the team at Monmouth Leisure Centre for all the help not only at last Friday's concert, but over the past year. You staff are always helpful and forward thinking, and make putting on events so much easier for us."
- "I had occasion to use the swimming pool this morning and I must comment on the professional attitude that I encountered. Given that it was 0900hrs on a Sunday morning, it was a pleasure to be greeted by a polite, happy smiling person. Not only did this young lady greet me in a lovely cheerful manner, she took the time to update the details on my card and provide me with answers to all the questions I had about the facilities within the leisure centre. It was a pleasure to interact with such a professional, proactive individual, she is a credit to your team."
- "We visited the leisure centre at Abergavenny. The lady on reception, was lovely and very helpful. She took time out to show us around and explained the memberships etc but wasn't at all pushy. Needless to say my partner and myself will be joining asap and that being mainly to her and her passion for the centre."

Environmental Health

- 'I want to thank you for your incredible help and kindness yesterday. It was well above anything I could have hoped for. You are one in a million. *** told me months ago that her walls were running with water!!!! That was why I asked you about my kitchen wall, misinformation it would seem.'
- "Thank you once again for all your help I found your visit very informative and would recommend it to anyone setting up a new food business.'

Operations:

- “I just want to say a big thank you to the guys who came and filled the potholes this week on Newton Court Lane. They did a wonderful job as the road was so bad and I just want you to know how much it is appreciated.”
- “Thank you for the works completed on the pavements on Longhouse Barn in Penperlleni, it is a wonderful job that has been done.”
- “I was heartened last week to observe grass cutting along the A4042. I could not help but notice the care and organisation of a moving group of workmen as the grass cutting was in progress, it was well organised.”
- “Called to say thank you for fixing pot hole has made a huge difference.’
- “Big thank you for the very efficient service I received from the Highway Dept. the hedge had been trimmed, wonderful service.’
- “Before we move onto the next challenge, I just wanted to show my appreciation and express thanks for the way yesterday’s incident was managed. Your teams and supply chain were excellent. I managed to stay throughout the incident and was really impressed with the mindset at every level to get the road open as soon as possible safely”
- “Thank you for sending the gritter along the lane and thank you for sending the snow plough up here and suggesting that a gritter was necessary to prevent an ice sheet. All the local residents will be very grateful for the prompt action.”
- ‘We just wanted to thank you for the superb job your teams have been doing keeping the main roads flowing and also for clearing our side road so promptly....Your prompt action has made it possible for the carers to reach us and keep the support in place. Many thanks to all involved.’
- ‘Thank you for dealing with the Cinderhill Street water stopcock hazard. Speedy job. Excellent.’
- I’m sure that you can imagine that this is a huge relief for us and once again please accept our thanks for your help and support in finding and authorising a solution to our drainage problem.’
- Street Lighting in Glendower Street Monmouth The street lighting has been fixed. Thank you.’
- I have been in conversation with Mon council and have to say been impressed with the responses from all parties towards my queries and concerns. The road traffic has eased since I sent the original email as Bulwalk corner has re-opened.’

Response Timescales

Our policy for responding to complaints at stage 1 is **10 working days** and for stage 2 formal investigation is **20 working days** plus a further 10 working days for Heads of Service to respond to the report’s findings.

Whole Authority Timescales	2016/17		2017/18	
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	62	0	59	0
11 – 30 working days	15	7	14	6

30+ working days	2	3	3	7
Total	79	10	76	13

Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon.

Total	27
Resources	4
Revenues, Systems and Exchequer	4
Operations	15
Highways	9
Waste and Street Services	6
Enterprise	2
Development Management	1
Leisure	1
Social Care and Health	3
Environmental Health – Public Health	2
Licensing	1
External	3

Analysis of Complaints / Comments

Year	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Comments	Compliments
2017-18	76	13	123	189
2016-17	79	11	153	168
2015-16	103	6	155	109
2014-15	100	25	150	90
2013-14	134	16	172	34

Service improvements

Complaints are generally resolved on an individual basis. Most formal investigation reports make recommendations for improvements to processes. These are followed up to ensure the recommendations are addressed.

Here are some examples where recommendations have been made for changes to practices / processes / procedures, as a result of people making complaints.

Apologies given where appropriate.

That the Programme Lead for Community Empowerment officer work with members of the Community who could help them build on the current volunteer profile for volunteering to include suitable profiles for the disabled to enable for them to volunteer for suitable opportunities as they arise.

That the Hub Manager together with the training manager investigate the possibility of training front line staff in dealing with enquiries for volunteers and the importance of how to respond directly to the person enquiring.

That when responding to a complaint, staff should use plain jargon free language that can be understood by the reader.

All MCC employees are required to abide by the policies and legal requirements of the authority, and if necessary that any 'equality and respect' training is reviewed and reinforced.

Where the public or elected members have concerns about breaches of planning consents, there should be an immediate opportunity for a site meeting to resolve the concerns raised.

Breach of Conditions Notice

- *Where a site meeting is declined, or the site visit shows breaches have occurred, then a BCN should be issued.*
- *Where a BCN has been issued, there should be adequate support from the Council for ongoing discussions.*
- *The BCN should allow for more detail concerning the breach itself.*
- *There must be an invite for open dialogue between client and the Council to avoid BCNs being issued.*

Payroll

- *Payroll move away from one standard letter for over payments. Instead these letters need to be personalised according to the circumstances surrounding the over payment. For example the amount involved and whether the person is still working with the Authority.*
- *Where the person has left the Authority, the Sundry Debtor invoice should be included with the letter and it be clear in the letter that payment terms can be agreed.*
- *The Authority put a message on its website, telephone network etc. when any additional bank holiday closures arise.*
- *Payroll ensure that there is consistency in how staff pay groups are managed in the future.*

- *The service take forward the changes in how they manage their staff budgets. Ensuring that a budget is set each year for each custodian and actual spend is monitored against this budget. Where irregularities are found that these are investigated and resolved in a timely manner.*
- *Service departments take responsibility for their employees wellbeing and actively work with Payroll to notify colleagues when an over payment occurs and to work with them to resolve the situation.*

Communication

- *Correspondence should be responded to in a more timely manner, there was an unacceptable delay in replying to the letter. This delay caused confusion and stress around the decision for XX. Clarity is needed as to who replies to correspondence when it is about a decision made at a partnership board meeting.*
- *Following a visit to decommission a service this should be followed up in writing as soon as possible to ensure that there is no ambiguity around this decision.*
- *Support should be offered to XX about other grants that they may be eligible to apply for.*

Libraries

- *A system is put in place to acknowledge to the customer that the library has received their Books4U request. Thereafter to provide regular updates until the book is available for the customer.*

Highways

- *The hedgerows along the route be maintained in good order and not be allowed to encroach into the highway. Hedges to be responsibly maintained by the person responsible for the particular hedgerow along the route.*
- *Highways to develop a Road Safety Plan, which will include the topic on large vehicles using country lanes in Monmouthshire for the relevant Committee to debate. This will also include consultation with members of the community for their views to be heard.*

Development Control

- *Applicants, for those who want it, receive clear communication as to when their application reports can be viewed. In this way, the Planning Authority are welcoming early responses to the content of such reports, in an open and transparent way.*
- *Very late correspondence is unhelpful, both in terms of the applicant and the Planning Authority. The service should provide some clear guidance on the*

process of submitting late correspondence, with monitoring to ensure adherence to the policy.

- *To continue to monitor and review validation process to ensure that a detailed description of planning applications is evidenced for future planning notification letters to those affected by the planning application. This needs to be followed by Planning Managers at wider team meetings and in Case Officers one to one meetings.*

Passenger Transport Unit

- *The Passenger Transport Unit review their policies and procedures. Clarity should be given as to what constitutes a complaint or an appeal. More detail should be given as to the appeals process to ensure consistency and transparency in application.*
- *The Passenger Transport Unit to review the Incident Reporting Form. The All Wales Travel Behaviour Code has a model form that could be adopted by the Unit.*
- *Clarity should be given to Drivers as to what constitutes bad behaviour on the bus and when an incident form should be used. If a child is known for bad behaviour there needs to be a mechanism to record this behaviour.*

Environmental Health

- *Any advice given in person should be followed up in writing.*

Commentary

Unfortunately, there are times when we don't always get things right and we fall short of the standard of service we want to deliver. We know that when customers are unhappy with any aspect of service we've provided, they want to be heard, they want the issue dealt with quickly and for the solution to be effective.

Therefore, when handling complaints from customers we aim to be customer and outcome focused, making it easier for people to let us know what they're unhappy about. We try to keep them informed of what we are doing to resolve their issues. We aim to work proactively with service areas in resolving issues quickly to prevent complaints escalating and becoming repetitious. Where things have gone wrong or we have given poor service, then we apologise and learn from our mistakes.

We continually analyse complaints and review the lessons learned from them. Going forward, the customer care standards for customer contact are being reviewed and

hopefully this will assist in improving communication and reduce customer complaints.

The number of complaints and comments dealt with under the Whole Authority complaints and procedure have gone down slightly this year. However, stage 2 complaints have increased slightly; we dealt with 13 formal complaints whereas the previous year we dealt with 11 formal complaints. Out of the 13 complaints received, 11 of them wanted to proceed directly to stage 2 and a formal investigation undertaken without trying to find an informal resolution to their problems.

On a positive note, over the last few years compliments have risen, in 2013-14 we received 34 compliments and this year we've received 189.

We still receive a fair number of enquiries about issues across the Authority and earlier intervention and staff engaging directly with customers solves problems straight away, reducing the level of complaints received.

Enquiries are contacts made by potential complainants asking about the service provided. Where appropriate we try to resolve the problem at an enquiry stage without taking the matter forward as a formal complaint.

Customer feedback also allows us to continue to inform and improve the way we handle complaints.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations

1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018

	2017-18	2016-17
Requests received:	1005	1045
Requests closed:	949	1055
Requests closed on time:	82%	97%
Internal reviews	2	

Requests under FoI and EIR are not segregated, and figures include both.

Target for percentage closed in 20 Working Days

A target of 90% has been retained.

The number of requests received has grown every year since FoI came into force on 1st January 2005. This is common to the public sector in general and is not Monmouthshire specific. Up to the end of 2016-17, the Council has received 7259 requests.

The number of requests received by Monmouthshire in each financial year is as follows:

2004-05 (3 months only)	31	
2005-06	135	
2006-07	118	(believed that some records are missing)
2007-08	172	
2008-09	305	
2009-10	421	
2010-11	609	

2011-12	662
2012-13	780
2013-14	918
2014-15	1002
2015-16	1061
2016-17	1045
2017-18	1005

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

October 2018