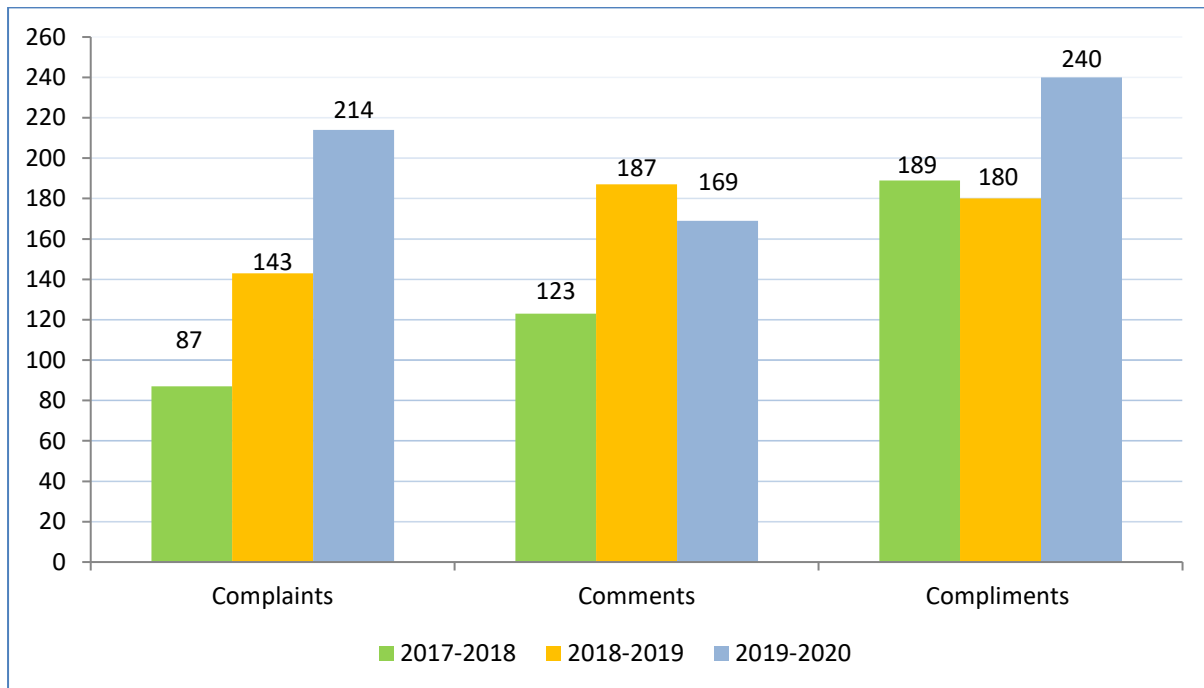


## Whole Authority Customer Feedback

April 2019 – March 2020



### Complaints

- 214 Complaints received

#### Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 207 Complaints started

#### Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

- 13 Formal complaints
  - 7 escalated
  - 5 new

### Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

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

3 complainants progressed their complaint to the PSOW after formal investigation. The PSOW did not investigate their complaints.

1 complainant progressed their complaint to the PSOW after formal investigation and they are currently investigating.

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

## **Waste & Street Services**

By far this was the most complained about service.

- Repeated missed bin and food waste collections; irregularity of collections, missed assisted collections
- Service received at recycling centres.
- Staff conduct; communication with the department.

## **Development Management & Planning Policy**

- Feels misled with current dwelling status
- Alleged failure to consult regarding revisions to planning status
- Enforcement issues
- Feels planning decision reached in undemocratic way
- Concerns regarding approval of planning applications
- Feels given incorrect information

## **Highways**

- Rights of access
- Green field area not maintained
- Lack of road sweeping
- Delays due to work undertaken in town
- Potholes not repaired
- Failure to maintain hedges
- Flood risk posed due to blocked drainage culverts
- Issues with street lighting
- Poor communication and responses from department.

## **Passenger Transport**

- Changes to school transport / length of journeys
- Bus passes not received
- Buses not operating, late / not arrived.
- Alleged incorrect information provided.
- Issues with bus route
- Issues with private hire bookings

## **Housing**

- Issues with neighbours
- Issues with Homeseach application
- Issues regarding the Local Rural Connection policy
- Alleged abuse of the Housing Act

## Others

- Rental of school facilities
- Noise nuisance
- General lack of response from various sections of the Council either by phone or email
- Staff conduct
- Traffic and safety during cycling event
- Alleged failure to provide suitable disabled toilets for learners
- Issues regarding firework display
- Process regarding making online payments

### **Stage 2 Formal Investigations concerned matters relating to:**

- There are no child sized disabled toilets in primary schools in Monmouthshire.

There were 4 elements to the complaint, 3 were not upheld and one partially upheld.

- The Council failed to act on a noise nuisance complaint.

The complaint was not upheld.

- MCC incorrectly requested an Enhanced DBS check for a post.

There were 7 elements to the complaint, 5 were not upheld and 2 were upheld.

- Issues regarding procuring a tender not being evaluated correctly.

The complaint was not upheld.

- Issues regarding a planning application

The complainant didn't pursue his complaint.

- The transport provision is not reasonable given the distance from home to school and the bus journey time.

There were 3 elements of the complaint which were not upheld.

- The utilisation of public school facilities by a fundamentalist group which the complainant believes goes against the ethos and values of Welsh education and therefore is inappropriate for school facilities to be used in this way.

The complaint was not upheld.

- The planning application process

There were 3 elements of the complaint, two were not upheld and one partially upheld.

- The lack of updates on a service request providing unnecessary delay and frustration.

The complaint was upheld.

- Miscommunication between teams regarding allowances paid.

There were 4 elements of the complaint, 2 were partially upheld, one upheld and one not upheld.

- The school is not adhering to its complaint policy. Consequently, there is a lack of confidence in the school and Governing Body to deal with complaints.

The complaint was partially upheld

- Works in Chepstow

The complainant did not pursue his complaint.

**Note:** Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. **45** complaints were received, **82** comments and **144** 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
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>37</b>			<b>6</b>		<b>116</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>				<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>
Landlord Services	1														1	
Property Services and Facilities Management	1										1					
People Services	2		1			1										
Digital Programme Office	1					1										
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	5		3					1			1					
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>4</b>			<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>			<b>2</b>				<b>1</b>	
Development Management & Planning Policy	13		1					4			7				1	
Housing and Communities	7		1			2					3				1	
Leisure	3		1					1							1	
Green Infrastructure and Countryside	3	1								1					1	
Events	1	1														
Highways Operations and SWTRA	10		9					1								
Highways and Flood Management	12		6			1		1	1						2	1
Monmouthshire Business, Youth Enterprise & RDP	1										1					
Catering and Cleaning	2														2	
Passenger Transport Unit	7	1	1					5								
Fleet Transport	1	1														
Waste and Street Services	121	1	7					99							14	
Enterprise not allocated	1		1													
<b>Total Enterprise</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>27</b>			<b>3</b>		<b>111</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>				<b>22</b>	<b>1</b>
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	3		2												1	
Legal Services	2		2													
Local Democracy	1					1										

<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>4</b>			<b>1</b>								<b>1</b>	
Animal Health & Trading Standards	<b>1</b>													<b>1</b>	
Environmental Health - Public Health	<b>3</b>							<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>				<b>1</b>	
Finance	<b>1</b>							<b>1</b>							
Registrars	<b>1</b>													<b>1</b>	
SCH not allocated	<b>1</b>													<b>1</b>	
<b>Total Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>7</b>							<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>				<b>4</b>	
Additional Learning Needs and Special Learning Needs Service	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>													
CYP not allocated	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>							
<b>Total Children &amp; Young People</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>							
External	<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>						<b>2</b>	
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>1</b>					<b>1</b>						<b>2</b>	

## Comments

- 169 comments

<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>169</b>
Customer Relations	1
Digital Programme Office	3
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	2
Resources not allocated	1
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>7</b>
Building Control	5
Housing and Communities	2
Leisure	2
Monmouthshire Business, Youth Enterprise & RDP	1
Highways Operations and SWTRA	16
Highways and Flood Management	23
Passenger Transport Unit	7
Waste and Street Services	85
Enterprise not allocated	1
<b>Total Enterprise</b>	<b>142</b>
Communication	1
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	8
<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>9</b>
Animal Health & Trading Standards	1
Environmental Health - Public Health	3
<b>Total Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>4</b>
External	7
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>7</b>

### A selection of comments received concerned:

#### Waste and Street Services

- So many comments about missed recycling collections; green waste not collected and that it is a payment service.

#### Highways

- Street lights turned off in the evenings / street lights not working.
- Lack of response from staff
- Issues with street address/postcode
- Issues with overhanging branches on trees on highway / overgrown footpaths and hedges.



- The car park in Withy Close in Magor is causing an environmental issue and a safety issue. The car park itself is a general mess, overflowing litter and brambles everywhere.
- Flooding and residual dirt in the driveway and around their bungalow following heavy or constant rainfall.
- Speed and road safety issues in Catbrook.
- Vehicle parked permanently in parking bay.
- Dangerous road junctions, broken signs and damaged road surfaces.
- Flooding issues
- Diversion due to A466 Closure, Catbrook June 2020 and residents only signs during diversion which starts in March.
- Issues with potholes.

## Other

- The noise / dust whilst homes who are being built at Greystone Meadows is horrendous.
- Issues with local pages regarding waste on website not working
- Online bus timetable incorrect.
- Length of time to get through to Council too long.
- Process of post 16 school transport / issues re timekeeping of school transport.
- Lack of staff at Usk post office
- Lack of maintenance of changing rooms in leisure centre
- Limited amount of gym equipment in leisure centre

## Compliments

- 240 Compliments

<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>240</b>
Customer Relations	3
Emergency Planning	1
Landlord Services	1
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	2
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>7</b>
Development Management & Planning Policy	6
Building Control	75
Housing and Communities	3
Leisure	6
Green Infrastructure and Countryside	7
Youth Service	19
Highways Operations and SWTRA	24

Passenger Transport Unit	1
Fleet Transport	1
Waste and Street Services	62
<b>Total Enterprise</b>	<b>204</b>
Communication	0
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	19
Chief Executive Not Allocated	1
<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>20</b>
Animal Health & Trading Standards	2
Environmental Health - Public Health	4
Environmental Health -Commercial	2
Registrars	1
<b>Total Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>9</b>

### 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:

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

### Waste & Street Services

Although we received a large amount of complaints and comments regarding this service, we also received compliments, a selection below:

- As being (fairly) new in Chepstow, we are delighted at how seriously and effectively (and efficiently) Monmouthshire Council takes recycling and environmental responsibility.
- Carry on delivering a great service and system.
- I am writing to thank you for the prompt and effective cut back of the rogue bushes.
- Very heartfelt thank you to the lovely young lady at Llanfoist HWRC, who helped the 86 yr old lady out on a very hot day with unloading her car etc, she said the lady was very polite, charming and more than helpful, so thank you and well done.
- Thanks for all your help with Usk Open Gardens. It made such a difference.
- I would like to congratulate your department for not cutting the verges on the road from Trelleck to the Whitestone picnic area. There are common spotted orchids flowering on the section between Cleddon bog and Whitestone. This is the first time I have seen this in the 26 years we have lived here. It just shows what can be achieved with sensitive management.

- Email received in response to a request within 24 hours 'Thanks so much, what a service!'
- I wish to compliment you again on litter. I noticed how litter free the highway is along the A48 from Newport to Chepstow and also the surroundings areas.
- I would just like to say thank you very much for the bench that was installed by the big flowerbed in Kings Fee yesterday. I appreciate yours and your teams time is precious and that finances aren't what they could be.
- Planting on green in Portskewett (behind Hill Barn View) The community have been really impressed with this much more environmental friendly approach and it obviously brings with it cost savings too, so well done on this approach.
- I just wanted to thank you for arranging the Community Service Crew to come in over the half term, they did a fantastic job and we really appreciate their efforts, could you pass our gratitude to onto the team.
- Would just like to say that I called to the cemetery yesterday afternoon and how lovely it's beginning to look. With just a few bushes cut back & borders taken care of it's made such a difference.
- Just wanted to thank you and the team for the work to the Astro Turf over the weekend.
- Underpass - Dual Carriageway Monmouth, great. Thank you and your amazing team.
- A big thank you to the Garden Waste Crew who stopped to help lady who was struggling to move the garden waste bag, the crew stopped and helped by taking the bag emptying it and returning it to the property - the caller was very very grateful and would like her thanks passed to the crew.
- Thanks to you and your team for all your hard work. To be honest you haven't drawn breathe from the floods! Your hard work is appreciated.

## Highways

- Sincere thanks to the team for their swift action taken today, in removing a further large tree that had decided to block Llanwenarth Breast Lane.
- Thank you so much for taking the trouble to get our lane right. The workers came back and improved on their earlier work and left some planeings for us for future repairs.
- The lane from Bethel Far Hill to Penarth Mill, thank you for such a magnificent job on our lane. Tenants have also remarked how good the lane is now.
- Thanks for all your help with Usk Open Gardens. It made such a difference.
- Sincere thanks to all those who worked on resurfacing and relining the B road from Monmouth to Chepstow. Local residents like me in the villages along the road are really enjoying having a safe road, especially before the winter.

- Just to say thanks for clearing the culverts out on the upper part of the B4293, as this will help stop the large pooling of water during the winter period.
- Thank you to the men who were out providing sandbags.
- Thank you to the council and, in particular, the two gentlemen who came to clear the reën with a dredger so that it wouldn't flood.
- Such diligence and hard graft on Sunday 23rd February 2020 was admirable. Amazing dedication to the 'task' in hand particularly on a Sunday, when the weather conditions were particularly challenging.

### **Community Hubs**

- Excellent customer service. F really took ownership of the issue and helped me as a one stop shop. She did a great job.
- They are so helpful - nothing is too much trouble - brilliant people.
- Its wide service to the local community, the warm welcome we received when visiting the library.
- I just wanted to thank one of your employees who was so kind, helpful and compassionate to a friend of mine having difficulties with accommodation.
- Thank you again to you and your team, whilst in one of the worst times in my life, all of the staff were patient and amazing in my time of need.
- Ordered sandbags earlier today by phone. Thank you to the receptionist for being so professional. Sandbags already delivered! Wow what a service.
- Thank you for reading us a story. I had such a great time. I really like the library because it helps me learn. I really enjoyed it.

- **Youth Service / Leisure**

- Thanks so much for looking after them. He came home Sunday and slept all day! They had a great time although all a bit cold. A big thank you to all the other volunteers this weekend.
- Thank you so much for taking my daughter on her first Dof E expedition this weekend. She really enjoyed it. Just a bit tired this afternoon.
- I would also like to thank all the staff for helping E to achieve her DoE we are really proud parents and she couldn't have done it without your support.
- Just wanted to send you a quick email to let you know what a fantastic time I had at the Palace yesterday - it was a really memorable day and we couldn't have asked for nicer weather! Thank you, once again, for all your help in doing and finishing the award. Hope to see you over the summer when I volunteer.
- Thank you though for making me realise I just needed that routine to do things, you've really helped me.
- I'd just like to pass on how great the guy was who taught K's class this morning. L really enjoyed it and it was her first lesson without the waist float.
- Thank you for all your help organising the first ever JKA national course. Everything went really smoothly and the facilities were great. Thanks again and please pass on our thanks to all the staff involved.
- I am sending this note to say thank you to everyone for the real support you have given as I learn to swim.
- L has been amazing and always encouraged me to believe I could do it. Thanks L for your patience and coaching skills .I know it takes huge skill to teach old dogs new tricks! Today I managed two lengths and I feel a great sense of achievement as when we started this journey it did not seem possible and I could not have done without you training.
- I am writing to you as I feel it's a good point in my life now and I just wanted to just let you know how the youth centre/workers have helped me be who I am today.

### **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	2018/19		2019/20	
	Stage 1	Stage2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	94	1*	147	1^
11 – 30 working days	31	4	55	4
30+ working days	7	9	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>13</b>

\*Received no further contact so complaint was closed

^No response to clarify complaint, therefore it was closed

## Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon:

<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>22</b>
Digital Programme Office	2
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>2</b>
Highways and Flood Management	3
Highways Operations and SWTRA	1
Waste and Street Services	8
<b>Total Enterprise</b>	<b>12</b>
Communication	1
<b>Total Chief Executive</b>	<b>1</b>
Environmental Health - Public Health	4
Not allocated	1
<b>Total Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>External</b>	<b>2</b>

## Analysis of Complaints / Comments

Year	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Comments	Compliments
<b>2019-20</b>	<b>207</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>240</b>
<b>2018-19</b>	132	14	187	180
<b>2017-18</b>	76	13	123	189
<b>2016-17</b>	79	11	153	168
<b>2015-16</b>	103	6	155	109

## **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.*

*The noise monitoring equipment should be re-offered to enable an accurate measurement of the noise that the family are being subjected to.*

*Managers are reminded of the necessity to complete written risk assessments as part of the appraisal of all DBS Checks and ensure that Chief Officers, Head of Service and Safeguarding Team sign off the assessment.*

*Reiterate the legislative process for the public right of way so that the consultation process is clear.*

*MCC to continue to review learner travel allocations as and when changes have to be made.*

*MCC to develop a formal internal process for undertaking and reporting reasonability assessments for learner travel queries.*

*Language to be aligned throughout the process ie, planning and housing using consistently the same terms for the use of the property class.*

*Ensure that the review of payments and systems is undertaken and measures put in place to ensure that this administrative error will not happen to others in the future.*

## **Commentary**

It's important to look at pragmatic ways to resolve matters to ensure a reasonable outcome for all concerned. We work with managers to consider the best possible means of unravelling the problems highlighted in a timely way that satisfies all involved and provides good customer care. We work closely with the service areas to prevent complaints escalating and becoming repetitious.

An important part of dealing with and resolving complaints are the lessons learned. We aim to learn from what went wrong and improve for the future. Managers receive action plans after formal complaints are investigated that outline the recommendations made and for them to respond and implement them as part of the resolution of the complaint.

The increase in complaints continues to be a challenge as this year complaints increased by 57 % and comments decreased by 9%.

Great that compliments have increased from 180 in 2018- 2019 to 240 this year.

We still receive a fair amount 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.

Customer feedback is welcomed as it allows us to continue to inform and improve the way we handle complaints.

**Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager**

**August 2020**