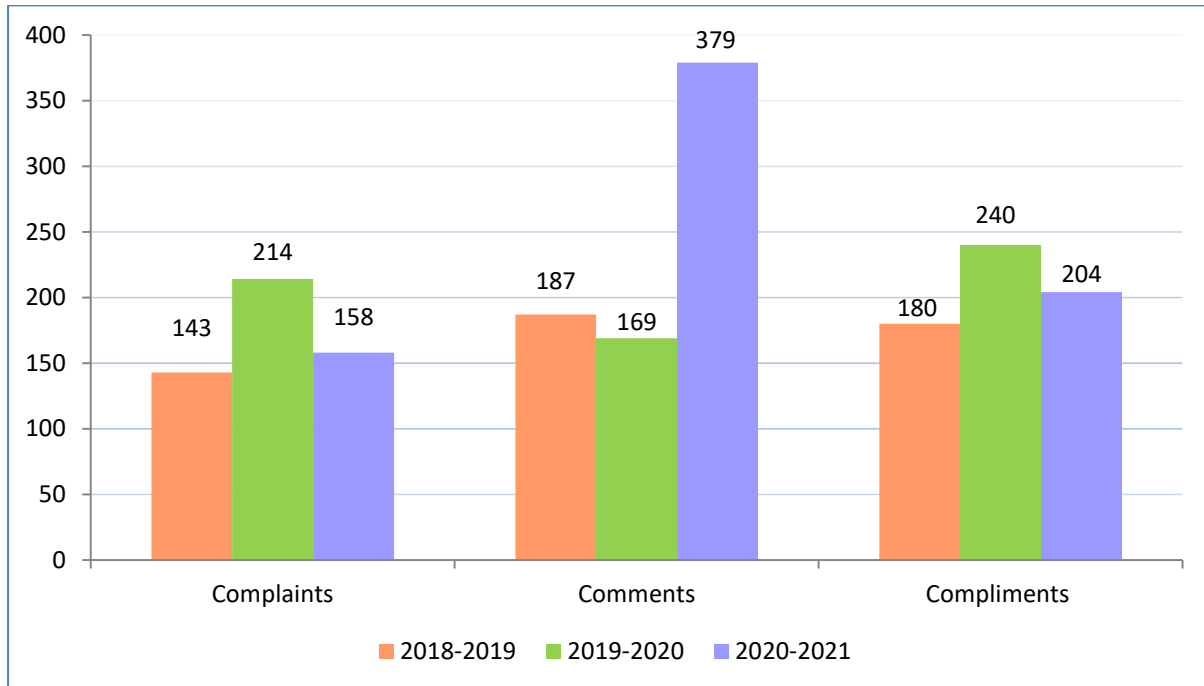


Whole Authority Customer Feedback

April 2020 – March 2021



Complaints

- 158 Complaints received

| Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | YTD |
|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 23 | 43 | 38 | 54 | 158 |

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

- 151 Complaints started

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

- 17 Formal complaints received
 - 10 escalated – 4 of which were dealt with at stage 1 in 2019 - 2020
 - 7 new ones.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

Of the above informal complaints, 2 complainants contacted the PSOW, whose decision was not to investigate.

Of the above formal complaints received, 1 complainant went directly to the PSOW, who advised that they were not investigating.

2 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 we agreed with an early resolution.

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

Waste & Street Services

- Repeated missed bin and food waste collections; irregularity of collections, non-delivery of garden waste bags, non-collection of garden waste
- Staff conduct

Development Management & Planning Policy

- Issues concerning planning applications and lack of consultation in relation to planning applications
- Issues regarding the planning process
- Length of time taken to resolve issues
- Issues regarding communication with the department
- Enforcement issues

Highways

- Lack of responses to communications
- Lack of consultation or discussions with residents concerning reopening roads during Coronavirus pandemic
- Problem with road drainage
- Staff conduct
- Works started that have not been completed
- Condition of lanes / roads

Others

- Homelessness issues
- Issues regarding access to education

Stage 2 Formal Investigations concerned matters relating to:

- The planning application process, handling and recommendation for approval of a planning application.

There were 17 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- Issues relating to planning applications contradicting the Local Development Plan.

There were 15 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- That the information presented to the Planning Committee did not comply fully with all the necessary requirements of the LDP, Planning Policy Wales, Town & Country Planning Act, Air Quality Standards Regulations etc.

There were 6 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- The complainant's opinion that the Planning Committee were not given full, fair and unbiased information to consider Refusal or Approval with suitable and sufficient Conditions attached to allow the development to be delayed until all Conditions were discharged prior to any development starting.

There were 15 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- Length of time taken to progress with all applications made regarding unauthorised building works.

There were 7 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- Lack of clarity and information in the 'minor amendments' planning application did not allow the case officer to make an informed decision. No enforcement taken to ensure that the building complies with the original planning approval.

There were 5 elements to the complaint and two of them were partially upheld.

- The process and procedures of planning and building control for a new residential dwelling. Residents concerned about potential damage to their property and safety issues.

There were 19 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- MCC had erred in naming the complainant's private driveway and failed in not rectifying the mistake.

There were 15 elements to the complaint, one was partially upheld and the rest were not upheld.

- In relation to a planning application and the development of land adjacent to the complainant's property and that they were not consulted on changes to the development.

There were 5 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- In relation to the LA's lack of support during her son's unauthorised school absences and issues with home tuition.

There were 3 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- In relation to the initial adoption of a site as part of Monmouthshire County Council's Local Development Plan. The complainants felt that there were flaws in the process followed.

There were 4 complainants who made a complaint about this issue. There were 3 elements to the complaint and none were upheld.

- **Note:** Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. **38** complaints were received, **94** comments and **167** compliments were made about the service.

Distribution YTD

| | Informal received | | | | | | | | | Formal received | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Total | Access to Service | Communication | Data Protection | Quality of Service | Quality of Works | Result of Process | Service not provided | Staff Conduct | Total | Access to Service | Quality of Service | Result of Process | Staff Conduct |
| Overall Total | 151 | 1 | 15 | 1 | 91 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 37 | 17 | 1 | 9 | 5 | 2 |
| People Services | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Digital Programme Office | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Revenues, Systems & Exchequer | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Resources not allocated | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total Resources | 3 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Development Management & Planning Policy | 18 | | 3 | | 11 | | 3 | | | 13 | | 8 | 5 | |
| Highways Operations and SWTRA | 6 | | 1 | | 3 | | | | 2 | | | | | |
| Highways and Flood Management | 15 | | 8 | | 4 | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | |
| Housing and Homelessness | 3 | | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Passenger Transport Unit | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds) | 89 | | 1 | | 66 | | | | 22 | | | | | |
| Enterprise not allocated | 2 | | | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Total Enterprise | 133 | | 14 | | 87 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 26 | 14 | | 9 | 5 | |
| Chief Executive Not Allocated | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Total Chief Executive | | | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Registrars | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total Social Care & Health | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Additional Learning Needs Service | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| Pupil Referral and Inclusion Service | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Total Children & Young People | 1 | | | | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| General - whole MCC | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------|-----------|--|--|----------|----------|--|--|--|----------|--|--|--|--|
| External | 12 | | | 1 | 2 | | | | 9 | | | | |
| Total Other | 13 | | | 1 | 3 | | | | 9 | | | | |

Comments

- 379 comments received

| | |
|---|------------|
| Overall Total | 379 |
| Landlord Services | 1 |
| Digital Programme Office | 30 |
| Revenues, Systems & Exchequer | 6 |
| Resources not allocated | 1 |
| Total Resources | 38 |
| Building Control | 8 |
| Business and Enterprise | 1 |
| Catering | 1 |
| Cleaning | 2 |
| Community and Partnership Development | 3 |
| Development Management & Planning Policy | 8 |
| Highways Operations and SWTRA | 22 |
| Highways and Flood Management | 58 |
| Housing and Homelessness | 6 |
| MonLife - Green Infrastructure and Countryside | 3 |
| Passenger Transport Unit | 1 |
| Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds) | 187 |
| Total Enterprise | 300 |
| Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning | 1 |
| Legal Services | 2 |
| Chief Executive Not Allocated | 1 |
| Total Chief Executive | 4 |
| Licensing | 1 |
| Environmental Health - Public Health | 6 |
| Total Social Care & Health | 7 |
| Additional Learning Needs Service | 2 |
| CYP not allocated | 1 |
| Total Children & Young People | 3 |
| General - whole MCC | 2 |
| External | 25 |
| Total Other | 27 |

| Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | YTD |
|----|-----|----|-----|-----|
| 64 | 121 | 86 | 108 | 379 |

A selection of comments received concerned:

Waste and Street Services

- Comments about reusing recyclable bags
- Street cleaning and litter picking
- Food bins being damaged due to being thrown down
- Use of wheely bins in narrow streets
- Some waste collected but not all other waste
- Offer different capacity bins in the future
- Glass boxes not returned to outside of property
- Comments concerning the HWRC booking system and visit to site
- Comments about the cessation of garden waste during the pandemic
- Comments concerning closure of parks during pandemic
- Refuse vehicle drivers, driving too fast
- Issues concerning grass / verge cuttings
- Comments regarding garden waste permits
- Comments regarding HWRC sites being closed during the pandemic
- Some items of recycling left behind on roads after collection
- Pathways overgrown
- Overflowing bins on high streets
- Children's park in Abergavenny heavily covered in moss - slippery and dangerous
- Issues with decision to close Usk Recycling centre
- Concerns with fly tipping.

Highways

- Introduce better traffic calming measures
- Consider being more cycle friendly in towns
- Concerns registered regarding lack of consultation on proposed speed reduction works
- Many comments regarding temporary traffic lights in Usk and re-routing one way system
- Parking charges in town and use of machines
- Closure of parts of Chepstow to traffic and lack of consultation
- Lack of cutting of overhead branches
- Comments regarding new trial of Magor square
- Comments regarding road repairs
- Comments regarding changes to Monnow Street Monmouth, felt now belonging to cyclists
- Lorries knocking over salt bins, needs to be more secure
- Speed of vehicles in some areas, requesting speed ramps
- Potholes need repairing
- Speed bumps installed too high

- Disabled car parking spaces in Woodstock Way car park removed for installation of electric charging points
- Dangerous driving in Monmouth, provide more CCTV cameras
- Road closure in Goytre
- Concerns over health and safety - trees encroaching onto boundary of property
- Parking spaces in Usk, widen them for parents and children

Other

- A number of issues with booking slots to the HWRC site online
- Recycling booking form too long and cumbersome
- Comments concerning service requests on My Mon site
- Concerns regarding anti social behaviour
- Issues with school meals
- Lack of communication to correspondence / emails.
- Comments regarding social housing policy
- Comments concerning fox hunting
- Issues with Council tax bills
- Comments regarding refusal of licensing application
- Unhappy about receiving correspondence in Welsh and English

Compliments

- 204 Compliments

| | |
|---|------------|
| Overall Total | 204 |
| Emergency Planning | 1 |
| Resources not allocated | 1 |
| Total Resources | 2 |
| Building Control | 60 |
| Development Management & Planning Policy | 4 |
| Highways Operations and SWTRA | 13 |
| Housing and Homelessness | 4 |
| MonLife - Green Infrastructure and Countryside | 12 |
| MonLife - Leisure | 4 |
| MonLife - Tourism | 3 |
| MonLife - Youth Service | 13 |
| Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds) | 63 |
| Total Enterprise | 176 |
| Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning | 8 |
| Total Chief Executive | 8 |
| Environmental Health - Public Health | 2 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Registrars | 1 |
| SCH not allocated | 1 |
| Total Social Care & Health | 4 |
| Not allocated to any SIP | 1 |
| General - whole MCC | 3 |
| External | 10 |
| Total Other | 14 |

| Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | YTD |
|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 51 | 62 | 51 | 40 | 204 |

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:

- Your teams in Mon CC are doing a brilliant job with all the fly tipping that's going on
- Thank you to the bin men for doing such a great job
- Thank you for managing to keep other collections going, which has not been the case throughout the rest of the UK.
- We wish to give an official compliment to the Grounds Staff who manage and maintain the Danes Park, Chepstow. We have lived in Normandy Way for over 30 years and see the return of the Song Thrush that thrive in the areas of long grass margin in the Park. We are also so pleased to see the wild flowers appearing especially in this period of lockdown. Thank you so much.
- I want to say a HUGE thank you to everyone who helped me to get my car keys back today! From the adviser at the council and the waste collectors who went trawling through nappy bags to find my car keys! I cannot thank you enough! These guys don't get enough praise or recognition, especially during these difficult times. Thank you so much!
- Thanks to all the lovely boys who have collected everything during this very troubling time. Always pleasant and helpful WELL DONE.

- I have been in contact with a new litter champion from Llanfair Discoed, who has asked me to pass on her thanks to the team for sorting out a fly tip in her lane last week. She was very impressed with the team's efficiency.
- We are all quick enough to criticise, this email is quite the opposite - very many thanks to the team for taking the time to make this extra effort - very much appreciated. Thank you and good wishes.
- I would just like to express my thanks I visited Monmouth Cemetery recently and what a great improvement the grass has all been picked up and it looks so much better.
- Broken bench, former skateboard park, Town Field, Monmouth - Just catching up again, that was amazingly quick and efficient on same day as reported. Brilliant service! Please pass on our thanks to the person who sorted, much appreciated.
- Bailey park...Just a big thank you for cutting the grass, it looks tremendous.
- Linda Vista mowing - a compliment for whoever's been mowing the arboretum in Linda Vista has simply mown a circuitous trail round and left the rest - thus making an interesting path to walk around (and also making it easier to mow). It's great! Please channel our appreciation through to the mower if you can.
- Staff are efficient and capable and always cheerful - well done all.

Highways

- Just a note of thanks for arranging the road sweeper to pass along Llanwenarth Breast Lane today, great job done.
- On behalf of all the residents of Llanfaenor near Newcastle, Monmouth, I would like to thank you and your team for all their hard work in clearing our lanes of mud, gravel and grass, as well as filling in all the potholes to such a high standard. If you could pass our thanks onto your team, that would be great.
- Can I send my thanks to all involved in arranging, and repairing the side of the lane. I only raised this late last week, and considering all the pressures MCC have had at this time, I was so pleased that the workmen had attended, and repaired the problem area. I am grateful for the prompt action and high standard of repair.
- Thank you very much for fixing the street light at Burrium Gate Usk. It has made such a difference.
- Your repair team has completed an excellent job of clearing and upgrading both of the drainage chambers at the top of the driveway. Please thank the Assistant Engineer and the team for me. I am very grateful.
- I was delighted to see the pothole has been filled – thank you. The rains of the past few days have been a good test for the renewed culvert etc, and they are working perfectly. It's such a relief!
- May I express my delight that Elms Road was included in the recent resurfacing programme. Many thanks to all involved.

- Thanks to the road maintenance team of Sunday 27th December. We woke on Sunday to find that Storm Bella had felled one of the trees on the road between Devauden and St Arvans, completely blocking it. I would like to thank the team who came along late in the afternoon (it was past twilight when they were done) to clear up the remaining branches and move the trunk to somewhere other than the road. We really appreciate the work these teams do, and hope that you will be able to pass on our thanks to them.
- Your workmen completed the paving slabs outside of my house yesterday morning, and since then we have had a huge amount of rain. As the attached picture shows, there is NO lake outside of my house! I can't begin to express what a difference being able to just walk out of my house without getting wet feet and ruining shoes has made, it really is a life changer for me. It's a great job done by the 2 workers, who were professional and friendly in their approach also.

Community Hubs

- For housing support last week, parent was so grateful and appreciative that he now has somewhere to live as she was very worried about him.
- Just a note to let you know that your staff in the Usk Hub, have really made a difference to this shielding isolation that we are enduring. They have gone way beyond what one would have any hope of expecting from a neighbour with their cheery help and support.
- I live in Monmouth and our own recycling depot is still closed. My neighbour told me about the Llanfoist Cars/ Abergavenny Site, but that you need to ring and book a slot for garden waste. I have just got off the phone from booking my slot on Thursday, and this was all arranged by an extremely helpful and efficient young lady.
- Thank you so much for your efficiency, care and interest. It is much appreciated.

Mon Life / Youth Service / Green Infrastructure and Countryside

- My 2 girls really enjoyed today! (from the Key workers children) Thanks so much. In these difficult times care, compassion and fun for our little ones is essential and appreciated.
- Great to know my daughter was involved in this "happy daddy". (regarding children being involved in "outdoor fun" - activities to thank the NHS heroes from the key workers youngsters.
- Our thanks go to you for trying so hard to adapt change. The way you do your job and still be able to support the kids in the community, it certainly has been a crazy time for everyone.

- Both my husband and I are key workers for the NHS and throughout lockdown we have had to access both of the Hubs provided. Now we are in the summer hols we use Mon Games indeed as we have every summer since our nine year old started school. During these last months the staff have been amazing with my son. So patient, tolerable, and above all, incredibly kind.
- I just wanted to say thank you very much for taking my concern seriously and on being so prompted in sorting it out! I have been walking through the Warren path and I was proud to show my relative how you, the MCC, have been so efficient in sorting the matter out so quickly.
- For reinstalling the bench in memory of my husband. Sending this message of thanks whilst sat on bench. Many thanks for all you help.
- Monmouth Leisure Centre - I want to let the relevant people at headquarters know how marvellous the staff at Monmouth Leisure Centre are. Without exception, they are invariably courteous, helpful and friendly no matter the provocation and no matter how often the guidance on how to manage the current situation in the centre changes. I can't praise them highly enough.
- I'm aware of how much you are all doing operationally to make this work and keep the doors open. And the ongoing discussions surrounding improvement of services and availability. I'm not suggesting through this email that there aren't challenges or that decisions are easy at this time - timetabling of activities are complex and people notoriously hard to please, especially with small town mentality. On my part, any extension on gym time would be very welcome. As would be the chance to update wellbeing programme all be it incrementally. This is not to take away from the mountains you are all having to climb already - you really have been a lifeline for me. Many, many, many thanks.
- 'Gyms v Covid Tomorrow', the last day before the fire break, will be my 52nd visit to the Fitness Suite since you re-opened on August 10th. In these unprecedented times I was not sure what to expect on my first visit. I found the procedures in place well organised and have felt entirely safe during my visits. Well done to all concerned. Roll on November 9th!
- Keep up the good work you're doing a fantastic job.
- Many thanks again for your commitment and managing to keep these awards going under the current circumstances. We really appreciate it.
- Coastal path access.... Not sure who has been doing the very necessary work, on this popular part of the Path, but a great job.

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 | 2019/20 | | 2020/21 | |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| | Stage 1 | Stage2 | Stage 1 | Stage 2 |
| Up to 10 working days | 147 | 1* | 109 | 0 |
| 11 – 30 working days | 55 | 4 | 36 | 7 |
| 30+ working days | 5 | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| Total | 207 | 13 | 151 | 17 |

*No response to clarify complaint, therefore it was closed

Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Overall Total | 20 |
| Revenues, Systems & Exchequer | 3 |
| Digital Programme Office | 1 |
| Total Resources | 4 |
| Highways and Flood Management | 2 |
| Highways Operations and SWTRA | 3 |
| Recycling & Waste | 2 |
| Total Enterprise | 7 |
| Animal Health & Trading Standards | 1 |
| Environmental Health - Public Health | 7 |
| Licensing | 1 |
| Total Social Care & Health | 9 |

Analysis of Complaints / Comments

| Year | Stage 1 complaints | Stage 2 complaints | Comments | Compliments |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------|
| 2020-21 | 151 | 17 | 379 | 204 |
| 2019-20 | 207 | 13 | 169 | 240 |
| 2018-19 | 132 | 14 | 187 | 180 |
| 2017-18 | 76 | 13 | 123 | 189 |
| 2016-17 | 79 | 11 | 153 | 168 |

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.

Review of planning terminology internally and how we can be clearer and provide more clarity on this to the general public

All information relevant to an application is included on the planning portal eg photos

Review the system utilised for the portal to see if it can be more stable in the future.

FOI team/digital to check some of the formats used to send larger amounts of information

Review how letters are sent to statutory consultees – could the system be improved in any way?

Review how the Planning Team communicate with consultees, is it clear that consultees are objecting to an application and that is a separate planning process to the complaints process?

The LA work with young person to review and update his existing educational offer to ensure it meets his needs

The LA to meet with young person to discuss an appropriate future pathway for his post-16 education, employment or training to take into consideration his identified needs

For future applications by MCC Planning, there would be significant value in publishing Stage 1 and 2 Road Safety Audits, whilst these are advisory in the planning process they provide transparency to the process followed.

For future applications by MCC Planning, there would be significant value in publishing Section 278 agreement, as this is a legally binding document, to provide transparency to the application and process followed.

Commentary

The Coronavirus pandemic has presented the Local Authority with huge challenges and dealing with complaints has been no exception. We have continued to maintain receiving and responding to complaints as effectively as possible, relying on receiving responses from staff in those service areas that have been stretched so much, for example, recycling and waste, and highways. They have been remarkable in responding to us as well as dealing with their own day to day workloads.

Although the number of complaints recorded were slightly down on last year, the number of comments recorded rose considerably by 124%. Again, these were from those front facing services and much related to Coronavirus measures that were being considered / or put in place. It was good that despite the difficulties, the public

still took the time to complement services, with over 200 being received, thanking our staff for everything they were doing to keep communities safe through the pandemic.

As the Coronavirus pandemic improves slightly, we are seeing a similar trend so far this financial year ie 2021-22, at the same level as last year, to date (November 2021) we've received 113 complaints, 286 comments and 139 compliments.

The lessons learned from complaints are very important and we do our best to learn from what went wrong and improve services 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.

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

December 2021