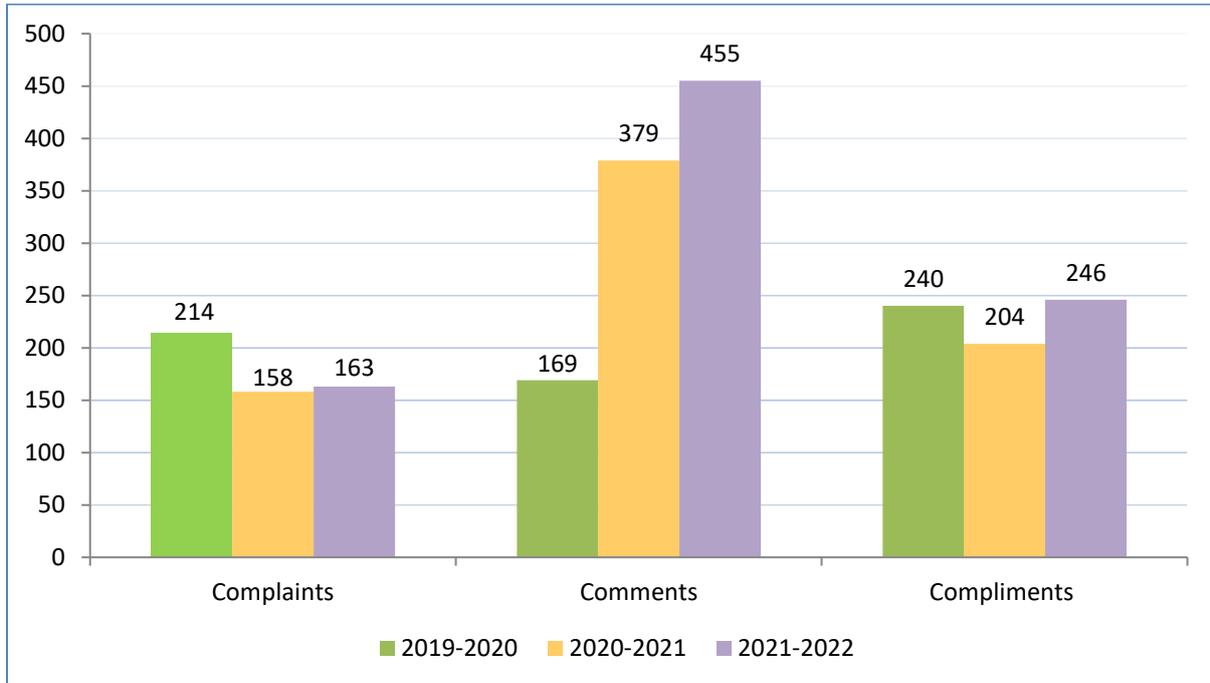


Whole Authority Customer Feedback April 2021 – March 2022

The following table shows the number of complaints, comments and compliments received for each of the three years to March 2022.



Each of these is covered in more detail below:

A. Complaints

163 Complaints were received in the year ending 31 March 2022. This is 24% lower than 2019-2020 with the highest number being in the first quarter and the number declining each subsequent quarter.

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
60	46	30	27	163

Stage 1 - Informal Resolution

156 Complaints were started

Examples of the 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

- Recycling Centres booking systems

Development Management & Planning Policy

- Lack of responses to communications
- Staff conduct
- Handling of planning application / Delay in planning permission
- Issues with enforcement procedures / lack of action
- Issues with new housing development

Highways

- Lack of responses to communications
- Problem with blocked drains / flooding issues
- Staff conduct
- Condition of lanes / roads
- Street lighting
- Speeding in lanes

Others

- Exclusion from Housing register
- Concerns with passenger transport permits
- Environmental issues e.g., vermin at properties
- Inconsistent use of Homelessness policy
- Council tax debts

A more detailed breakdown of the subject of stage one complaints by department is shown in the table below.

The directorate receiving the largest number of complaints is Communities and Place. This is understandable as it delivers the largest number of universal services that will be received by all households. In many cases these will have multiple contact points over the course of a year.

In highways and flood management the most common cause of complaints is communication making up 16% of stage one complaints in the directorate. The most common cause of complaints in Recycling and Waste relates to service quality accounting for 44% of complaints relating to the directorate.

Distribution of Stage 1 Complaints

	Informal received							Formal received			
	Total	Access to Service	Communication Issue	Discrimination	Quality of Service	Staff Conduct	Timescales	Total	Quality of Service	Staff Conduct	Result of Process
Overall Total	156	2	37	2	92	22	1	12	9	1	2
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	3				3						
Resources not allocated	2		1		1						
Total Resources	5		1		4						
Catering	1				1						
Development Management & Planning Policy	18		2		13	3		6	5		1
Highways Operations and SWTRA	11		10		1						
Highways and Flood Management	23		22			1					
Housing and Homelessness	5				3	2		1	1		
Passenger Transport Unit	6				6			3	2		1
Recycling and Waste	73	1	1		60	11		1	1		
Total Communities and Place	137	1	35		84	17		11	9		2
MonLife - Green Infrastructure and Countryside	1						1				
MonLife - Leisure	1				1						
MonLife	2				1		1				
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	1			1							
Total Chief Executive	1			1							
Local Democracy	1	1									
People and Governance	1	1									
Animal Health & Trading Standards								1		1	
Environmental Health - Public Health	4				3	1					
Total Social Care & Health	4				3	1		1		1	
Not allocated to any SIP	1		1								
External	5			1		4					
Total Other	6		1	1		4					

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation

12 Formal complaints received

- 6 were escalated from stage 1
- 6 were new complaints that began at stage 2

Those investigations which have concluded are concerned matters relating to:

- The development of 130 houses over two large fields, the work started by the contractor and the alleged failure of the Planning department to take action against them when presented with evidence about the conduct of the developer.
There were 10 elements to the complaint and they were not upheld.
- The lack of provision of free transport to the complainant's child's chosen school and that no confirmation was provided by the Passenger Transport Unit that free transport would be provided to any alternative schools.
The complaint was not upheld.
- Enforcement duties in relation to alleged breach of planning rules concerning the conversion of a flat on farmland.
The complaint was not upheld.
- The complaint concerns a planning approval which the complainant believes the planning officers were misled in the presented.
The complainant did not continue with their complaint.
- Antagonistic inspections & damaging relationships concerning a breeding licence inspection.
The complaint was not upheld.
- That MCC Housing Options Team did not do all they could to assist the complainants throughout the process of a Possession Notice to remove the tenant from their property.
There were 6 elements to the complaint, 5 were not upheld and one was upheld.
- Passenger Transport unit - The use of S19 and S22 permits. Alleged that contracts are being run using the wrong licence, ultimately compromising public safety and having a detrimental effect on already correctly licenced operators in Monmouthshire.

There were 5 elements to the complaint, one was partially upheld and 5 were not upheld.

The majority of our complaints are in relation to recycling and waste and highways, the front facing services. Despite the legacy of the pandemic and that 44,000

households and 500 businesses are serviced by these teams each year, they have managed to provide a service during such challenging times and responded to the complaints and comments made as quickly as possible.

The complaints received were generally on a par with those in 2020-21, although the stage 2 formal investigations decreased slightly. Comments rose by 20% and pleasingly, so did the compliments with 246 received.

The PSOW provided 9 free online training sessions for us on communication skills, handling complaints and investigation skills. 120 staff have attended the training sessions so far with more sessions programmed for next year. Hopefully this training will equip staff to be complainant focused, fair and objective when dealing with our customers and endeavour to resolve issues in a timely, effective manner.

The lessons learned from complaints is very important and we always do our best to try and 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. Some of the specific service improvements made are contained in section E of this report.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

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

One complaint was referred to us via the PSOW which we investigated at stage 1

A separate report containing the PSOW's findings in relation to complaints about Monmouthshire County Council was reported separately to both Cabinet and Governance and Audit Committee. It showed that Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.21 per 1,000 residents. This ranges from 0.20 to 0.72 with an average of 0.36

Social Services Complaints

Social Services complaints are dealt with separately under the Social Services complaints procedure. 40 complaints were received, 84 comments and 111 compliments were made about the service during April 2021 – March 2022.

B. Comments

455 comments were received in the year ending 31 March 2022 which is more than double the number received in 2019-20. These issues are important as they help

the authority understand where problems may be arising that do not meet the threshold of a complaint but where action may be necessary to prevent issues arising in future.

Compared to complaints, the numbers are more evenly distributed over the year

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
109	122	111	113	455

A selection of comments received concerned:

Waste and Street Services

- HWRC sites – difficulties with booking systems, staff conduct.
- Issues with website regarding purchasing garden bags
- Flytipping issues
- Assisted collections being missed
- Inconsistent collections
- Rubbish left after refuse collections
- Not receiving a collection service
- Maintenance of greens and verges / lack of grass cutting
- Not enough bins at markets
- Damaged bins

Highways

- No notification beforehand of works being carried out or road closures in Chepstow
- Issues with traffic lights in Usk
- Condition of roads
- Car parking tickets
- Road closures in Grosmont
- Parking of vehicles on pavements
- Lack of disabled kerbs on roads
- Moving of disabled parking spaces in car park at Chepstow Castle
- Issues regarding 20mph restrictions
- No traffic management where road closed and blocked
- Speed of traffic
- No signage regarding works in Tintern
- High street changes in Chepstow
- Proposed car park in Monmouth
- Trees being cut down
- Potholes not completed properly
- Blocked gulleys

MonLife

- Swimming lessons cancelled
- Asked to wait outside during inclement weather
- Website showing wrong details for family swimming
- Unable to cancel membership without penalties
- Restricted number on amount of people swimming
- Lack of single sex swimming changing facilities
- Dirty state of swimming changing areas
- Classes cancelled / rearranged from timetable

Other

- Query regarding food markets and Christmas markets in Monmouth town centre
- Council tax, issues with online portal
- Issues with automated telephone service for payments
- Issues with winter payments / isolation payments
- Issues with public toilets in Abergavenny / Tintern
- Comments on the Replacement Local Development plan and access to RLDP documents
- Concerns for an amusement arcade in the centre of Monmouth's historic town
- Not happy with planning processes
- Comments concerning the telephony system eg no queue number waiting system / waiting times to get through
- Issue with renewing library books online
- Concerns regarding MyMon booking system
- Absence of dog warden across Monmouthshire

The breakdown is as follows:

Overall Total	455
Landlord Services	3
Digital Design and Innovation	12
Revenues, Systems & Exchequer	10
Total Resources	25
Building Control	13
Business and Enterprise	1
Cleaning	2
Communication, Engagement and Marketing	1
Development Management & Planning Policy	11
Highways and Flood Management	44
Highways Operations and SWTRA	22
Housing and Homelessness	3
Passenger Transport Unit	2
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	258
Enterprise not allocated	5

Total Communities and Place	362
Caldicot Castle and Country Park	1
Leisure	13
Total MonLife	14
People and Governance not allocated	2
Total People and Governance	2
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	8
Policy & Performance	3
Total Chief Executive	11
Animal Health & Trading Standards	2
Licensing	1
Environmental Health - Public Health	6
Total Social Care & Health	9
Future Schools Teams	1
CYP Not allocated	1
Total Children & Young People	2
General – whole MCC	1
External	29
Total Other	30

C. Compliments

246 Compliments were received in the year to 31st March 2022 which is broadly consistent with the number received in 2019-20. The highest number were received in quarter 1

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YTD
90	55	40	61	246

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.

Building Control send out a satisfaction feedback 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:

- “Please may I take this opportunity to thank Monmouthshire council for the continued excellent service you provide.”
- “I have had several opportunities to experience the varied services you provide, and almost all have been dealt with professionally and in a timely manner.”
- “Please say a big thank you for removing the flytippinging.”
- “Weed removal and power washing in Cormeilles Square. They are very pleasant and polite and this has been noticed by many.”
- “Thanks and congratulations on the no-mow policy in Belgrave Park and Abergavenny generally. The new signage is excellent and the grassland looks fantastic despite the cold wet weather. I’m noticing a big increase in bird life feeding in the park itself now there is food and cover. A massive thanks to you and your team”.
- “Rubbish and overgrown weeds and growth on the lane behind Sycamore Avenue leading to the garages. All residents agree an excellent job has been done by the Council . They really appreciate it.”
- “Thank you for arranging to cut the grass on the riverbank it makes such a difference”.
- “Guys on the collection run resolved the issue quickly and with really good customer service”.
- “Thanks to those responsible with looking after the town centre, in particular green spaces. There has been a noticeable improvement over the last few years and the number and quality of planters and green space changes is much appreciated. I am sure this has had a direct result on the commerce and thriving nature of the town.”
- “Praise for the wild flower verges and areas down by Usk river and which has also seen footpaths artfully cut through the foliage and that includes mown circled areas within this for families to picnic.”
- “I always like to praise as well as criticise. So a bouquet to the council contractor who cut the verge. All the way to the end of the drive. Cleared the road that was getting overgrown. And cut back the hedge on the corner, it has not been trimmed for 3 or 4 years.”
- “Pleased with having my garden waste bin delivered one week after ordering it, and that the man who delivered also wheeled it up to the top of the drive for me.”
- “Outstanding member of staff at Llanfoist Cemetery. Thank you, he was so helpful today. Went out of his way to discover location of a grave.”

Highways

- “A grand job on the work on Walnut Lane. The workers were very accommodating for us when we had to access and egress.”
- “Thank you for your efforts and the team/supply chain, on Friday and over the weekend to get the A465 reopened at Llanguna following the lorry incident.
- “The tarmac repair job they are doing in School Road is excellent”.

- “Just to say a big thankyou to you and your highways team for filling in the holes on the road to my home”
- Thank your employees for the work they did last month on the landslide/drainage problem on Heol Gerrig, Ilanellen, above the canal bridge.
- “The team that came to do the work on our lane in both areas did an excellent job and were really friendly and helpful too.”
- “Pot holes Pentre Lane / Llanwenarth Breast Lane, can you please pass on my thanks to the team, for the above works.”
- “M4 J32 Incident 20.07.21. Please pass on our thanks to the team involved in undertaking these repairs in a very short period of time and during the current heat wave”
- “M186 - Bryn-y-Gwenin, thanks for the new road surface. Your workers were great, friendly, accommodating and helpful. New road is lovely.”
- “Many thanks for the prompt attention to mud slide on B4293 between Devauden and Itton reported yesterday afternoon. Possible accident averted.”
- “I would like to say thank you, to those who helped over the past few days with regards Storm Dudley and Eunice. It was a great effort by all and I certainly learnt a lot during the time.”
- “Reporting a fallen tree during Storm Eunice. Wanted to report how impressed with the team they were - turned up about 2 hours after reporting the tree fallen and very impressed with how quick they were in responding to that call.”

Mon Life / Youth Service / Green Infrastructure and Countryside

- So many praises for Youth Work week.
- “Thank you for everything you’ve done for me.”
- “Just wanted to thank you and all the team for making X’s day with you on Saturday so successful”
- “I wanted to thank you and the team. X had the best time on the expedition last week.”
- “My Daughter has spent that past two days with you completing her bronze DofE. I just wanted to thank you and all the volunteers.”
- “Thank you so much for organising the boys gold practice D of E over May Half term. I think with everything everyone has been through to spend time away with friends in the outdoors was exactly what he needed.”
- “Throughout the COVID 19 pandemic and when the restrictions were first lifted right through to now the leisure centre has worked tirelessly hard to make myself and others feel safe whilst acknowledging that the staff are kept safe too. All staff from those on reception, the house keeping, fitness instructors and the management have worked well and I feel it is very important that their hard work is acknowledged.”
- “We recently had two week's intensive swimming lessons for our Year 5 and 6 pupils. This was an amazing opportunity for a bit of normality for the children and the staff at the Leisure Centre followed all the COVID regulations to make this a successful two weeks for the children. Thank you to everyone who made this possible.”

- “I would like to take the time to share my experience of the combined MON Leisure and GP Referral Scheme as for me it has proved to be an excellent and extremely beneficial system for both my mental and physical wellbeing. Covid 19 has had a devastating impact on many people's lives and to have the facilities of the leisure centre and the support of its staff has been vital for me. All staff have made an incredible effort to ensure that the Leisure Centre facilities are immaculately clean and safe.”
- “Having spent three months over the summer of 2021 walking the whole of the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path self supported I felt compelled to write and thank you. From here we went north to Prestatyn where we picked up the coast path all the way to Chepstow. What an amazing journey! Thank you to everyone who worked to establish the path and all those who continue to promote and maintain it.”
- “Thank you for getting the footpath cleared. They did a wonderful job and left it not only looking better than I have ever seen it but their work was so tidy.”

Others

- Thanks for assistance / advice with planning applications
- “Using your online directory I was able to report some fly tipping near to my house, and this afternoon I get an e mail to say it has now been dealt with. Now that is impressive.”
- “I don't know if you have any way of recognising good performance within Trading Standards, if you have I would like to thank you for excellent customer service provided.”
- “Excellent solution from grumpy to positive situation. Friendly and found a solution to the situation, was really knowledgeable and helped as much as possible.”
- Many thanks for your quick response and for attending to this today, we really appreciate it.'
- “We appreciate that the years we've been working with you on this application have been a hectic time for the council, but whenever we have received advice, it has always been well thought out and helpful.”

A breakdown of compliments by directorate is shown below:

Overall Total	246
Digital Design and Innovation	1
Total Resources	1
Building Control	65
Development Management & Planning Policy	4
Highways and Flood Management	1
Highways Operations and SWTRA	18
Housing and Homelessness	1
Passenger Transport Unit	1
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	61

Enterprise not allocated	2
Total Community and Place	153
Green Infrastructure & Countryside	2
Leisure	6
Youth Service	74
Total MonLife	82
Legal	1
Total People and Governance	1
Community Hubs, Contact Centre & Community Learning	6
Total Chief Executive	6
Animal Health & Trading Standards	1
SCH Not Allocated	1
Total Social Care & Health	2
External	1
Total Other	1

Requests for service

These are recorded and acted upon:

Overall Total	28
Development Management & Planning Policy	1
Highways and Flood Management	5
Highways Operations and SWTRA	3
Recycling and Waste (Inc Grounds)	12
Enterprise not allocated	1
Total Enterprise	22
Green Infrastructure & Countryside	1
Total MonLife	1
Environmental Health – Public Health	3
Total Social Care & Health	3
External	2
Total Other	2

D. 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.

62% stage 1 complaints were responded to in this timescale compared to 72% in the previous year

42% of stage 2 complaints were responded to in this timescale compared with 41% in the previous year

Whole Authority Timescales	2020/21		2021/22	
	Stage 1	Stage2	Stage 1	Stage 2
Up to 10 working days	109	0	96	2
11 – 30 working days	36	7	48	3
30+ working days	6	10	12	7
Total	151	17	156	12

Analysis of Complaints / Comments

Year	Stage 1 complaints	Stage 2 complaints	Comments	Compliments
2021-22	156	12	455	246
2020-21	151	17	379	204
2019-20	207	13	169	240
2018-19	132	14	187	180
2017-18	76	13	123	189

E. 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.

Officers to advise residents in a timely manner when something is not the responsibility of the local authority and direct the resident to the most appropriate avenue to deal with their issue e.g. Developer.

For large developments that are seen as controversial in the neighbouring communities, the Planning Authority will add an informative to its decisions to encourage the developer to engage with residents prior to and throughout the construction of the site

MCC to consider updating Transport Policy to clarify the definition of suitable school. The Rule Book and Transport Policy will be amended prior to the commencement of the school year 2022/23

Consideration is given to including a guidance note/FAQs on the Housing Options Team 'Information for Landlords' webpage setting out the Council's remit in relation to the private rented sector

An application has been made for the Section 19 large bus permit and as soon as this is received then the "O" licence will be relinquished.

Review the Transport Policy, stipulating the rules on transport to ensure it is up to date and in line with the new large bus permit. The drivers handbook to be reviewed to align with the H2S rule book and the wider Transport Policy.

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

November 2022