



**Complaints and Compliments Report
Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee
Half Year
2015/16**

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1. Principles

Carmarthenshire County Council's new Complaints Procedure was adopted in May 2011. The procedure aims to emphasise the following principles:

- To ensure that as many complaints as possible are **resolved at stage 1** local resolution.
- To ensure that investigations follow the '**Investigate Once, Investigate Well**' principle.
- To adopt a stronger emphasis on **learning from complaints** and utilising them where possible to reform service design.

2. Definition

The **definition of a complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction or concern,

- about a public service provider's action or lack of action
- or about the standard of service provided
- which requires a response
- whether about the public service provider itself, a person acting on its behalf, or a public service provider partnership.

Complaints which are currently open and under investigation are **not included** in this report.

The complaints referred to within this report are those where the investigation has been completed during the review period.

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3. Complaints investigated and responded to between April 2015 – September 2015

SERVICE	Stage 1				Stage 2			
	No. of Complaints responded to ¹	No. receiving a full response within allocated time period ²	No. receiving a full response after allocated time period ³		No. of Complaints responded to	No. receiving a response within allocated time period ⁴	No. receiving a response after allocated time period	
Chief Executives	18	12 67%	6 3%		0	0 0%	0	0%
Education & Children's Services (excluding Statutory Complaints)	4	4 100%	0 0%		0	0 0%	0	0%
Corporate Services	21	19 90%	2 10%		2	0 0%	2	100%
Community (excluding Statutory Complaints)	53	34 64%	19 36%		4	1 25%	3	75%
Environment	104	64 62%	40 38%		8	4 50%	4	50%
Cross Departmental Issues	4	4 100%	0 0%		0	0 0%	0	0%
Statutory Social Services Complaints – covering Children Services, Adult Social Services and Mental Health and Learning Disabilities ⁵	29	11 38%	18 62%		4	1 25%	3	75%
TOTAL	233	148 64%	85 36%		18	6 33%	12	67%

¹ This is the cumulative figure of complaints investigated and responded to within the period of the report this financial year

² Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 10 working days, with an additional 10 working day extension with the complainant's consent

³ Any complaints which have been investigated and responded to outside the allocated time period

⁴ Any corporate complaint which has been investigated and responded to within 10 working days. Any Statutory Social Service Complaint where an investigation has been undertaken and a response has been sent within the allocated time period. This initially would be 25 working days, or up to 3 months with the complainant's consent

⁵ These are any complaints logged which fall under the Statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure

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4. Summary of complaints

- The Authority investigated and responded to 251 complaints during the first half of 2015/16, compared to 313 during the same period for 2014/15.
- Overall, 66% of cases received a response within the allocated time period, compared to 69% for the same period last year.

Department	Total No. of complaints received
Chief Executive's Department	18
Education & Children's Services (excl Statutory Complaints)	4
Corporate Services	23
Community (excluding Statutory Complaints)	57
Environment	112
Cross Departmental	4
Statutory complaints for Children Services, Adult Social Services and Mental Health and Learning Disabilities	33
Total	251

5. Redirected Communication

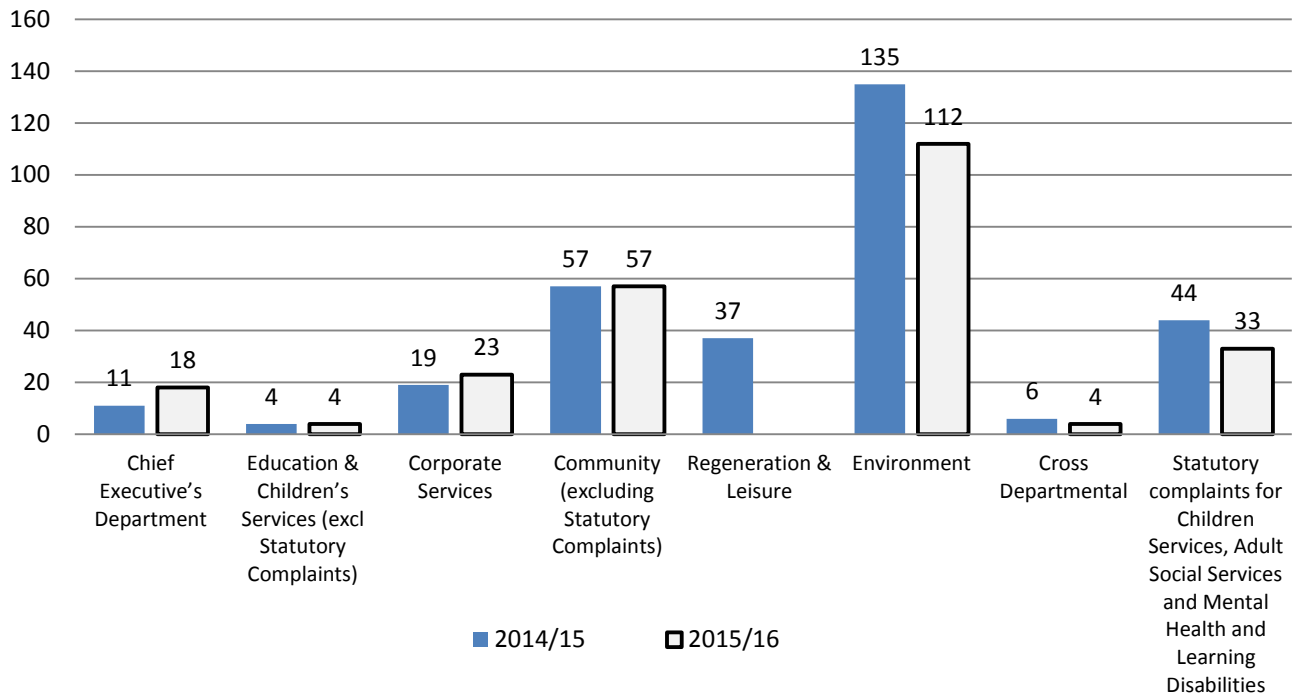
The Complaints Team also addressed a further **273** "Redirects" – enquiries and requests for assistance which offered the team the opportunity to try and rectify difficulties before complaints arise. This figure would also include any dissatisfaction received regarding properly made Policy decisions which would not be addressed by the formal Complaints Policy.

Department	Total No of Redirected communication received
Chief Executive's Department	17
Education & Children's Services	25
Corporate Services	9
Community	93
Environment	125
Cross Departmental	2
External Providers	2
Total	273

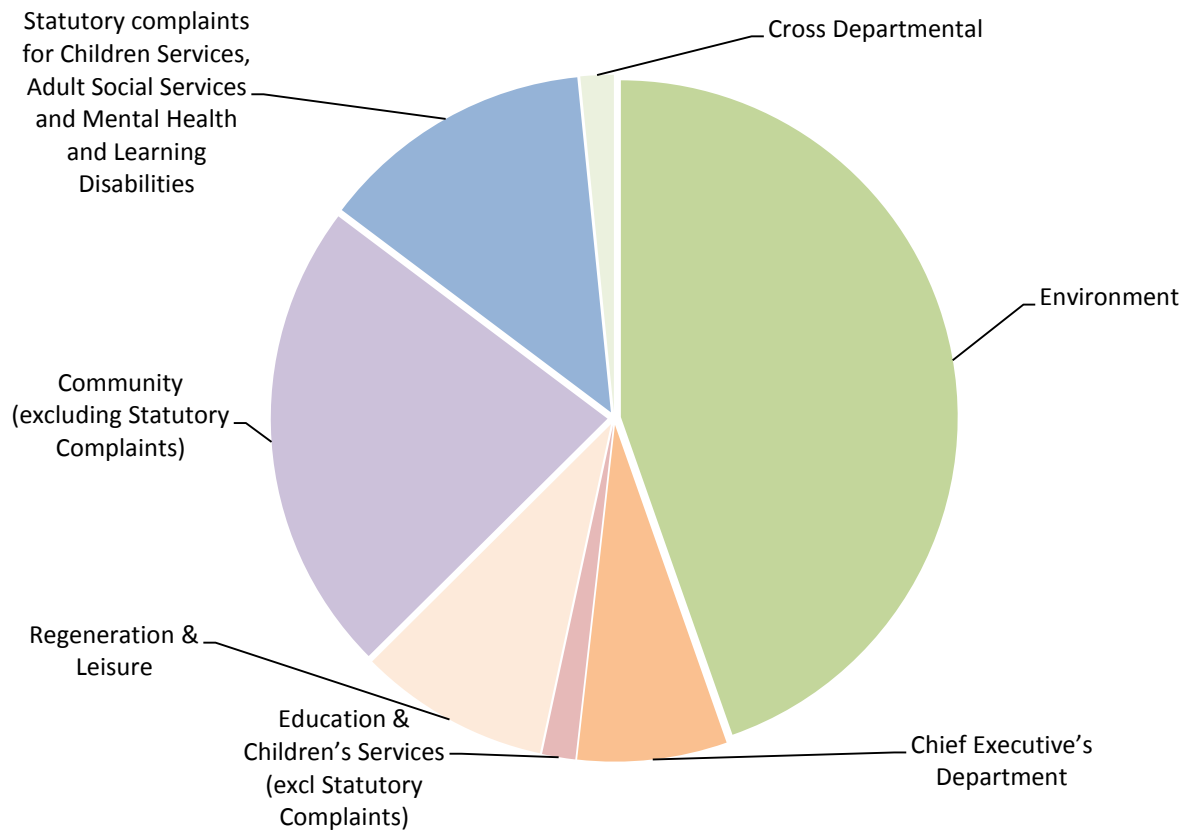
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****Comparisons are approximations only due to departmental reorganisations****

Number of Complaints investigated & responded to during Q1 & Q2 2015/16 compared to 2014/15



Complaints by Department 2015/16



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6. Complaints with any equalities or Welsh language issues

During the first half of 2015/16 we received no complaints which involved specific Welsh language issues.

7. Complaints determined by the Ombudsman during 2015 / 16 (April to September)

			Ombudsman conclusion				
	Concluded by Ombudsman 2015-16	Settled	Not Upheld	Discontinued	Out of jurisdiction	Referred back to Authority	Upheld
Chief Executives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education & Children's Services	2	0	0	0	0	2	0
Resources	3	1	0	1	0	1	0
Community Services	2	0	0	2	0	0	0
Environment	14	2	0	4	4	4	0
Cross Departmental Issues	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Total	22	3	0	8	4	7	0

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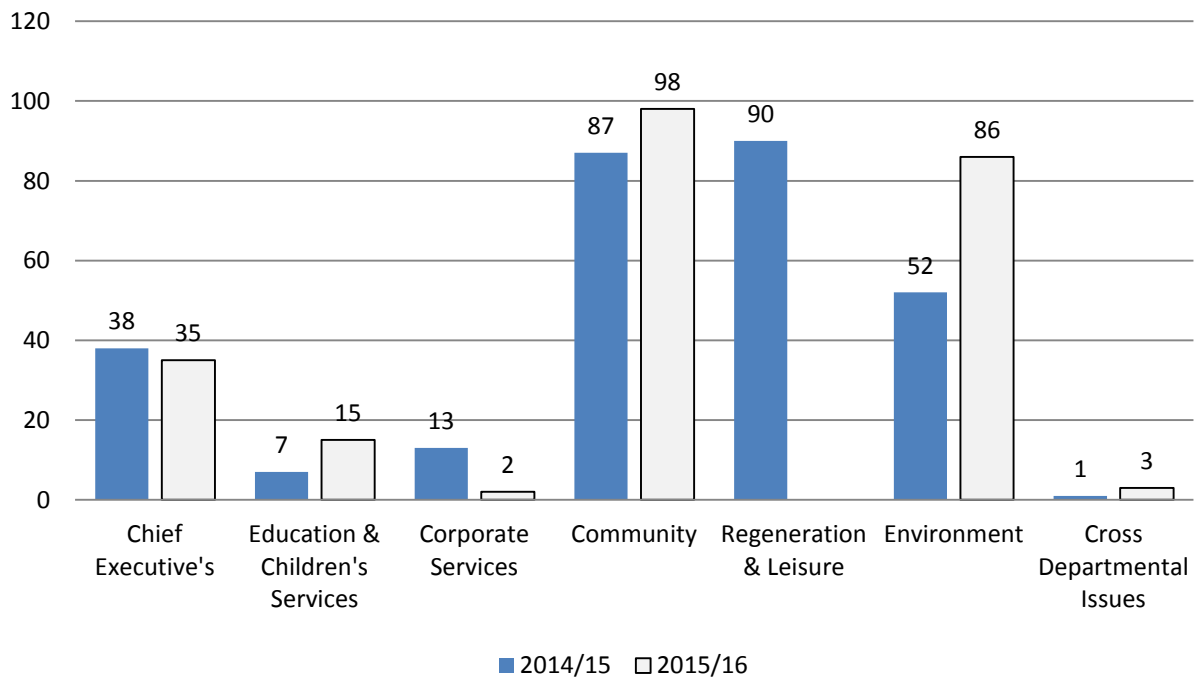
8. All Departments Compliments

Service	No. of compliments received
Chief Executives	35
Education & Children's Services	15
Corporate Services	2
Community	98
Environment	86
Cross Departmental Issues	3
Total	239

- The Authority received 239 compliments between April 2015 and September 2015, compared to 288 for the same period in 2014/15.

****Comparisons are approximations only due to departmental reorganisations****

Number of compliments received during Q1 & Q2 2015/16 compared to 2014/15



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9. Departmental Complaint & Compliment Analysis

9.1 Chief Executives

Complaints	Regeneration and Policy		People Management and Performance		Administration and Law		IT	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	14		0		2		2	
Upheld	4	29%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%
Partially Upheld	6	42%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%
Not Upheld	4	29%	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	0		0		0		0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

Registrars received one complaint that was upheld, it related to insufficient communication between the authority and a bride regarding scaffolding on Town Hall at the time of her wedding. A complaint regarding the manner of a registrar was partially upheld with an apology being given for any misunderstanding over comments made.

Economic Development has a partially upheld complaint regarding the organisation of a first aid course.

Customer Services acknowledged that they could have been more helpful when assisting with a Blue Badge enquiry by allowing use of a PC or printing off an electronic form. An apology also had to be given because card payments could not be made in The Hub in Llanelli.

Two complaints were received in relation to IT. One was upheld. It concerned the way a request for assistance at a library was addressed.

Three complaints were received regarding the manner of a Contact Centre agent. Apologies were given to callers by Team Leaders.

Compliments	Policy	Registrars	Customer Services Centres	Contact Centre	Complaints	IT
Compliments received	1	3	8	7	1	15

Analysis of the trends:

- Registrars received three compliments about the way in which they conducted wedding ceremonies “...we just wanted to say the biggest thank you for conducting our ceremony. You put us at ease”
- A complainant acknowledged the way in which their complaint had been addressed and the fact that it was resolved promptly.
- A number of compliments were received in relation to the manner of the staff working in the Customer

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Service Centres. The support that they provide members of the public was also noted. *"I don't think I would have managed to complete all the necessary documents without their guidance", "...very very helpful. Clear, concise and I am very grateful, "Very professional, a credit to the council"*

- The staff were also compliments on the way they addressed matters for the public *"Excellent customer service, extremely helpful and went the extra mile to help me with my enquiry", "Thank you to the very kind, polite gentleman"*
- IT received a number of compliments. *"your work and commitment has reflected true partnership working in Carmarthenshire", "He took our rants, came over and over to check things out, reset us and was a really big help", "PCs converted to laptops has improved efficiency - support was appreciate"*

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9.2 Corporate Services

Complaints	Corporate Property		Financial Services		IT		Audit and Risk Management	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	2		18		2		1	
Upheld	1	100%	4	22%	1	50%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	1	100%	1	6%	1	50%	1	100%
Not Upheld	0	0%	13	72%	0	0%	0	0%
Stage 2 Complaints Investigated	1		1				0	
Upheld	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Partially Upheld	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Not Upheld	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%

Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends

- Audit and Risk Management received one complaint which was partially upheld. It involved the length of time it took to complete an Insurance Claim. The complainant had already accepted a full and final settlement, however an apology was given for any delay.
- Corporate Property received a complaint about the process used to sell Council Property. It was partially upheld because although policy was followed, communication could have been improved to avoid any misunderstanding. The other Stage 1 complaint concerned communication issues and was upheld. The third complaint was investigated at Stage 2 and involved the conduct of an officer carrying out site visits. It was partially upheld and staff are to be reminded of the protocol / best practice when carrying out site visits.
- 19 complaint s were received for Financial Services, all involving Council Tax or Benefits. Four of these were upheld. They involved the miscommunication of information regarding recovery action (sincere apology given), a recovery firm not recording payments correctly (apology given by the company), the way joint tenant records were recorded (methods reviewed) and a letter sent out in error by the team (apology given). The complaint that was partially upheld concerned a slight delay in verifying correspondence about the sale of a property (apology given).

Compliments	Corporate Property	Financial Services	IT
Compliments received per division	0	2	15

Analysis of the trends:

- The knowledge and effort of the Pensions team was acknowledged *“your pensions team have been ultra efficient in the way they have dealt with his retirement pension”*
- A Council Tax Officer was also thanked for the way in which they dealt with a refund *“thank you for giving council service a good reputation”*

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9.3 Cross Departmental

Complaints	Cross Departmental	
Stage 1 Complaints Investigated	4	
Upheld	1	25%
Partially Upheld	1	25%
Not Upheld	2	50%
Stage 2 Complaints investigated	0	
Upheld		
Partially Upheld		
Not Upheld		
Analysis of the nature of complaints and the trends		
<p>Three of the cross departmental complaints received related to issues concerning building / maintenance work being carried out to Council Houses. They therefore involved elements of concern about Housing and Environment Departments. One was upheld, one partially upheld and one was not upheld.</p> <p>The other complaint required clarification around food waste bin liners and also a concern over a highway defect. It was not upheld.</p>		
Compliments	3	
Analysis of the trends		
<p>Thanks were received for the way a Housing Repairs request was logged by the Contact Centre and then carried out by the Property Services Division.</p> <p>The Foods Standards Agency acknowledged the work of the Public Protection and Legal teams taking positive action against food establishments serving food contaminated with other food stuffs.</p> <p>A compliment was received for the way a request for verge cutting was carried out quickly (Contact Centre and Highways).</p>		