

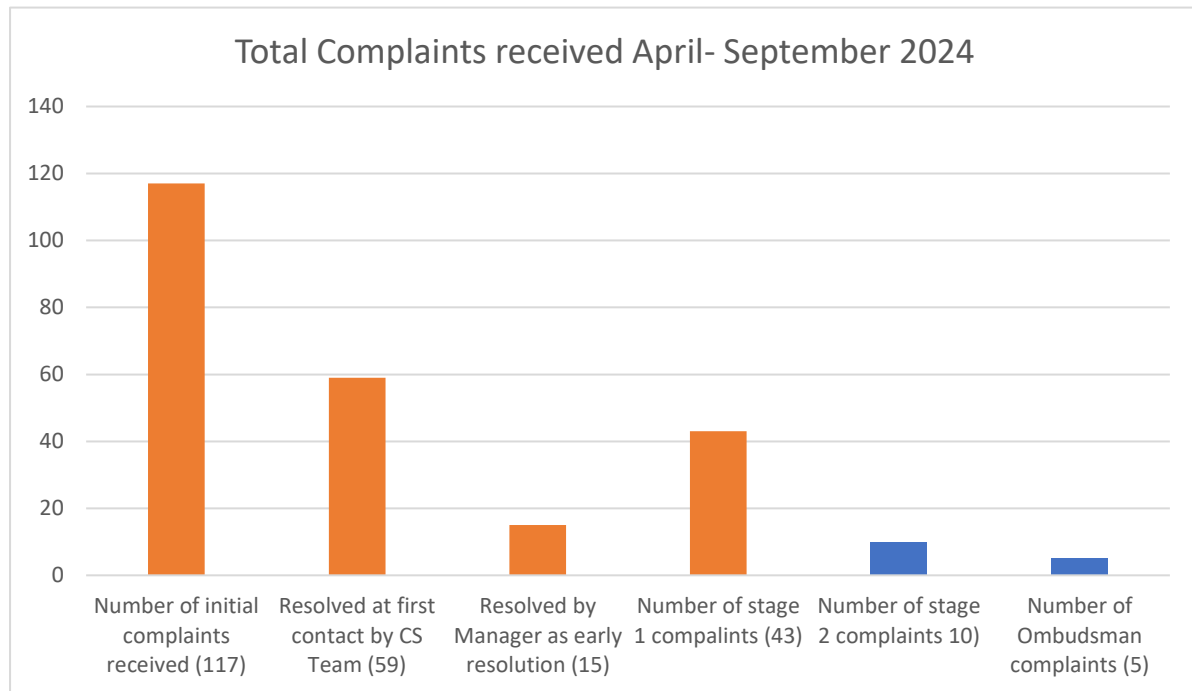
Bi-Annual Complaints Report April 2024 – September 2024

Introduction

The report summarises our complaints performance during the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2024/2025 covering the period from 1st April 2024 to 30th Sept 2024.

The purpose of this report is to review the complaints received by the Council over a six-month period, looking at the statistical data, in order to provide information about complaint themes, trends and the effectiveness of our current complaint's procedure.

The Overall Picture



- The number of initial complaints received between 1st April 2024 to 30th September 2024 was 117 which is an increase of 30 on the previous 6-month period
- 59 complaints were resolved at first point of contact by the Customer Service team
- 15 complaints were resolved by managers as Early Resolution
- 43 complaints went through the formal complaints process and were investigated as Stage 1 complaints
- 10 complaints were escalated to Stage 2
- 5 complaints were received by the Ombudsman although one is not being investigated.

Monthly Breakdown for all complaints

Month	Number Received	Resolved By Customer Services (Early Resolution)	Resolved By Manager (Early Resolution)	Percentage (Early Resolution)	Stage 1 Received
Apr 24	16	5	2	44%	9
May 24	22	13	0	59%	9
Jun 24	19	13	3	84%	3
Jul 24	24	9	5	58%	10
Aug 24	17	9	2	65%	6
Sept 24	19	10	3	68%	6
Total	117	59	15	63%	43

The chart above shows the breakdown of how each complaint was handled. Overall, 63% of the complaints received were dealt with either by Customers Services or by early resolution without the need for an investigation and formal response. This is a much more effective, efficient and customer focused method of resolving customer complaints.

The chart below shows the stage 1 complaint comparison from Apr 23– Sept23 last year and the current reporting period Apr 24- Sept24 this year, to show a more direct comparison between months.

**Last Year
Apr 23 – Sept 23**

**This Year
Apr 24 – Sept 24**

Month	Stage 1 complaints received	Month	Stage 1 complaints received
Apr 23	4	Apr 24	9
May 23	4	May 24	9
Jun 23	7	Jun 24	3
Jul 23	4	Jul 24	10
Aug 23	13	Aug 24	6
Sept 23	1	Sept 24	6
Total	33	Total	43

The below chart shows the stage 1 complaint comparison from the previous reporting period Q3 and Q4 (Oct 23 -Mar 24) and the current reporting period Q1 and Q2 (24-25) Apr 24 – Sept 24)

**Previous reporting 6 months
Oct 23 – Mar 24**

**Current reporting 6 months
Apr 24 – Sept 24**

Month	Stage 1 complaints received	Month	Stage 1 complaints received
Oct 23	8	Apr 24	9
Nov 23	6	May 24	9
Dec 23	3	Jun 24	3
Jan 24	3	Jul 24	10
Feb 24	6	Aug 24	6
Mar 24	8	Sept 24	6
Total	34	Total	43

We have seen an increase in Stage 1 complaints, several factors contribute to this rise, with the most significant being the impact of recent organisational changes within the Council. This is particularly reflected in complaints related to services like Clean and Green and Waste, where issues such as stopping grass cutting in open spaces we do not own and the shift to fortnightly bin collections have been raised. It is expected that these complaints will decrease in the coming months as customer get used to the changes.

The below chart shows the stage 2 complaint comparison with the previous reporting period Q3 and Q4 (Oct 23-Mar 24) and the current reporting period Q1 and Q2 (Apr 24 to Sep 24).

**Previous reporting 6 months
Oct 23 – Mar 24**

**Current reporting 6 months
Oct 23 – Mar 24**

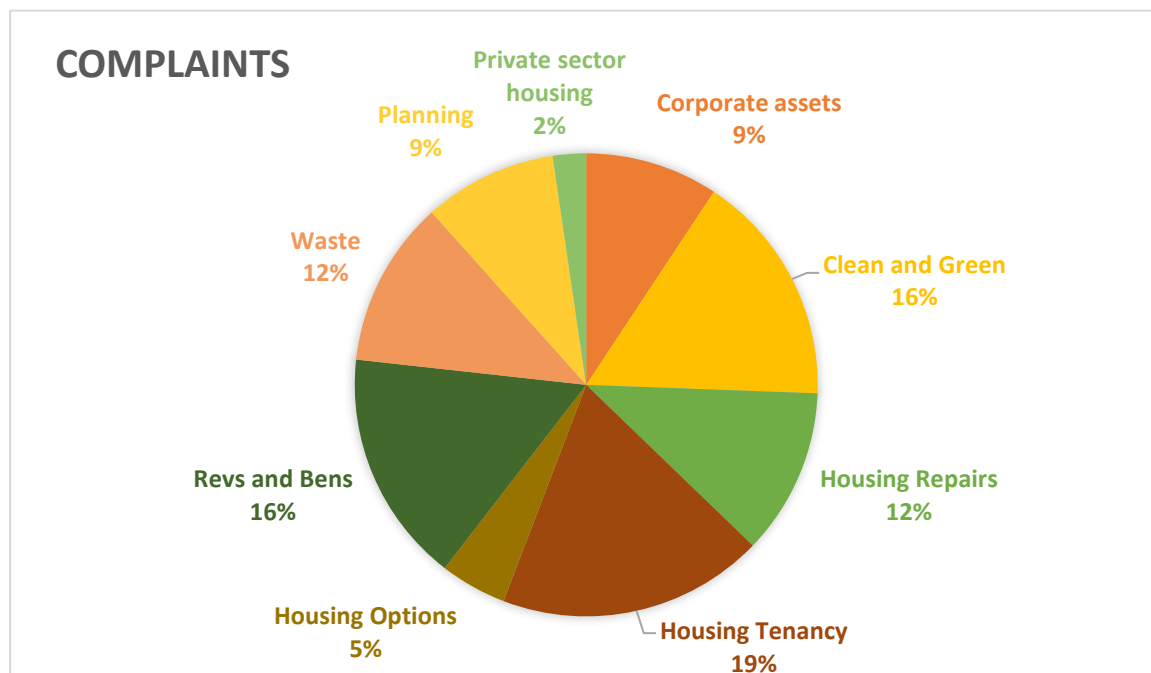
Month	Stage 2 complaints received	Month	Stage 2 complaints received
Oct 23	0	Apr 24	0
Nov 23	2	May 24	1
Dec 23	0	Jun 24	2
Jan 24	0	Jul 24	2
Feb 24	1	Aug 24	4
Mar 24	2	Sept 24	1
Total	5	Total	10

The comparison chart above shows an increase in the number of Stage 2 complaints, which can again be attributed to staff reductions across the Council and the reduction in turnaround times and some service standard. While unfortunate, this increase was inevitable given the difficult decisions we have had to make due to the Council's current financial situation.

The number of Ombudsman complaints has remained steady at five during this reporting period, unchanged from the previous reporting period.

Departmental Breakdown

The chart below shows all Stage 1 complaints received by each department.



Law and Democracy

Clean and Green - Stage 1 Complaints – Total 7

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Clean and Green	Tennis court fence removal	Alleged damage to vehicle from tennis ball	1x Not Upheld
	Lack of grass cutting	Delay in cutting parks and open spaces	1x Upheld
		Lack of grass cutting privately owned open spaces	1x Not upheld
		Lack of grounds maintenance	Complaint of ivy growing over fence from Council land
	Lack of grounds maintenance	Overgrowing hedge at cemetery and lack of response	1x Upheld
		Branches leaning on fence and lack of response	1x Partially upheld
Sports pitch complaint	Poor quality cricket lines , incorrect pitch size marked	1x Upheld £30 compensation	

Corporate Assets

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 4

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Corporate Assets	Car park issues	Issues with parking at pavilion	1x partially Upheld
		Increase in car parking fees	1x Not upheld
		Increase in car parking fees and overflowing private bins	1x Not upheld
	Cemeteries	Lack of communication over refund	1x Upheld

Stage 2 Complaints – Total 2

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Clean and Green	Branches leaning on fence	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	Not upheld
	Lack of grass cutting on privately owned spaces	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	Not upheld

Corporate Assets/ clean and Green – Commentary

There has been an increase in complaints within both the Clean and Green and Corporate Assets service area over the last six months. Many of these can be attributed to the impact organisational change has had on the team and the decision to no longer maintain land which the Council does not own in order that the green team can focus their time on land we do own and housing areas where customers are paying for maintenance.

The issues with the sports pitches have now been addressed and this should reduce any further complaints regarding this. There have been additional pressures on the team, with staff sickness and delays in recruitment. This has put pressure on the rest of the team and resulted in some of the green maintenance being behind schedule. Moving forward the quantity of these complaints should reduce.

In Corporate Assets the decision to increase car parking fees was as a result of financial pressures which resulted in a number of complaints. The issues with lack

Waste

Area: Waste

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 5

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Waste	Collection Issues	Overflowing bin not emptied	1x Not Upheld
	Fortnightly Collection	Unhappy with change to fortnightly bin collections	1x Not Upheld
	Large bin assessment	Unhappy with the large bin assessment process	1x Not Upheld
	Near miss collision with bin lorry	Unhappy with lack of banksman when reversing	1x Upheld
	Garden Waste	Lack of action on genuinely missed collection	1x Upheld

Stage 2 Complaints – Total 1

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Garden Waste	Lack of action on genuinely missed bin	Unhappy with Stage 1 Response	Upheld £ 25.00 compensation

Waste Manager – Commentary

Waste collection impacts all residents in the borough, so some complaints are inevitable. Regarding collection issues, the shift to fortnightly collections was necessary due to financial pressures faced by the council. With waste being collected from over 24,000 properties, there will occasionally be instances where bins are genuinely missed. Additionally, there are times when residents present overflowing bins, which we are unable to collect.

Private Sector Housing

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 1

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Private sector housing	Grants	Lack of action/ response for customer wanting to make grant application	1x not upheld

Senior Strategic Development Manager - Commentary

The Grant application was not progressed as those who administer (through West Yorkshire Gas) were not able to contact the lady. By the time she reached out to us the grant scheme had closed. She has been advised that we will let her know about any further grant programmes as and when and if they are set up under the new government.

Built Environment

Housing Options

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 2

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Housing Options	Temporary accommodation	Failure to meet customers' needs	1x Not Upheld
		Complaint against temporary accommodation and staff member	1x Not Upheld

Repairs

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 5

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Housing Repairs	Contractor issues	No show of contractor	1x Not Upheld
		Contractor professionalism dispute	1x Not Upheld
		Complaint against contractor	1x Upheld
	Complaint against staff member at OOH	Alleged staff rudeness	1x partially Upheld
	Health and safety issue	Lack of action with bedbug infestation at neighbouring property	1x Not upheld

Tenancy

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 8

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Housing Tenancy	ASB issues	ASB and noise complaint	1x Partially Upheld £150 compensation
		ASB and residents using customers bins	1x Partially Upheld
		ASB with neighbours' complaint and lack of action	1x Not Upheld as ongoing investigation
	Communal Clear up (Zero tolerance complaints)	Lack of notice and complaint about removal of personal items from communal areas	2x Not Upheld
	Complaint against staff member	Alleged rude staff member	1x Upheld £75 compensation offered
	Issues with asbestos flooring	Termination of lease and costs associated with floor replacement	1x Upheld £450 compensation offered
Untidy garden complaint	Vegetation and cuttings left in complainants communal garden	1x Not Upheld	

Stage 2 Complaints – Total 5

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Housing Tenancy	ASB reports not being actioned	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	Upheld £450 Compensation awarded
	Vegetation and cuttings left in communal garden	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	1x Upheld £75 compensation for frustration offered
	Termination of lease and costs associated with floor replacement	Unhappy with Level 1 Response-asking for additional compensation	1x Not Upheld
Housing Repairs	ASB with neighbours' complaint and lack of action	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	1x Upheld £700 compensation awarded
	Lack of action with bedbug infestation at neighbouring property	Unhappy with Level 1 Response	1X Not Upheld

Housing Manager - Commentary

The total number of complaints in the first six months is reflective of the number of complaints for the same period last year.

We are committed to ensuring a positive complaints culture exists within the Housing Department, in which we listen to our customers and learn from their experiences. Learning from complaints and making service improvements as a result of them. We will complete an annual self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman and Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's complaint handling codes and provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of our complaint handling performance. We will also identify what service improvements have been made as a result of the learning from housing complaints and report our performance to Tenants, Members and the relevant ombudsman.

Planning

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 4

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Development control	Planning application	Complaint over neighbours planning application	1x Not Upheld
		Complaint over lack of planning permission on neighbours' fence	1x Not Upheld
		Length of time taken for a pre app response	1x Partially Upheld
	Breach of planning	Complaint about how a breach of planning investigation was conducted	1x not upheld

Planning Policy and Development Manager – Commentary

Given the provocative nature of the Planning profession, complaints will be received when applicants and other customers are aggrieved with the outcomes and decisions that are being made by the Council.

Over the past 6 months the Planning Department has received 4 complaints; one relating to an Enforcement case whereby the allogger suggested that they never received feedback from the Council, despite the Council attempting to contact them by telephone, email and posted letter; another complaint suggesting that the Governments General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) was incorrect and should not be applied to flat roof dormer extensions, however the Council must apply the GPDO legislation as enacted; another complaint suggested that the Council and the Planning Inspectorate (in refusing an application and then commencing enforcement action) had acted petty and discriminatory, however the Council is duty bound to enforce against unauthorised works and deals with all cases consistently; and finally, one relating to a lack of Officer response to a pre-application submission. The pre-application complaint was partially upheld as the Officer (who no longer works for the Council) dealing with the pre-application advised the customer that they had other priorities even after a significant length of time, which was considered unacceptable.

Customer Service and Transformation

Revenues and Benefits

Stage 1 Complaints – Total 7

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Recovery	Summons dispute	Lack of action by Council Tax team	1x Partially Upheld
	Charges Dispute	Summons and liability costs on account	1x Not Upheld
Business Rates	Liability issue	Complaint regarding business rates collection and recovery process	1x Not Upheld
		Complaint about business rates exemption - awaiting valuation office input	1x Not Upheld
Council Tax	Single person discount	Dispute over money owing on account	1x Not Upheld
	Direct Debit	Lack of action transferring Direct Debit to new account	1x Upheld
	Council Tax arrears	Lack of action updating records	1x Partially Upheld

Stage 2 Complaints – Total 2

Area	Category	Overview	Upheld
Business Rates	Business rates Grant repayment	Unhappy with Level 1 response	1 Not Upheld
Recovery	Recovery costs on account	Unhappy with Level 1 response	1 Not Upheld

Revenues and Benefits Manager - Commentary

The vast majority of complaints have not been upheld, these have related to liability issues or customers being unhappy with recovery decisions made where money has been owed. Two complaints were partially upheld, one related to a staff error and the other to a delay, feedback has been given as appropriate, and the delay was due to resources issues

Ombudsman Complaints

There has been 5 complaints raised with the Ombudsman. Of the 5, they decided only to investigate 4 of them, refusing 1.

Month	Area	Overview	Outcome	Lesson learned
May 2024	Housing	Handling of unsafe garden complaint	LGO requested information 04/06/2024	Awaiting Outcome
June 2024	Housing	ASB, Repairs issues and requests for house move	LGO requested information 27/06/2024	Awaiting Outcome
August 2024	Corporate assets - Cemeteries	Complaint about the Cemetery Rules and Regulations policy	Not investigated	N/A
Sept 2024	Housing	Alleged lack of response to ASB	LGO requested information by 27/09/2024	Awaiting outcome
Sept 2024	Housing	ASB and concerns about staff conduct	Awaiting triage and mediation	Awaiting Outcome

Complaints Monitoring

Every complaint is taken seriously, examining the reasons behind each one, extracting valuable lessons, and making sure we don't repeat the same mistakes. Response times are closely tracked as illustrated in the table below.

Month	Stage 1 Complaints (Target 10 days)	Stage 2 Complaints (Target 20 days)
Apr 24	8	N/a
May 24	10	20
Jun 24	16	13
Jul 24	9	19
Aug 24	11	14
Sept 24	11	1

The response times have been out of target on occasion. This again is a result of organisational change, and managers having more work to do as a result. To mitigate this, a new compliance system is being introduced which will speed up the process of complaints handling as well as send reminders of deadlines which will reduce these back within target.

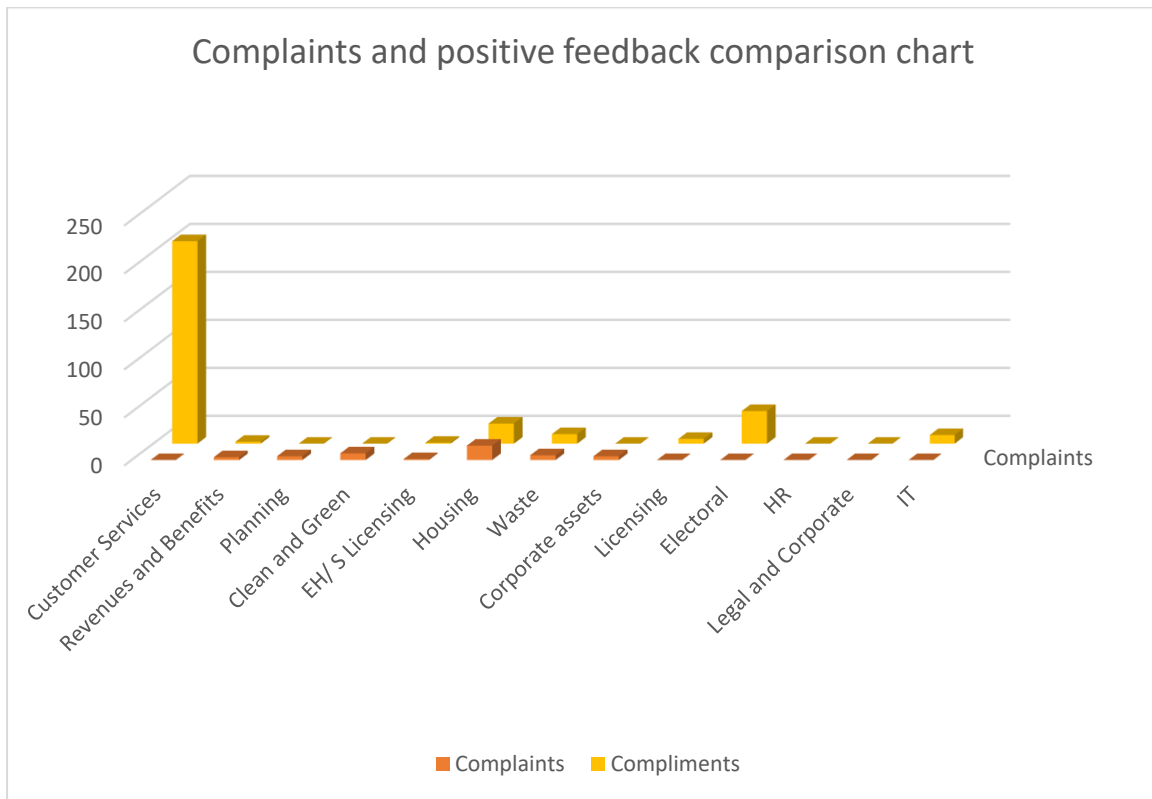
Positive Comments

Between April 2024 and September 2024 there were 293 positive feedbacks, compliments and comments received.

The Customer Services team and reception (211) and the Electoral team (34) received the highest amount of positive feedback due to the frontline nature of their services, recent election and their proactive participation in surveying customers.

Whenever we receive positive feedback, it is documented in a register. The below chart shows the positive feedback received in comparison to the number of complaints for each

department. It illustrates that our service areas consistently receive a significantly higher amount of positive feedback than complaints.



The following departments received positive feedback and no complaints.

Customer Services	211 Positive feedback comments
Community and Wellbeing	33 Positive feedback comments
Electoral Services	34 Positive feedback comments
Licensing	5 Positive feedback comment
HR	2 Positive Comments
IT	9 Positive Comments

Examples of positive feedback received.

Licensing

Just wanted to inform you that i received the license/badge and wanted to say a big thank you to the yourself and the licensing team.

Waste

Resident would like to express her gratitude for the waste crews in helping her whilst she has been at this address with all of her assisted collections

she advised she has been very happy with the service she has received

Housing

I'd just like to thank the housing team for arranging today's older persons day event today at Chartwell House Oadby. As a resident, it was lovely to meet different council members and other residents. It was a lovely atmosphere and the food provided was delicious and fresh. Thanks to all involved

Financial Inclusion

The Finance Inclusion Officer has transformed our lives with her caring, gentle and altogether helpful attitude. I cannot thank her enough. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. As I have mentioned before, you are an angel sent to me and I thank God for you. God bless

Customer Services

Really grateful for all of your help, I have been in hospital and have been worried, so really happy this has all been sorted out now