



Scrutiny Board

17 March 2015

Report title	Complaints Report Quarter 3	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Central Services	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	City Direct	
Accountable employee(s)	Sarah Campbell Tel Email	Complaints Manager 01902 551901 sarah.campbell@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

1. The Panel is recommended to review complaints management and performance for the period October 2014 to December 2014.
2. The Panel is recommended to note and comment on the compliments reporting process discussed at 5.0.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the complaints, compliments and Local Government Ombudsman enquiries received by the Council during the period quarter three – October, November, December 2014.
- 1.2 Complaints, compliments and Ombudsman enquiries are considered as a form of customer feedback. They are recorded and monitored by Customer Services Corporate Complaints Team within the Corporate Directorate. Monitoring customer feedback provides details about the types of complaints that are received by the authority and highlights any improvements or amendments made to service provision or delivery.

2.0 Complaints

- 2.1 During quarter three, the Council received 122 stage one complaints; all complaints are assessed as to whether they are justified or not by the Complaints Manager. Of the complaints received during this period 15 (12%) were upheld. Waste Management accounted for the highest number of upheld (three). Their upheld complaints related to refuse officer conduct (one), delays in refuse collection (one) and late responses and processes for bin enquiries (one).
- 2.2 Two trends were identified with the complaints received for Waste Management during quarter three. These trends were identified as bin contamination policy and additional recycling clear plastic bag policy. The complaints team are current liaising with Waste Management to ensure that these two policies are reviewed.
- 2.3 Waste Management received the highest number of complaints (28), followed by Revenues and Benefits (25) (appendix 1, page 9)
- 2.4 Waste Management and Revenues and Benefits dealt with the highest number of complaints; however, they completed investigations into their complaints within an average of 9 days. This has contributed significantly to achieving an average overall response timescale of 12 days for quarter three (appendix 1, page 9)
- 2.5 During quarter three 100% of stage one complaints were responded to within the timescales (appendix 1, page 8). The Council has therefore achieved its target of responding to 90% of complaints within 21 calendar days during quarter three.
- 2.6 The complaints team provide support to investigating officers to ensure that they meet response deadlines by making contact with them by phone and email regarding impending deadlines, and ensuring customers are kept updated when delays are unavoidable. Response reminders are sent to investigating officers by the complaints team on a weekly basis.

3.0 Stage two complaints

- 3.1 During quarter three, 13 (11%) of the stage one complaints progressed to stage two of the complaints procedure. One of the stage two complaints was upheld; this related to an invoice incorrectly issued to a customer on two occasions.
- 3.2 All recommendations from the outcome of the upheld stage two complaint have been agreed and will be implemented by the Community Directorate, Older People and Personalisation.
- 3.3 There were no further concerns or issues with other complaints that progressed to stage two.

4.0 Local Government Ombudsman enquiries

- 4.1 During quarter three, the Council received two enquiries from the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO); Education and Enterprise (one) and Community (one).
- 4.2 With regards to Education and Enterprise, one enquiry was received about School Skills and Learning. The enquiry relating to Schools Skills and Learning was upheld due to maladministration and injustice for faults and delays in hearing a school appeal, and failure to provide a school place. A service improvement report has been issued to the service group with recommendations for changes to service delivery.
- 4.3 With regards to Community, one enquiry was received about Children Young People and Families. A draft final decision has been received from the LGO. The outcome of this report will be addressed in the Annual Complaints Report.

5.0 Compliments

- 5.1 For the period quarter three, the Council received 30 compliments from customers. The Planning Department accounted for the highest number of compliments (Nine) followed by Housing Options Team (eight).
- 5.2 As part of the 100:100 programme we are asking Council employees to tell us about compliments they have received (internal or external) in order for these to be recorded and reported back to this board.

6.0 Monitoring Information

- 6.1 There are no concerns with the data analysis, and there is no evidence of any groups being disproportionately affected. The equalities data is based upon what complainants have provided and therefore there are no concerns of any groups being disproportionately affected. This is reflected in appendix 1, pages 11-24.

7.0 Focus Group

- 7.1 A complaints focus group will take place on 12 March 2015; the themes for the meeting will be bin contamination policy and additional recycling clear plastic bag policy. The focus group notes will be circulated to all participants and to the relevant service groups. The focus group findings will be presented to the Service Improvement Group to drive service delivery and to ensure that improvements are customer led.

8.0 Service Improvements

- 8.1 The Complaints Team produce service improvement reports for upheld complaints where the recommendations are for a change to policy or service delivery. The recommendations are agreed with Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Director and Strategic Director, and the Managing Director.
- 8.2 The production of service improvement reports commenced in January 2014. During quarter three the following service improvement report has been produced and agreed with the head of service. Recommendations will be delivered as appropriate.

9.0 Service Improvement Report

- 9.1 This related to a complaint received from the LGO about the Council's school admissions team and school appeals. The complaint was upheld due to maladministration and injustice for faults and delays in hearing a school appeal, and failure to provide a school place. The Council has apologised to the complainant for the faults identified; the handling of the school application; the delay in holding the appeal and the handling of the complaint. The Council has also agreed to pay a financial remedy and will undertake a review of the processes/procedures for school admission applications. A service improvement report has been issued to the service group with recommendations for changes to service delivery.

10.0 Ward Data

- 10.1 During quarter three, ward complaint data has been collated. Monitoring ward data provides details about the types of complaints per ward that we receive as an authority and highlights trends in ward areas. This is outlined in appendix 1, pages 12-24.

11.0 Corporate complaint handling improvements

- 11.1 The corporate complaints procedure was reviewed in 2013 to improve the handling of complaints. One of the improvements made to the procedure was to reduce the response timescale from 28 calendar days to 21 calendar days. For quarter 3 the average time taken to respond to complaints was 12 calendar days.

- 11.2 Further current improvements to complaint handling include the following:
- 11.3 Response timescales are currently under review with a view to further improve service delivery; this is subject to approval of a separate report which will also consider the centralisation of all corporate complaints.
- 11.4 A change of name from complaints to 'Customer Feedback' will be implemented. The term 'Customer Feedback' will cover complaints, compliments and suggestions for both internal and external customers. 'Feedback' also indicates to the customer that something will be done with the information that they have provided.
- 11.5 A policy on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour has been approved. The aim of the policy is to support the Council's overall aim of dealing with all complainants in ways which are demonstrably consistent, fair and reasonable. It sets out how we will decide which complainants will be treated as unreasonable or unreasonably persistent, and what employees should do in those circumstances. The policy is for the information of Council employees and employees within Wolverhampton Council's partner organisations and councillors as well as customers.

12.0 Updates from Quarter Two Report

- 12.1 **Service Improvement Report** - This related to a complaint received from the LGO about the Education Appeal Panel and Council's appeal process. The complaint was upheld due to maladministration and injustice for failure to process an appeal correctly. The Council has apologised for the faults identified and offered a fresh appeal. The Council has also agreed to review all administrative processes and staff training to ensure the Appeals Panel has a greater understanding of school cases, especially around class numbers and staffing. A service improvement report has been issued to the service group with recommendations for changes to service delivery.
- 12.2 **Update from Housing Ombudsman** - During quarter two, two enquiries were received from the Housing Ombudsman in relation to Wolverhampton Homes. One enquiry was received about dissatisfaction with the outcome of a complaint and a second enquiry was received about dissatisfaction with the complaint process. We have liaised with the Housing Ombudsman but we are still awaiting the outcome of both enquiries; this will be included in the Annual Complaints Report.

13.0 Financial implications

- 13.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

[CH/04032015/W]

14.0 Legal implications

13.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

[RB/02032015/N]

15.0 Equalities implications

15.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

16.0 Environmental implications

16.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report

17.0 Human resources implications

17.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

18.0 Corporate landlord implications

18.1 There are no corporate landlord implications associated with this report.

19.0 Schedule of background papers

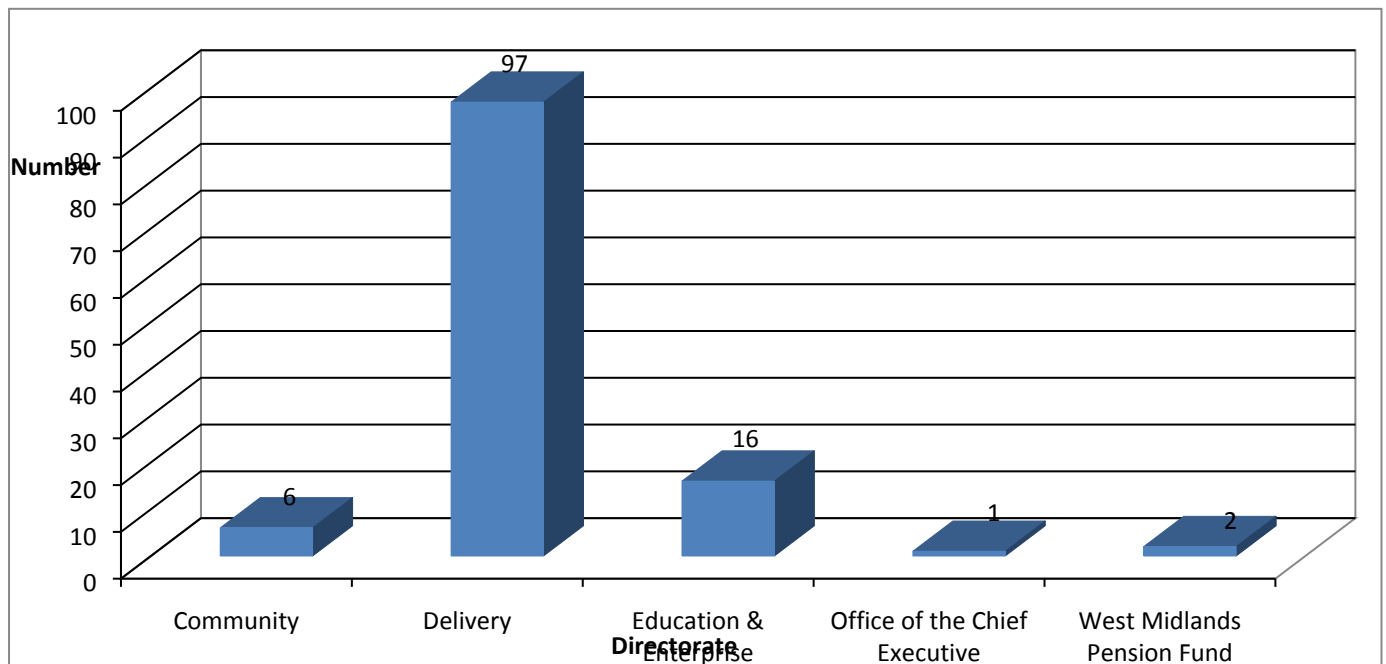
19.1 Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel, 10 October 2014 – Annual Complaints Report;
Scrutiny Board 27 January 2015 - Complaints Report Quarter 2

Customer Insight Report

Number of stage 1 complaints received per Directorate Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

Directorate	Number of complaints received	Average response (days)	Number of Complaints upheld	Number of complaints responded to within timescale
Community	6	15.0	2	6
Delivery	97	10.0	12	97
Education & Enterprise	16	15.0	0	16
Office of the Chief Executive	1	8.0	1	1
West Midlands Pension Fund	2	13.0	0	2
Total	122	12.0	15	122
Percentage			12%	100%

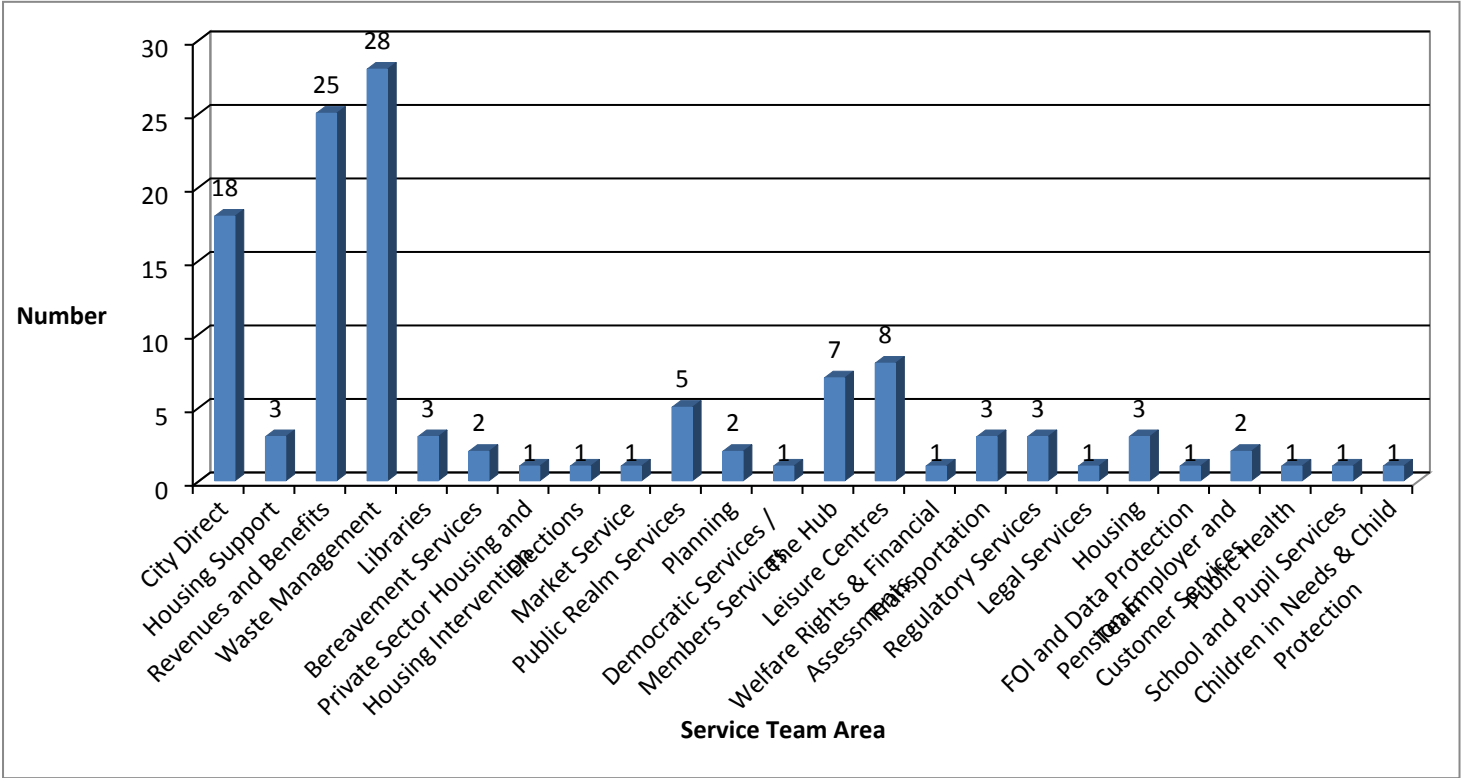
Number of complaints received per Directorate for Quarter 3 – 2014



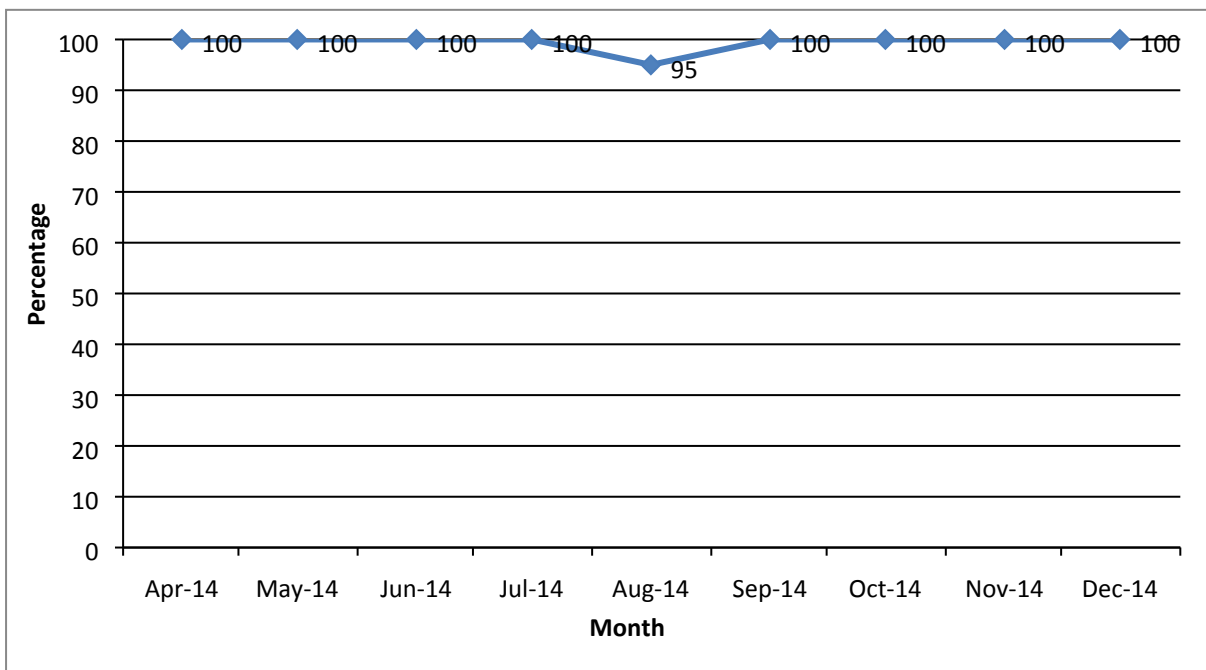
**Number of stage 1 complaints received per service team
Quarter 3 – October – December 2014**

Service Team Area	Number of complaints received	Average response (days)	Number of Complaints upheld	Number of complaints responded to within timescale
City Direct	18	10.0	2	18
Housing Support	3	7.0	0	3
Revenues and Benefits	25	9.0	2	25
Waste Management	28	8.0	3	28
Libraries	3	12.0	1	3
Bereavement Services	2	2.0	1	2
Private Sector Housing and Housing Intervention	1	6.0	0	1
Elections	1	1.0	1	1
Market Service	1	15.0	0	1
Public Realm Services	5	11.0	0	5
Planning	2	15.0	0	2
Democratic Services / Members Services	1	6.0	0	1
The Hub	7	9.0	1	7
Leisure Centres	8	14.0	1	8
Welfare Rights & Financial Assessments	1	17.0	1	1
Transportation	3	20.0	0	3
Regulatory Services	3	16.0	0	3
Legal Services	1	20.0	1	1
Housing	3	18.0	0	3
FOI and Data Protection Team	1	8.0	1	1
Pension Employer and Customer Services	2	13.0	0	2
Public Health	1	20.0	0	1
School and Pupil Services	1	21.0	0	1
Children in Needs & Child Protection	1	21.0	0	1
Total	122	12.0	15	122

Number of stage 1 complaints received per service team area for Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

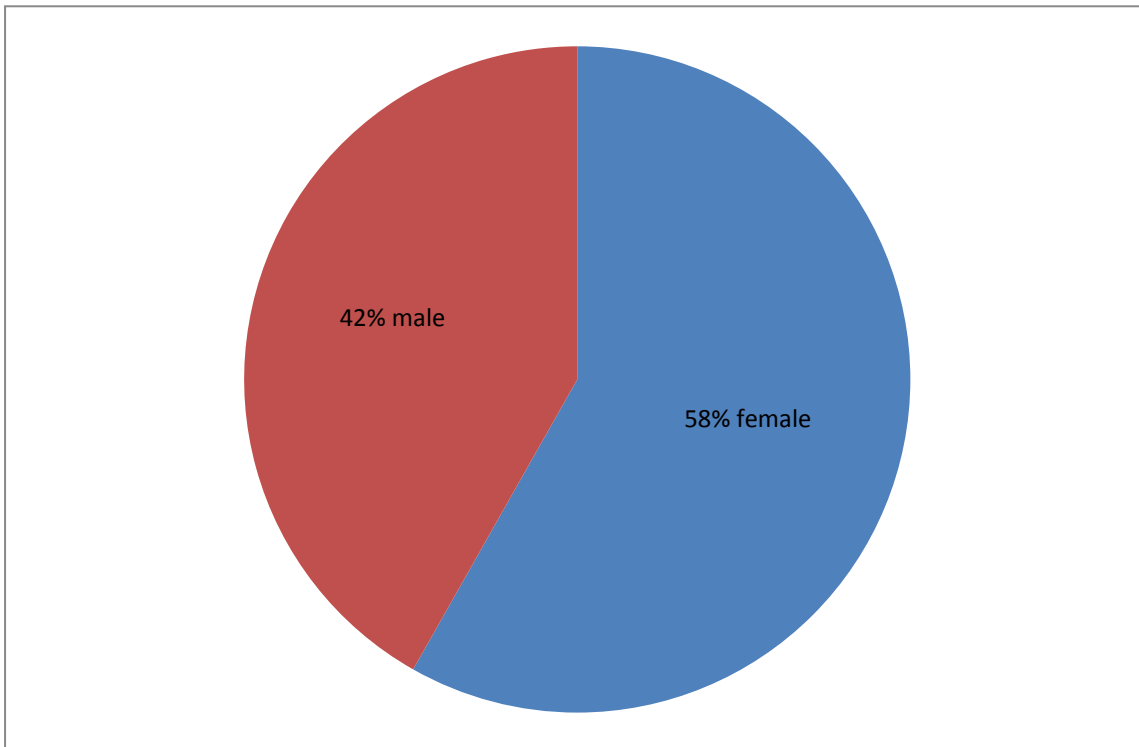


Percentage of complaints responded to within timescale for Quarter 1, 2 and 3



Equalities data for stage 1 complaints for Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

Service Group	Gender - Female	Gender - Male
Governance	0	1
Schools, Skills & Learning	0	1
Chief Executive's Office	0	1
The Hub	2	0
Regeneration	12	3
Central Services	13	8
Older People and Personalisation	4	0
Environment and Leisure	22	21
Finance	17	13
Children Young People and Families	0	1
Pensions Service	1	1
Public Health	0	1
Total	71	51



Complaint Ward Data Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

Key
G=Gender
E=Ethnicity
D=Disability
A=Age

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
Bilston East	5		G=Female	Complaint regarding lack of action/response from Environmental Health
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of consultation regarding replacement of metal bins to normal household bins
			G=Female	Complaint regarding lack of response to complaint at leisure centre regarding overcrowding in swimming pool and request for public swim and lessons policy
			G=Male	Complaint regarding refuse crew conduct and contamination policy
			G=Female	Complaint regarding tenancy delays and incorrect advice provided
Bilston North	5		G=Female	Complaint regarding conduct of officer at refuse site

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
		1	G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of action/communication - not adhering to contact the customer within 5 working days to book pest control treatment
			G=Female	Complaint regarding lack of communication/advice for housing benefit and council tax
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding non-payment of final invoice notice to customer
			G=Male	Complaint regarding poor communication by Customer Services Officer
Blakenhall	5		G=Male A=25-44 E=BlackCaribbean	Complaint regarding additional charges for phone calls regarding council tax
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding conflicting advice provided by housing benefit advisors with regards to college course
			G=Female	Complaint regarding customer service received from refuse and City Direct
			G=Female	Complaint regarding dissatisfaction with housing benefit service received and miscommunication
			G=Female	Complaint regarding miscalculation of housing benefit

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Female	Complaint regarding erection of keep clear sign/markings
			G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect procedures followed for keep clear traffic sign being erected
			G=Female A=25-44 E=White/British	Complaint regarding information not being processed correctly for housing benefits
			G=Female A=45-65 E=White/British	Complaint regarding length of time to process blue badge
			G=Male	Complaint regarding parking at leisure centre
			G=Male	Complaint regarding disagreement with recycling policy
Bushbury South and Low Hill	4		G=Female A=16-24 E=Black/Caribbean	Complaint regarding lack of action/response from housing
			G=Female A=25-44 E=White/British	Complaint regarding lack of communication re: no notification via card from refuse regarding contamination
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding late responses and processes following bin complaint
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding refuse officer conduct
East Park	6		G=Female A=25-44	Complaint regarding customer service re: no bin collection/contamination

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Male A=65-74 E=British	Complaint regarding failure to update records causing council tax demand
			G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect bill for council tax
			G=Male	Complaint regarding new membership fees and arrangements
			G=Female	Complaint regarding policy on recycling bags
Ettingshall	6		G=Female E=White/British D=Disability	Complaint regarding differing advice provided by officers with regards to council tax
			G=Female	Complaint regarding electoral canvasser officer conduct
			G=Male	Complaint regarding how a school consultation was conducted and consultation decision
			G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect advice provided by out of hours team regarding noise complaint
			G=Female	Complaint regarding lack of response from refuse manager - brown bin not collected for four weeks
			G=Female	Complaint regarding policy on pest control booking
Fallings Park	4		G=Male A=25-44 E=White/British	Complaint regarding conflicting information regarding collection of clear bags for recycling

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Female	Complaint regarding dispute over council tax arrears
			G=Female	Complaint regarding length of time to process blue badge application
Graiseley	5		G=Female	Complaint regarding conduct of officer - regulatory services
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of response for action re: reduction in repayments of housing benefit due to overpayment
			G=Male	Complaint regarding maladministration during processing of housing benefit
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding non-payment of final notice to customer
			G=Male	Complaint regarding recycling plastic bag policy
Heath Town	6		G=Male	Complaint regarding contaminated bin/plastic bag recycling policy
		1	G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect information provided by Revenues and Benefits
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of response and delay/action from public realm in relation to service request
			G=Female	Complaint regarding length of time to process blue badge

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Female	Complaint regarding unhappy with new membership changes
Merry Hill	4		G=Female A=25-44 E=/White/British	Complaint regarding cleanliness of leisure centre's facilities- toilets/drains
			G=Female	Complaint regarding delays in receiving blue badge and no response to chase up
			G=Female	Complaint regarding dispute over overdue library book fee - renewed over the telephone but still overdue
			G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect advice provided by housing benefit assessor
Oxley	3		G=Female	Complaint regarding delays in responding by officer - housing team
			G=Male	Complaint regarding officer conduct Customer Services Officer in City Direct
		1	G=Female A=45-65 E=White/British	Complaint regarding revised opening times at library
Park	5	1	G=Male	Complaint regarding automated system and no information regarding removal of details from the open register
			G=Female	Complaint regarding delays in blue badge process

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of response re: council tax enquiry
			G=Male A=45-65 E=Asian/Indian	Complaint regarding on-going issue with social work unit
Penn	3		G=Male	Complaint regarding council tax debt collectors re: dispute of payment and lack of response to breakdown requests
			G=Male A=25-44 E=Asian/Indian	Complaint regarding lack of communication/ engagement during planning process and incorrect plans circulated to residents
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of maintenance of tree
Spring Vale	2		G=Female A=45-65 E=Asian/Indian	Complaint regarding advise provided to the customer by council tax
			G=Female A=25-44 E=White/British D=Disability	Complaint regarding lack of communication/ misinformed with regards to council tax payments
St Peter's	6		G=Female A=16-24 E=Mixed	Complaint regarding discrimination by officer re: housing/homeless
			G=Female	Complaint regarding emergency out of hours telephone line fault
			G=Male E=White/British	Complaint regarding green and brown bin not being emptied - no reason received

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Female	Complaint regarding lack of response/unable to resolve issues with empty property team and council tax
			G=Male	Complaint regarding refuse officer conduct and dispute regarding bin collection
Tettenhall Regis	5		G=Female	Complaint regarding conduct of refuse officer
			G=Male E=White/British	Complaint regarding contamination policy for recycling bin
			G=Female	Complaint regarding damaged fence due to work carried out on overgrown area in park
			G=Female	Complaint regarding incorrect banding for payments
			G=Male	Complaint regarding procedures/policy that WCC follow regarding refuse
Tettenhall Wightwick	9		G=Male A=65-74 E=White/British	Complaint regarding customer service provided re: rubbish dumped
			G=Female	Complaint regarding customer service/incorrect information provided
			G=Female A=45-65/ E=White/British	Complaint regarding delays in payment of pension due to computer problems and no notification
			G=Male	Complaint regarding delays in receiving blue badge

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Male	Complaint regarding garden waste collection policy
			G=Male	Complaint regarding green refuse collection policy - revision to collection dates
			G=Male	Complaint regarding non- payment of invoices
			G=Female	Complaint regarding policy on bin contamination and officer conduct during call
			G=Male A=65-74 E=White/British	Complaint regarding policy on green bin collection - changes to collection period
Wednesfield North	3	1	G=Female	Complaint regarding City Direct not passing across request to engineer
			G=Male	Complaint regarding missed domestic bin
			G=Female	Complaint regarding policies on waste collections for black bins
Wednesfield South	4		G=Female A=16-24 G=White/British	Complaint regarding officer conduct
			G=Female	Complaint regarding position on lamp post blocking access to new driveway
			G=Male	Complaint regarding process of blue badge application
			G=Female	Complaint regarding waste collection policy - tied up plastic bags for additional recycling

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
Unknown	25		G=Male	Complaint re: refusal for admission to the Summit
			G=Female	Complaint regarding access issues on departure at Cemetery
			G=Male/British	Complaint regarding accounts payable - not providing invoice number difficult to reconcile payments
			G=Male	Complaint regarding business rates - dispute regarding payment of business rates
			G=Male	Complaint regarding call wait times for leisure centres
			G=Female	Complaint regarding consultation
			G=Female	Complaint regarding contamination and policy on clear bags for recycling waste collection
			G=Female	Complaint regarding customer service at library
			G=Male	Complaint regarding dissatisfaction with council tax charge and lack of response
		1	G=Male	Complaint regarding failure of the council to pay legal costs

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
		1	G=Female A=25-44 E=White/British	Complaint regarding failure to notify customer of baptism at poolside at leisure centre
			G=Male A=45-65 E=White/British	Complaint regarding fees and charges for stalls at markets
		1	G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of response from FOI/DP Team
		1	G=Female A=65-74 E=White/British D=Disability	Complaint regarding lack of response/action from cemetery staff
			G=Female	Complaint regarding leisure booking unavailable on arrival at leisure centre
			G=Male	Complaint regarding non-compliance with pension appeal policy and procedure
			G=Female	Complaint regarding non-payment of final notice
			G=Male/Black	Complaint regarding officer conduct in Civic Centre
			G=Female	Complaint regarding overpayment of council tax re: court order
			G=Female	Complaint regarding staff conduct
			G=Male E=White/British	Complaint regarding timing of swimming lessons for children on Sundays at leisure centre

Ward	Number of Complaints Received	Number of Complaints Upheld	Equalities Data	Nature of complaint
			G=Male A=45-65 E=White/British	Complaint regarding unpaid council tax/court summons
			G=Female	Complaint regarding unpaid invoices
			G=Male	Complaint regarding lack of response from council tax
			G=Female	Complaint regarding delays in payment of invoices to supplier/consultant
Total	122	15		

Complaint Ward Data Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

Ward	Number
Bilston East	5
Bilston North	5
Blakenhall	5
Bushbury North	7
Bushbury South and Low Hill	4
East Park	6
Ettingshall	6
Fallings Park	4
Graiseley	5
Heath Town	6
Merry Hill	4
Oxley	3
Park	5
Penn	3
Spring Vale	2
St Peter's	6
Tettenhall Regis	5
Tettenhall Wightwick	9
Wednesfield North	3
Wednesfield South	4
Unknown	25
Total	122

Complaint Ward Data Quarter 3 – October – December 2014

