

Corporate non statutory complaints and Customer Feedback



For the period 01 April 2016 to 31 March 2017

This report covers the period 1 April 2016 to the 31 March 2017 and covers all corporate (non-statutory) complaints and compliments for all council direct provision and commissioned services which do not relate to adult or children's social care. The report also contains complaints and compliments for Public Health Commissioned Services.

If you require any additional information please contact the Complaints Team on 01772 539414 or email your [request to complaintsandfeedback@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:complaintsandfeedback@lancashire.gov.uk)

SECTION ONE: CORPORATE Feedback

1.1 Summary of Corporate Complaints in 2016/17	3
1.2 Breakdown of feedback type and complaint by stage	3
1.3 What do people make corporate complaints about?	5
1.4 What are community services expressions of dissatisfaction about?	5
1.5 Learning from corporate complaints	6
1.6 All corporate compliments	7

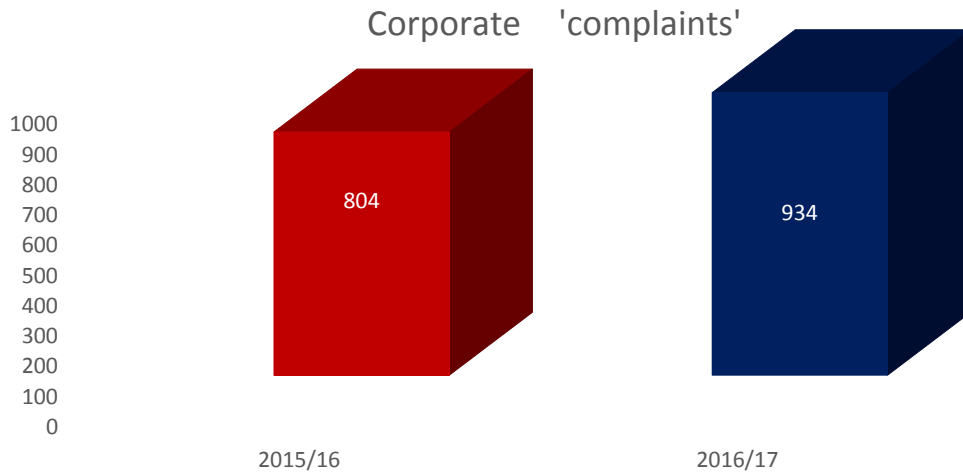
SECTION TWO: PUBLIC HEALTH COMMISSIONED SERVICES

2.1 Complaints and Compliments	8
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All council non-statutory Corporate Feedback

1.1 Summary of Corporate Complaints in 2016/17

Graph 1



Complaints are used by the council as an opportunity to learn and improve. As a direct result of corporate complaints in 2016/17 the council has made improvements to public information and internal processes and procedures.

The council has a single central team for all complaints. In 2016/17 934 matters were reported initially as a 'corporate complaint'. However not all issues which are reported to the complaints team in the first instance are considered 'complaints'. The matter will usually be considered as a 'routine service issue' if it is a first notification and the council has not had a chance to put the situation right. Hopefully the issue can be dealt with early, but if not, an informal complaint is logged and if the customer still remains dissatisfied after 20 working days, a formal complaint is logged. This report uses the terminology 'expression of dissatisfaction' (regardless if it is a formal complaint or not) for all issues which have been reported by customers to the complaints team. In 2016/17 the council dealt with 934 corporate related expressions of dissatisfaction (including third party claims). Although this was a 16% rise over the previous year, it should be noted that 99% of these were resolved early in the complaint pathway and 'nipped in the bud' as part of ongoing business matters and by proactive management action.

The majority of expressions of dissatisfaction were about highways due to the considerable size of this service and the fact that roads impact on every Lancashire citizen. It also attracts a large volume of enquires and as a result, is also the most complimented community service.

The largest single factor which contributed to this rise was the change in road layout in central Preston and the associated fines. Expressions of dissatisfaction as well as compliments about the council have gone up as the public now find it easy to be heard as a result of the Customer Access Centre being able to transfer calls straight through to a single complaints team and through the increased use of the [complaints pages](#) on the LCC website. (There was a 24% increase in views of the complaints pages on the LCC website from 2015-16 to a total of 9145 views in 2016-17).

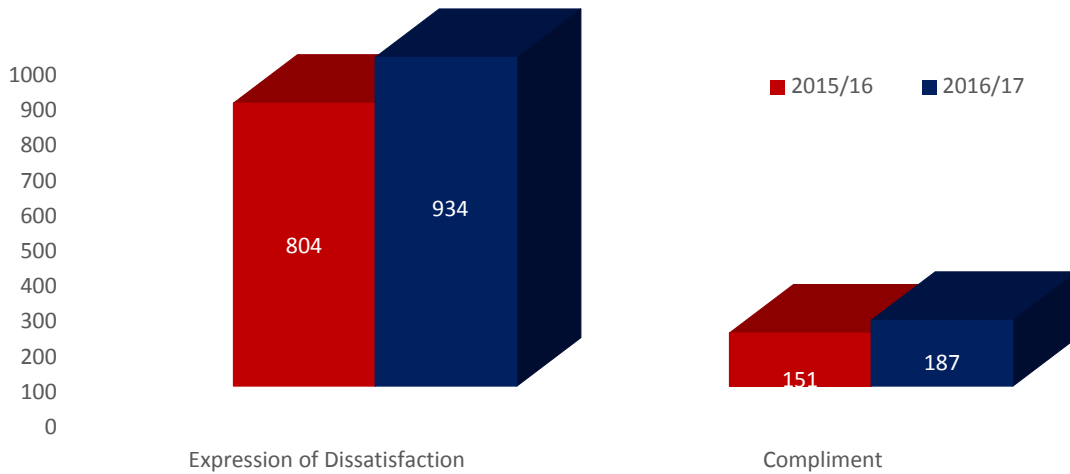
Of the 24 corporate complaints referred to the Local Government Ombudsman in 2016/17 **none were upheld** which points to good complaints handling by the managers concerned.

1.2 Breakdown of feedback type and complaint by stage

Graph 2 overleaf shows that 83% of all feedback is made to complain and express unhappiness about the council. 17% of all feedback received was positive, in the form of compliments.

Graph 2

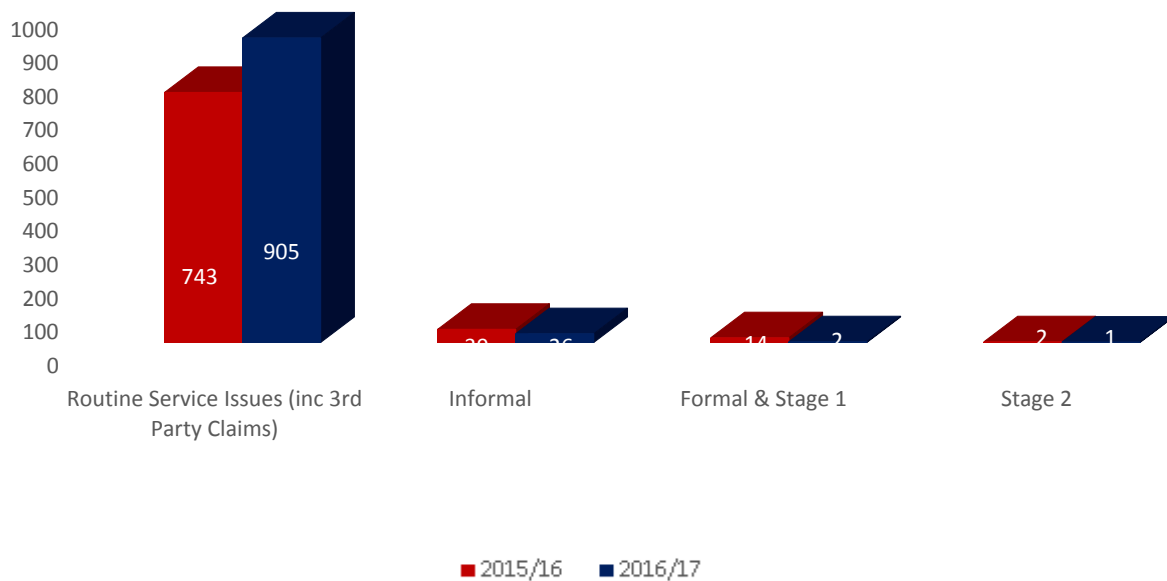
Feedback Type



Graph 3 shows that 97% of negative feedback was resolved as part of routine business matters (including third party claims). 26 complaints were resolved in the informal process as opposed to 39 in 2015/16 and just 3 complaints entered the formal process. This points to better resolution and outcomes in 2016/17 than the previous year, despite an increase in numbers.

Graph 3

Complaint By Stage



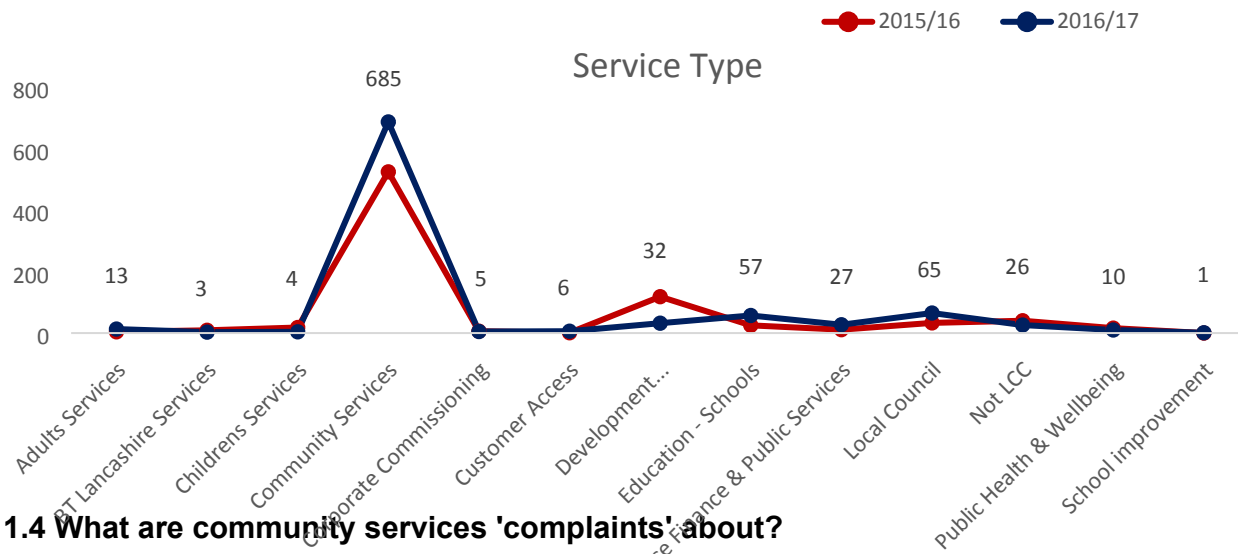
A new focus on the resolution of complaints at an early stage in the process has therefore improved outcomes, with a reduction of 14 formal / stage 1 complaints in 2015/16 to just 2 in 2016/17. One of these complaints was resolved by the payment of a 'good will gesture' of £100. The single Stage

2 Corporate Complaints Committee hearing in 2016/2017 resulted in the customer accepting the council's formal apology for miscommunication.

1.3 What do people make corporate 'complaints' about?

Graph 4 shows that 'community services' continue to be the single most common reason for expressions of dissatisfaction in about 75% of all cases. This is because of the considerable size of Community Services and due to the fact that roads and the weather impact on every Lancashire citizen.

Graph 4

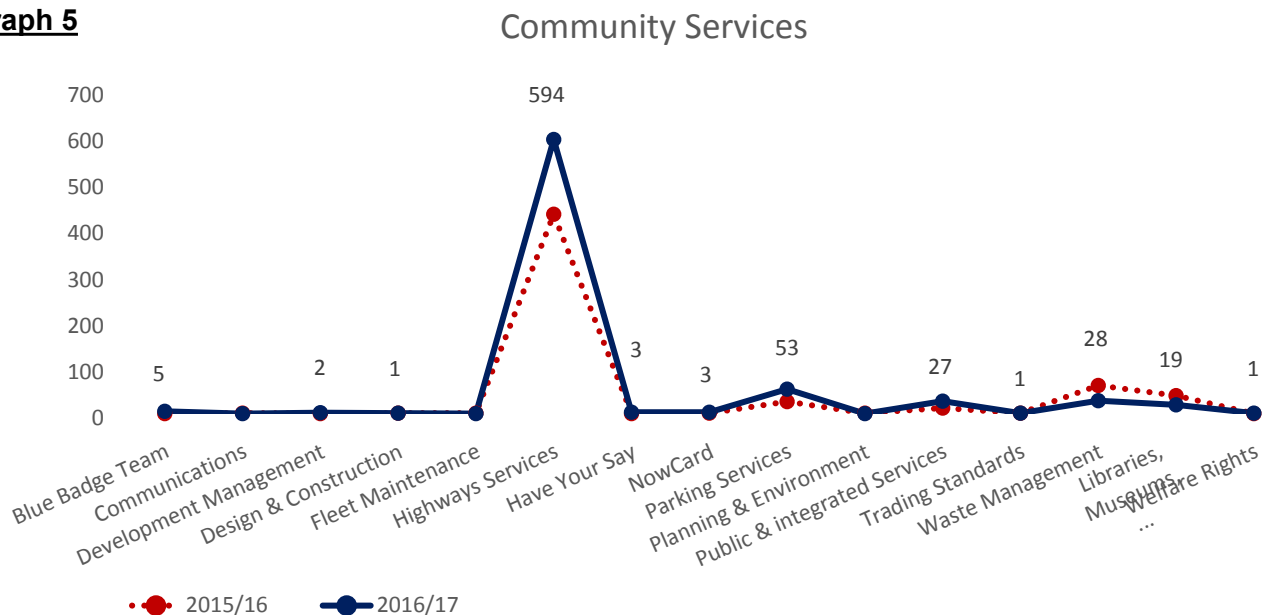


1.4 What are community services 'complaints' about?

A further breakdown of the 685 community service expressions of dissatisfaction can be seen in Graph 5 below.

Lancashire Highways received the majority of 'complaints' at 594 (including 68 claim requests). Of these just over 10% (44) were in relation to the Fishergate Bus Lane changes and a further 4% (18) were due to the service closures. The breakdown of these 18 is: 7 due to the ceasing of bus routes, 6 due to the closure of libraries and 5 were other service closures within Lancashire, during 16/17.

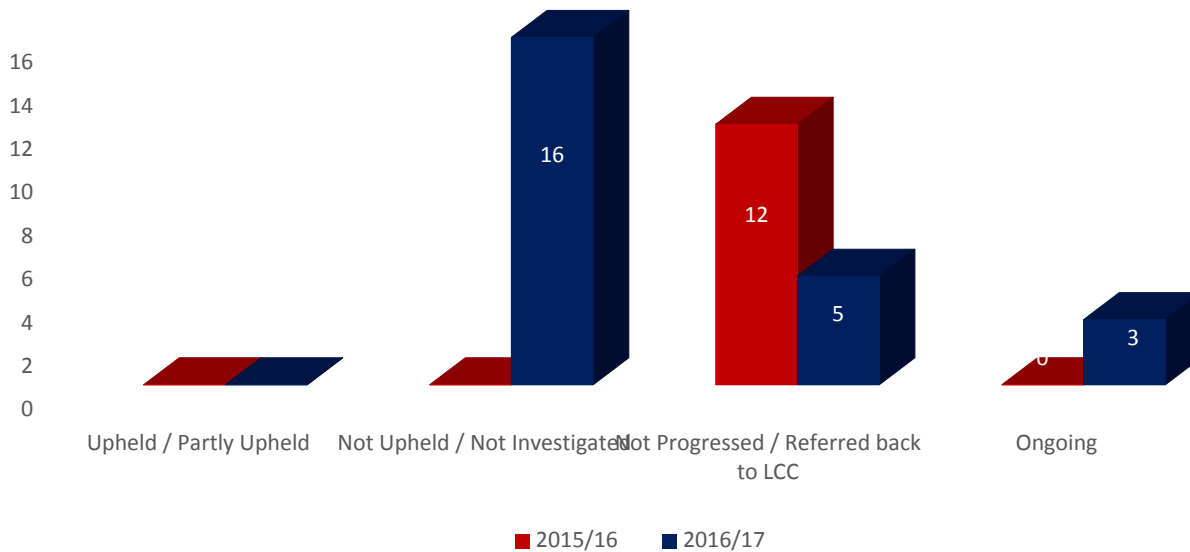
Graph 5



The Council does its best to resolve all complaints well before hearings become necessary. By actively managing complaints, some early referrals in 2016/17 were agreed to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO).

Graph 6

Final Outcome of LGO Complaint referrals



Of the 24 LGO Corporate complaints enquiries, 16 were not upheld or not investigated by the LGO, 5 were 'not progressed' (i.e. they were either referred back to the council, a local resolution was agreed or the LGO decided not to investigate). Three corporate complaints are currently ongoing or awaiting a final decision from the LGO. A total of £50 was agreed in local settlements (for an enquiry received in 2015/16). **It should be noted that the LGO did not uphold any corporate complaint referral in 2016/17.**

1.5 Learning from corporate complaints

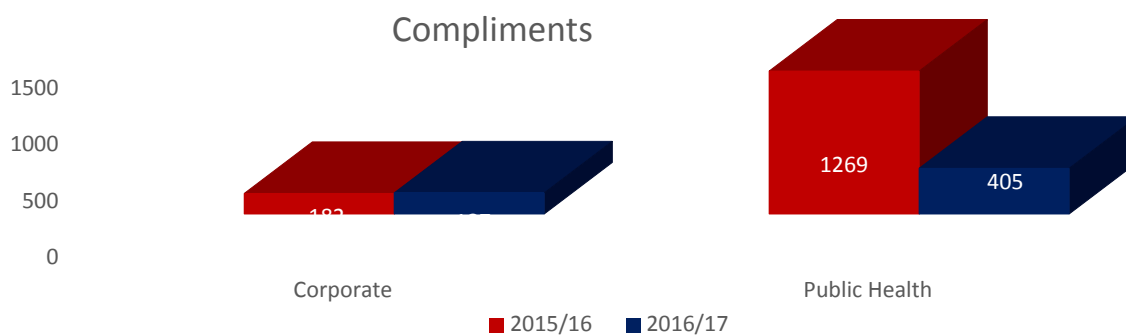
- Updates have been added to the [council internet website](#) to update and incorporate information in relation to the different stages of the corporate complaints procedure
- As a result of an increase in 'first reports of faults' coming to the complaints team in the first instance, new signposting has been added to the complaints internet website to signpost people to the '[Report it](#)' website without registering a 'complaint' with the council.
- In relation to the increase in 'complaints' coming into the central complaints team, a new process has been agreed with Highways to focus on the resolution of expressions of dissatisfaction within strict timescales.
- The complaints manager will personally speak to every potential Stage 2 complainant to ensure we have understood their complaint correctly and ensure that all reasonable action has been taken to resolve the complaint before a Stage 2 complaints hearing is arranged. This action and the new Highways process has increased complaints being resolved locally and reduced the need for stage two hearings.
- In relation to a complaint about a public right of way, an amendment has been added to the council interactive map
- In relation to a complaint made about how an information governance request was handled, a new process has been agreed to handle such complaints.
- In relation to a complaint about a bus pass mistake (when three experienced staff were all allowed to leave the Council at once) internal processes between the finance team and school transport teams were examined and improved as part of a system review of the school transport customer journey
- When the council acknowledges fault and when members of the public are in hardship and

in debt, the council will consider the offer of direct payments to be extended into the future (eg spread over 24 months instead of 12) to make payments more affordable.

- The complaint manager will when circumstances dictate, undertake independent corporate complaint investigations and make recommendations for the council
- All learning and actions as a result of Stage 2 hearings will be taken to the next planned Corporate Complaints Committee which sits.
- The 2012 corporate complaints committee policy and procedure is in the process of being revised for 2017.

1.6 All corporate compliments

Graph 7



As can be seen in Graph 7, a total of 592 compliments were made in 2016/17. Despite a large reduction in the collection of public health compliments since 2015/16, the majority of compliments made about council services in 2016/17 are still made in relation to public health commissioned services with a proportion of just over 68% of all compliments received. The amount of compliments generated is generally in relation to the nature of the business and directly proportional to the amount of business that the Council undertakes in particular service areas. Compliments are always shared with the line managers concerned and staff are also sometimes nominated for Pride Awards from this customer feedback.

Public Health Commissioned Services

2.1 Complaints and Compliments

Public Health services are provided to the public through commissioned providers. However as the Council is responsible for the quality of these services, it monitors the performance of these contracts and providers report back quarterly on their performance.

Graph 8 shows a considerable increase in the number of complaints received this financial year with also a significant reduction in the number of compliments received. The explanation for this is that a number of services across public health were decommissioned in March 2016. There were also a much larger number of contracts in 15-16, with more service providers regularly feeding their figures back quarterly. Reduced numbers of contracts and services were tendered and commenced in April 2016, operating on larger Lancashire footprints rather than districts, which therefore also had an impact on numbers. In addition, a restructure took place during 2016/17, and there was limited or no communication taking place with service providers during that period due to the internal changes and the mobilisation and implementation of services.

So although the monitoring of performance reports was maintained to an extent in 2016/17, as part of business continuation, for all the above reasons, it is unlikely that the service compliments will ever recover to the numbers recorded for the 15-16 period. It is hoped that complaint numbers will reduce as new services establish themselves.

Graph 8

