

Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2011/12 to 2013/14

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report advises Members of summary details regarding the compliments and complaints received during 2013/14, with comparisons to 2011/12 and 2012/13.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

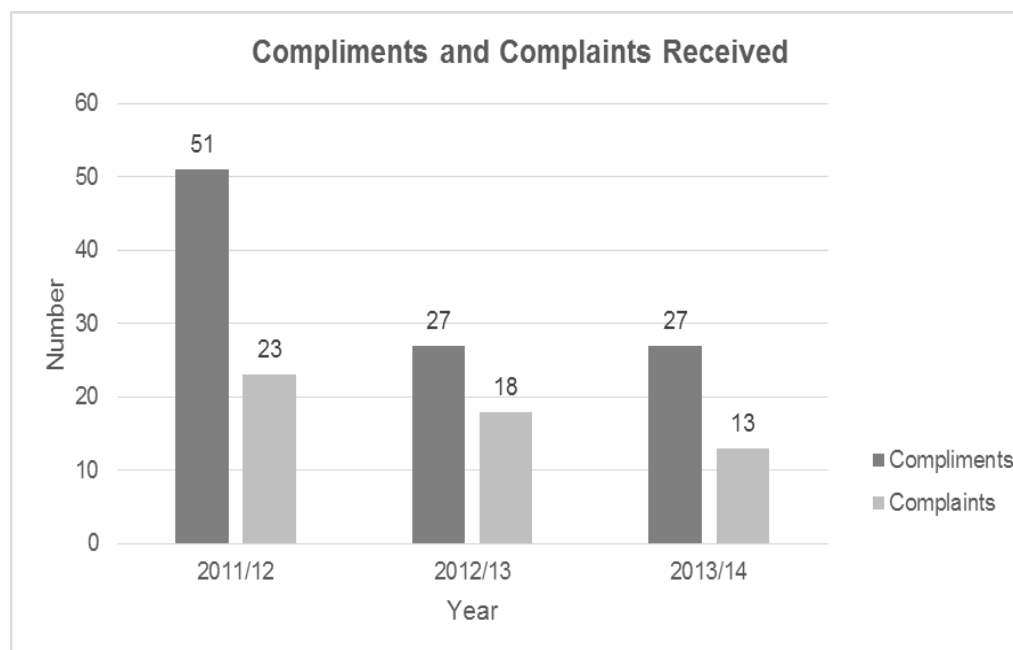
The Fire Authority's vision and strategic aims stress a commitment to providing high quality services to the community of Shropshire. The Service takes seriously both compliments and complaints made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments are also used to review the effectiveness of the provision of these services. All compliments and complaints are recorded.

The Fire Authority has in place a Comments and Complaints Procedure to ensure complaints are handled in a fair and objective manner and that views expressed about the quality of services provided are acknowledged.

4 Summary of Compliments and Complaints Received during 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the number of compliments and complaints received over the three-year period 2011/12 to 2013/14.

Figure 1



Where appropriate, compliments are summarised and posted on the Service's website. All complimentary letters etc. received are made available to each meeting of the Fire Authority and also copied to those, who have been acknowledged for good service within the correspondence. The number of compliments received is actually far greater than shown in Figure 1, which represents only those addressed directly to the Chief Fire Officer or Headquarters. Many more compliments are sent to stations, watches or departments and are not always passed on to Headquarters.

The number and variety of compliments received make it difficult to categorise and benchmark specific areas of performance over a given period of time. The Committee considered this issue previously and determined that such analysis would be of little benefit, when balanced against the resource implications.

The appendix provides a breakdown of complaints received. There are no nationally prescribed categories for recording complaints but, to facilitate local benchmarking between the periods 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14, complaints received have been segregated into five key areas.

These are:

- Damage to property
- Poor driving behaviour
- Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service
- Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection
- Other

Of the 16 complaints lodged during 2013/14, 0 were fully upheld, 4 were partially upheld, 8 were overturned and 4 were either withdrawn, were anonymous or the Service was unable to take any further action.

5 Management of Compliments and Complaints

Performance Standard

All complaints are fully investigated, with a written response provided to the complainant, advising of the outcome of the investigation. The Fire Authority sets a performance standard of 28 working days, in which to furnish the complainant with a written response, or advise of an extension of time, where necessary. This standard has consistently been achieved.

Appeals

Complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation are entitled to appeal to the Chief Fire Officer and / or the Chair of the Fire Authority. Should the complainant still remain dissatisfied, an appeal may be directed to the Local Government Ombudsman. No appeals against the outcome of a complaint have been made to either the Chief Fire Officer or the Local Government Ombudsman during 2013/14.

Lessons Learned

All lessons learned from complaints are communicated in the most appropriate manner to staff, with remedial action taken as necessary, e.g. retraining, discipline etc. It would not be appropriate to publish the actions taken in relation to individuals within this report.

6 Complaints Procedure Review

The review of the Complaints Procedure is ongoing and it is hoped that this will be completed within the next calendar year. It is unlikely that the review will result in any major changes to the Procedure itself but rather that it will tighten up areas that have been identified as issues, for example ensuring that all relevant departments are informed about complaints when they are received.

7 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

8 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

10 Appendix

Summary of Complaints received 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14

11 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Summary of Complaints Received 2011/12 to 2013/14

Type of Complaint	Total 2011/12	Outcomes		Total 2012/13	Outcomes		Total 2013/14	Outcomes	
Damage to property	3	2	Complaints upheld	3	1	Complaints upheld	0	0	Complaints upheld
		0	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld
		1	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		0	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn ¹		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn
Poor driving behaviour	3	1	Complaints upheld	5	4	Complaints upheld	4	0	Complaints upheld
		1	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld
		0	Complaints overturned		0	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned
		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn		2	Complaints withdrawn
Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service	5	0	Complaints upheld	2	0	Complaints upheld	5	0	Complaints upheld
		1	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld
		4	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		4	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn
Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection	5	3	Complaints upheld	4	1	Complaints upheld	2	0	Complaints upheld
		0	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld
		2	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn
Other	7	0	Complaints upheld	3	1	Complaints upheld	3	0	Complaints upheld
		1	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld
		3	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		2	Complaints overturned
		3	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn
Anonymous²		0			1			2	
Total		23			18			16	

¹ This figure includes those instances where the Service has been unable to take any further action, for example because of a lack of information or evidence.

² Anonymous complaints are investigated as far as reasonably practicable with action taken, where appropriate. Anonymous complaints are not included within the overall statistics reported.