

Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2015/16 to 2018/19

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 2018/19, with comparisons to the previous three years.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

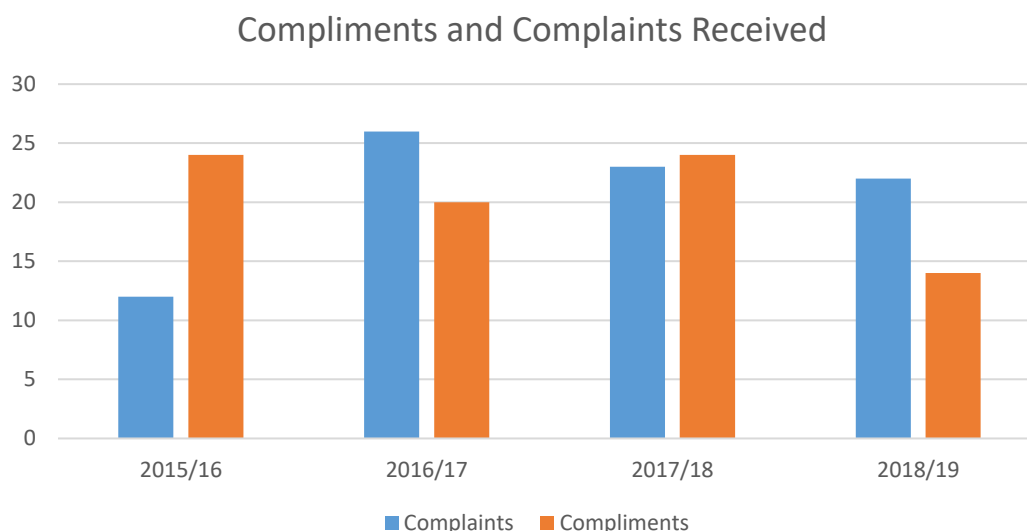
The Fire Authority's vision and strategic aims stress a commitment to providing high quality services to the community of Shropshire. The Service takes seriously both compliments and complaints made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments are also used to review the effectiveness of the provision of these services. Complaints are recorded, as are compliments, when they are addressed to the Chief Fire Officer or come to the attention of Executive Support Officers.

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 2015/16 to 2018/19

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the number of compliments and complaints received in 2018/19, compared with the previous three-year period.

Figure 1



Compliments

The details of all complimentary communications received via the Executive Support Officers are circulated to the personnel concerned, their line management and Executive Officers. They are also published in the Service's weekly internal newsletter, 'The Pink', for all staff to appreciate and on the Service's website for public information. Care is taken, at each stage, to ensure that any personal, identifying details are removed.

The number of compliments received is likely to be greater than shown in Figure 1, as this only shows those formally addressed to the Chief Fire Officer or passed to Executive Support. Compliments are very often also sent directly to stations, watches or departments and may not always be passed on to Executive Support Officers.

The number and variety of compliments received make it difficult to benchmark specific areas of performance over a given period of time. However, Appendix A to the report provides a breakdown by type of the compliments received in 2018/19, together with some examples.

Complaints

Appendix B provides a breakdown of complaints received. There are no nationally prescribed classifications for recording complaints but, to facilitate local benchmarking across the period from 2015/16 to 2018/19, complaints received have been categorised into six 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 / procedure
- Environmental
- Other

Of the 22 complaints lodged during 2018/19:

- 8 were substantiated
- 4 were partially substantiated
- 10 were unsubstantiated

A little over half of all complaints (55% in 2018/19) were found to be fully or partially substantiated (see Figure 2). In all cases, even those that are found to be unsubstantiated, the Service looks to identify any improvements that may help to avoid similar complaints arising into the future

Figure 2

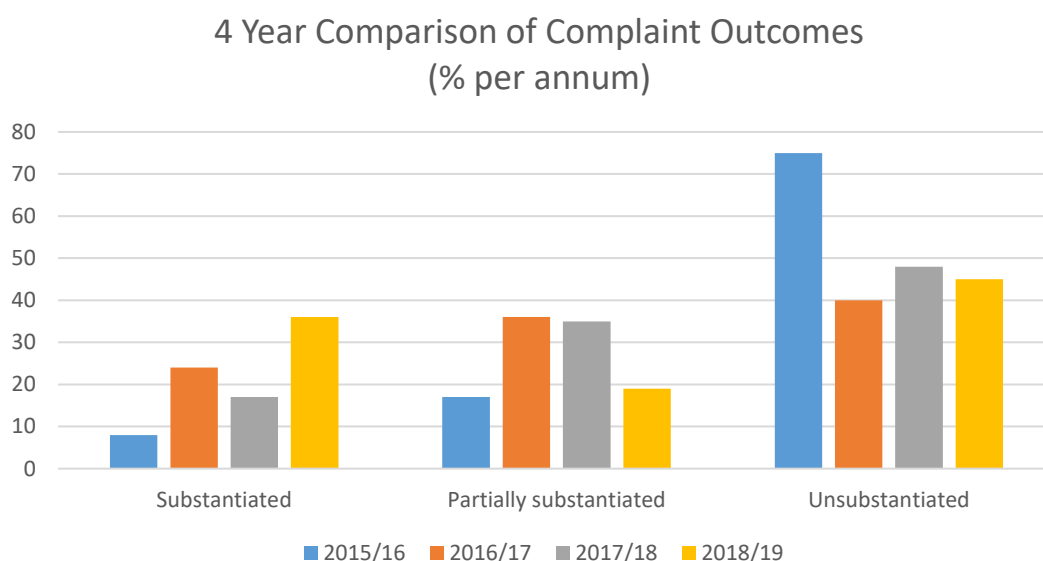
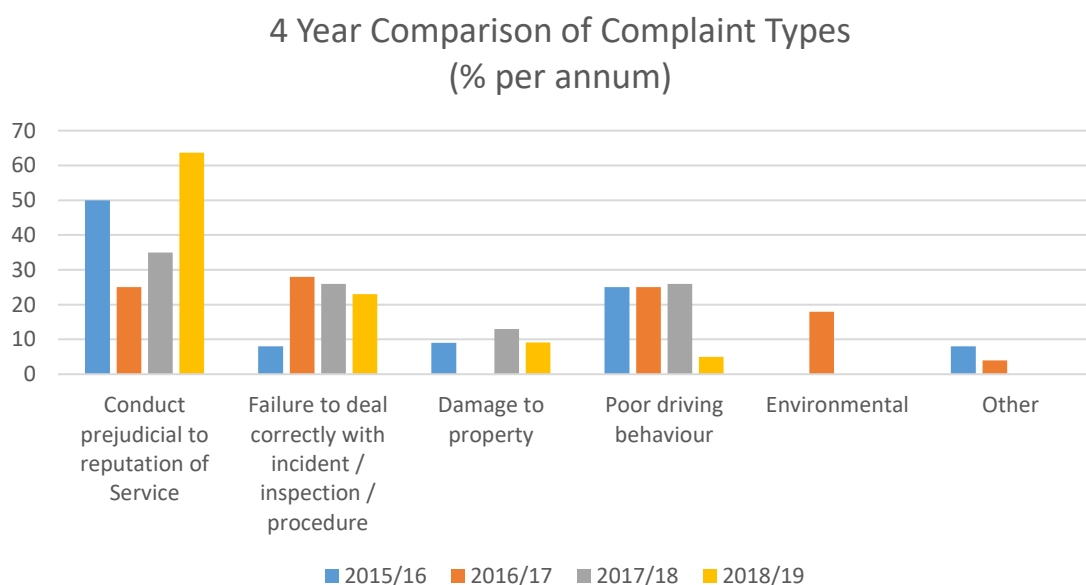


Figure 3



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. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following this, an appeal may be directed to the Local Government Ombudsman.

One appeal, against the outcome from a complaint, was received by the Chief Fire Officer, relating to an allegation of a potential breach of the data protection act. Following its work with the Fire Lawyers Network, the Service is confident that its current policies on this particular matter are correct, but will review those policies to make sure the sort of concerns raised by the complainant are avoided into the future.

No appeals against the outcome of a complaint have been made to the Local Government Ombudsman during 2018/19.

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. Actions taken in relation to individuals are not published within this report, as it would not be appropriate.

6 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Compliments received 2018/19

Appendix B

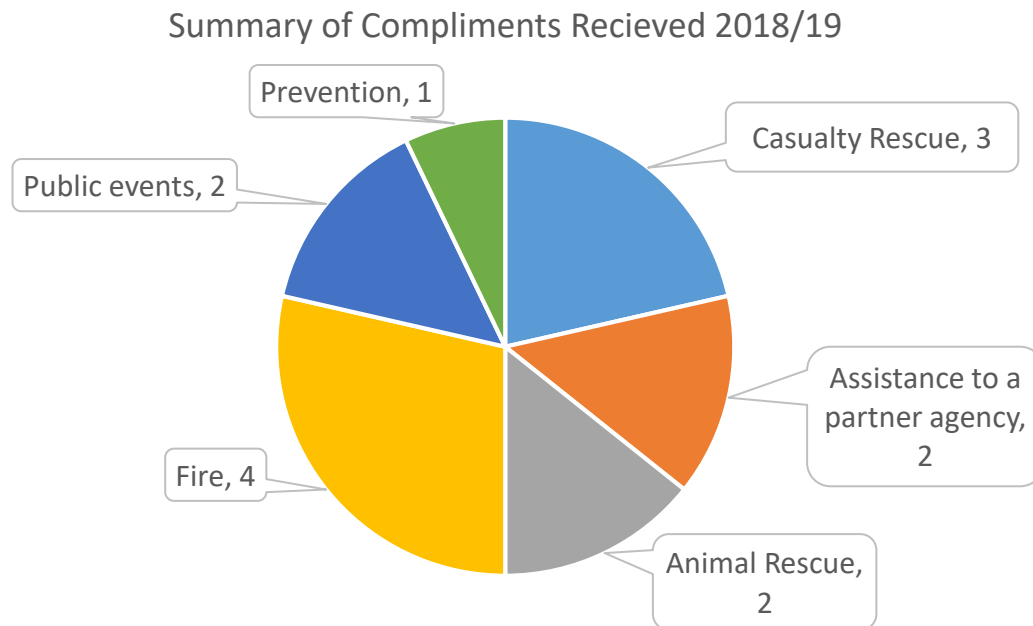
Summary of Complaints received between 2015/16 and 2018/19

9 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Summary of Compliments Received 2018/19

Figure 4



Examples of Compliments Received

Below are some examples of compliments received during 2018/19. More can be viewed on the Service website via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/management-support/compliments-and-thanks>

Compliment received following a Safe & Well Visit

“The firefighter talked us through the Safe & Well pack, which we felt was very useful. Moreover though, they discussed with us some specific issues around fire risk, as well as other risks, associated with living with our 97 year old dad in a very rural area; and we talked through a variety of options which might help to keep my dad safe, e.g. when left alone. Taking on the responsibility of an elderly parent can be challenging at times and people who go the extra mile, because they understand these challenges and they care about all the people involved, are so valuable to us - this is especially so as we get little formal support or assistance.

The firefighter's interest and enthusiasm; and their genuine caring attitude we believe went well beyond the basics provided in the pack, and we wanted your management within the Service know how grateful we are both for the Service, and for the personal service we received. And to the Vulnerable Persons Officer - Thanks again for your time on the phone”

Praise for Church Stretton Fire Crew following rescue from Cardingmill Valley

“I would just like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to all those who were involved in rescuing me from Cardingmill Valley waterfall. Although I was strapped to a ladder and tarpaulin for the time that I was with you, and was being carried along the river while experiencing a panic attack (!), my husband assures me that you were all nothing less than amazing.

I had injured my leg and he has also informed me that when you asked me what my pain score was, I replied 2/10. It turns out I must be a little tougher than we all thought as I was diagnosed with a severely broken leg. I was operated on the following day at RSH and had my tibia pinned and plated back together.

Once again, a huge thank you for your skill, expertise and reassurance. You do an amazing job."

Praise from Police following location of a high risk missing person

"Tonight we had a young, missing person near Coalbrookdale. Due to the weather and the various hazards nearby...woods, river, railway line, dark etc they were categorised as being 'high risk.' The local environment with the fields and woods was a nightmare for us and they were potentially a needle in a haystack. The fire officer attended as the Interagency Liaison Officer, along with several fire personnel from Telford, to assist with the search. As a result we found this person before any harm could come to them, and so we owe a great deal to our fire colleagues.

As Duty Inspector I wanted to pass my thanks to the officer and those who attended to assist. I'm very grateful. This was a great example of blue light interoperability which I know our Chief Officer teams are striving towards."

Compliment following Monkmoor house fire caused by a rogue firework

"Last Saturday my home was saved by the crews and firefighters who attended the fire. I arrived home when the fire had been extinguished and although there was some garden damage I couldn't believe my house was still standing! The fire stopped inches away from my shed which is attached to my house; the outcome could have been very different.

You all do such an amazing job and I am incredibly lucky. I genuinely want to say thank you to everyone involved in keeping my home, 'my home!'"

Excerpt from a letter sent to the Chief Fire Officer from a Shropshire funeral directors

"We work with colleagues from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service on various occasion when completing our duties, always at the scene of a death, always under very stressful and difficult circumstances.

Please convey our sincere thanks to all your Cleobury Mortimer team who, with as much dignity as could possibly be afforded, ensured our safe entry, and exit from, the property.

I have said before that members of the general public have a bit of a perception as to what the fire service does, but they actually have no idea about some of the things your staff have to do. We certainly know as we see it first-hand so often. You have a first-rate team at Cleobury Mortimer who you should be very proud of. Do please thank all concerned on our behalf."

Summary of Complaints received between 2015/16 and 2018/19

Type of Complaint	Total 15/16	Outcomes		Total 16/17	Outcomes		Total 17/18	Outcomes		Total 18/19	Outcomes	
Damage to property	1	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	3	0	Substantiated	2	2	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Poor driving behaviour	3	0	Substantiated	6	2	Substantiated	6	0	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated
		1	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		4	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		2	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service	6	1	Substantiated	7	0	Substantiated	8	2	Substantiated	14	5	Substantiated
		1	Partially substantiated		2	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		4	Partially substantiated
		4	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated		3	Unsubstantiated		5	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection / procedure	1	0	Substantiated	7	1	Substantiated	6	2	Substantiated	5	1	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		1	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Environmental	0	0	Substantiated	5	3	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		0	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Other	1	0	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Anonymous	1			2			0			2		
Total	12			26			23			22		