

Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2007/08 to 2009/10

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members of summary details regarding the compliments and complaints received during 2009/10, with comparisons to 2007/08 and 2008/09.

2 Recommendations

Members are requested to note the contents of this report.

3 Background

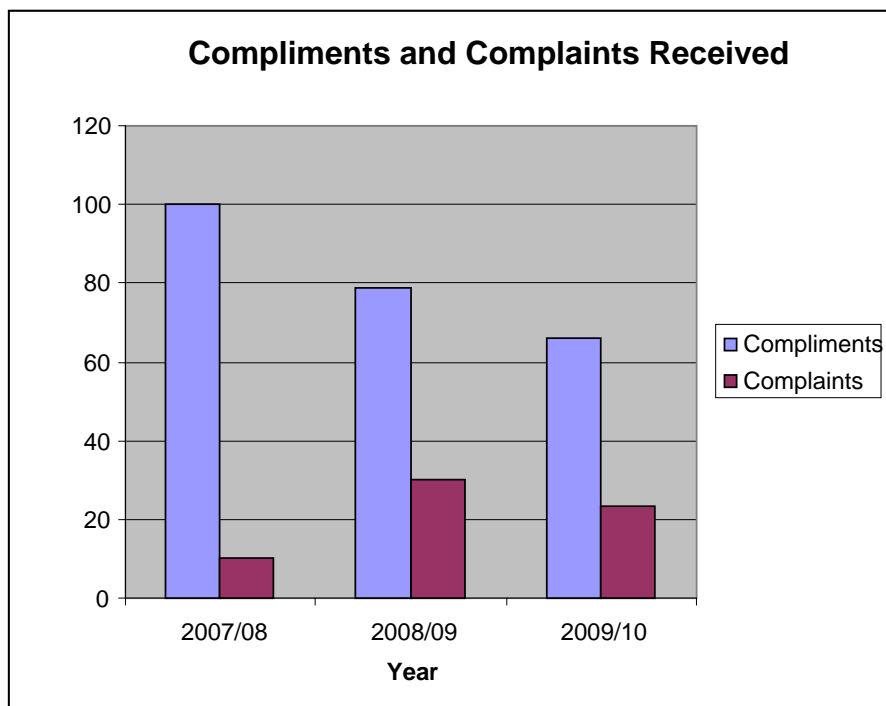
The Fire Authority's vision and strategic aims stress a commitment to providing high quality services to the community of Shropshire. The Service takes seriously both compliments and complaints made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments are also used to review the effectiveness 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 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10

Table 1 (below) illustrates the number of compliments and complaints received over a three-year period.

Table 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 received. It should be noted that the number of compliments received is far greater than those shown in Table 1. Those shown represent those addressed directly to the Chief Fire Officer or Headquarters. Many more compliments are sent direct to stations/watches/departments and are not always copied or passed on to Headquarters.

The number, and moreover 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.

Appendix A provides a breakdown of complaints received. There are no nationally prescribed categories for recording of complaints, but to facilitate local benchmarking between the periods 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10 complaints received have been segregated into five key areas.

The five key areas are:

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

Of the 24 complaints lodged during 2009/10, 9 were fully upheld, 10 overturned and 5 withdrawn. In effect, less than 40% of alleged complaints are found to be proven.

5 Management of Compliments and Complaints

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

In November 2007 the complaints procedure was subjected to an independent British Standards Institute (BSI) audit and is now accredited to ISO 9001.

Complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of the inquiry undertaken 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. During 2009/10 no known successful appeals were lodged.

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 is not considered appropriate to publish the actions taken concerning individuals within this report.

Within 4 to 6 weeks from the completion of an investigation the complainant is forwarded a Complaint Satisfaction Survey form. The number of completed and returned survey forms is indicated in Table 2 (below). The Survey seeks complainants' views on several areas concerning the management of the investigation.

Table 2

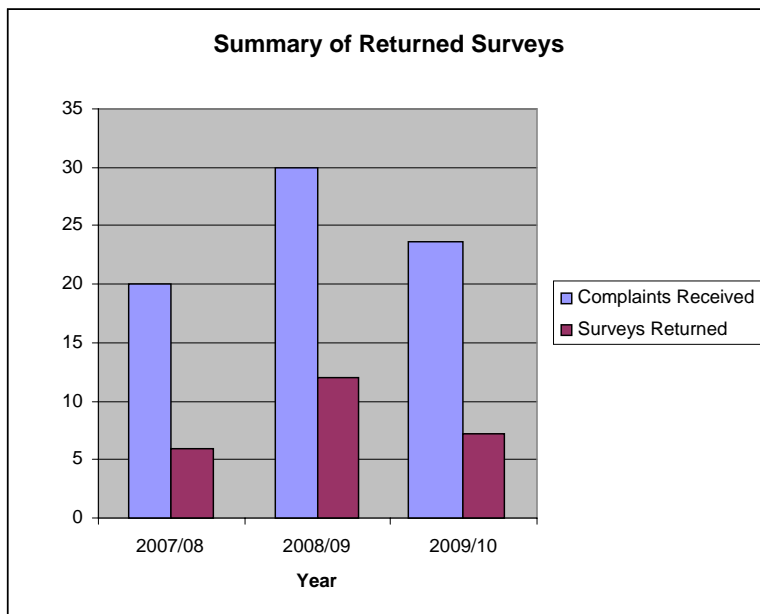
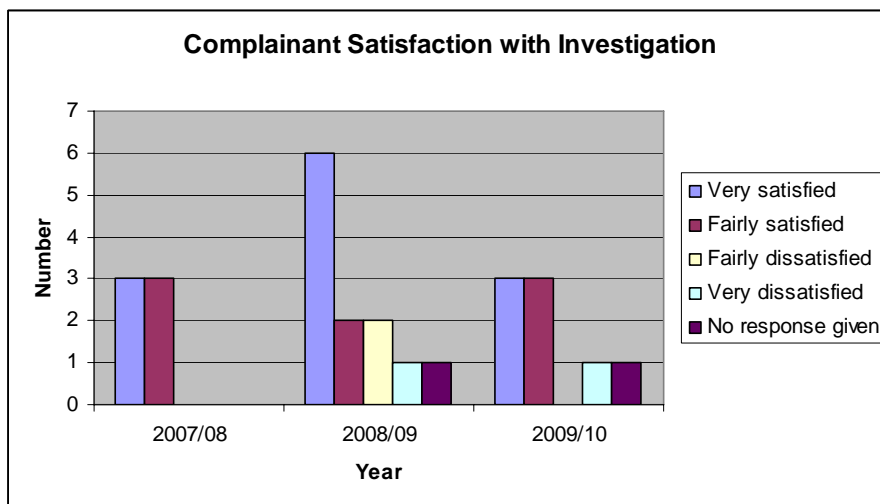


Table 3 (below) summarises the respondents' overall satisfaction with the manner in which their complaints have been dealt with.

Table 3



6 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Equality Impact Assessment

Upon completion of all complaint investigations complainants are forwarded an equality and diversity monitoring questionnaire. A summary of data collected through the monitoring form is provided in Appendix B.

All complaints together with the complaints' management process is reviewed on a monthly basis, at which time, any equality and diversity implications arising would result in a full impact assessment being undertaken to identify further areas for improvement.

No equality and diversity monitoring is undertaken in respect of compliments received.

9 Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Complaints Received 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10

Appendix B

Summary of Results from Equality and Diversity Monitoring Survey

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Implications of all of the following have been considered and, where they are significant (i.e. marked with an asterisk); the implications are detailed within the report itself.

Balance Score Card		Integrated Risk Management Planning	
Business Continuity Planning		Legal	
Capacity		Member Involvement	
Civil Contingencies Act		National Framework	
Comprehensive Performance Assessment		Operational Assurance	
Efficiency Savings	*	Retained	
Environmental		Risk and Insurance	*
Financial		Staff	*
Fire Control/Fire Link		Strategic Planning	
Information Communications and Technology		West Midlands Regional Management Board	
Freedom of Information / Data Protection / Environmental Information		Equality Impact Assessment	

Summary of Complaints Received 2007/08 to 2009/10

Type of Complaint	Total 2007/08	Outcomes		Total 2008/09	Outcomes		Total 2009/10	Outcomes	
Damage to property	2	2	Complaints upheld	3	2	Complaints upheld	5	3	Complaints upheld
		0	Complaint partially upheld		0	Complaint partially upheld		0	Complaint partially upheld
		0	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		0	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn		2	Complaints withdrawn
Poor driving behaviour	9	7	Complaints upheld	9	2	Complaints upheld	8	2	Complaints upheld
		0	Complaints partially upheld		2	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaint partially upheld
		2	Complaints overturned		2	Complaints overturned		5	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn		3	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn
Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service	4	1	Complaints upheld	9	0	Complaints upheld	5	1	Complaints upheld
		1	Complaints partially upheld		3	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld
		2	Complaints overturned		2	Complaints overturned		3	Complaints overturned
		0	Complaints withdrawn		4	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn
Failure to deal correctly with an incident /inspection	3	1	Complaints upheld	6	3	Complaints upheld	3	2	Complaints upheld
		1	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld
		0	Complaints overturned		2	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned
		1	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn
Other:	2	1	Complaints upheld	3	1	Complaints upheld	3	1	Complaints upheld
		0	Complaints partially upheld		1	Complaints partially upheld		0	Complaints partially upheld
		0	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned		1	Complaints overturned
		1	Complaints withdrawn		0	Complaints withdrawn		1	Complaints withdrawn
Total:	20			30			24		
Anonymous*		5			0			1	

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

**Summary of equality and diversity monitoring data (complaints)
 2007/08, 2008/09 & 2009/10**

		Year		
		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Gender:	Male	3	6	3
	Female	2	5	3
Disabled:	Yes	1	1	1
	No	4	8	4
Ethnic/Cultural origin • White:	British	5	3	1
	English	5	7	3
	Scottish			
	Welsh			
	Other			
	Irish			
	Other white			
Ethnic/Cultural origin • Mixed:	White & Black Caribbean			
	White & Black African			
	White & Asian			
	Other mixed background			
Ethnic/Cultural origin • Asian or Asian British:	Indian			
	Pakistani		1	
	Bangladeshi			
	Other Asian background			
Ethnic/Cultural origin • Black or Black British:	Caribbean			
	African			
	Other Black background			
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual		9	3
	Gay			
	Lesbian			
	Bisexual			
	Other			
Ethnic/Cultural origin • Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	Chinese			1
	Other			
Religion:	None	1		
	Buddhist			1
	Christian	3	8	1
	Hindu			
	Jewish			
	Muslim		1	
	Sikh			
	other		1	