

**Corporate Overview and Scrutiny
Management Board**

24 October 2022

**Customer Feedback Report,
Quarter One, 2022/23**



Report of Corporate Management Team

Paul Darby, Corporate Director of Resources

**Councillor Susan McDonnell, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Digital and
Customer Services**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To present an overview of the wide range of information collected from our customers that describe their experiences of using our services.
- 2 The report covers performance in quarter one 2022/23, April to June 2022.

Executive summary

- 3 Customer feedback such as satisfaction with, and general experiences of, the services and support we provide, is an important aid to improve customer service and align our actions with customer need.
- 4 Performance is reported on an exception basis with key messages under three summary sections of going well, areas which require attention and other areas to note.
- 5 As we transition into a post-pandemic world, the impacts of COVID-19 can still be seen in our performance reporting. The last two financial years are not representative for many areas of performance and will be an unfair comparison due to pandemic impacts.
- 6 We have therefore, wherever possible, tried to make the comparison of current performance against pre-pandemic data. Whilst COVID-19 continues to impact on certain performance metrics, there is evidence of some areas returning to pre-pandemic levels.

- 7 However, the biggest challenge for our residents, local businesses and the council is the current cost of living crisis. Inflation is currently running at 10.1%¹ with the Bank of England forecasting it to peak at 13.3% at the end of March 2023. The inflationary increase is largely driven by the rise in the cost of fuel and energy bills, which is being impacted significantly by the war in Ukraine.
- 8 The cost-of-living crisis impacts our contact with our customers in three key ways:
- Demand for financial support and advice services. High inflation is outstripping wage and benefit increases resulting in a fall in income in real terms. This has been further exacerbated by the tax increases implemented in April. This will result in increased demand for services to help support people facing financial hardship or who are in crisis.
 - As we continue to administer support schemes provided through Government funding, customer contact increases as residents make enquiries in relation to their own circumstances. The Government's Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme has resulted in significant increases in customer contact as residents make enquiries and also need support to progress claims (Non Direct Debit payers).
 - As resources are allocated to enable the implementation of additional support schemes, this can have an impact on the performance and delivery of mainstream services which can prompt further contact and potentially complaints.

Recommendation(s)

- 9 That Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board notes the overall position and direction of travel in relation to customer feedback, particularly in relation to the continuing impact of COVID-19 and the increased cost of living.

¹ UK Consumer Price Index for 12 months to July 2022

Background

- 10 Successful organisations listen and respond to their customers and one way to gain this valuable insight is by gathering and utilising customer feedback. This should then be used to inform learning and continuous improvement across services

Analysis of Customer Feedback

Going well

- 11 82% of the 22,000 respondents to our CRM satisfaction survey (which is automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM) stated they were satisfied with overall service delivery. 83% of customers who requested a service via an online form gave a rating of four or five stars.
- 12 99% of respondents to the annual care connect survey stated their support needs were met and 40% stated there was nothing they disliked about the service. But three specific areas were highlighted: the desire for more contact, the cost of the service and issues with equipment specifically that pendants can be easily activated by mistake.
- 13 Across the three venues of the Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire, 97% rated their experience as 'good' or 'very good'. However, only 70% rated food and drink facilities as 'good' or 'very good', with the most frequent cause for complaint being long queues and slow service.
- 14 Although service demand has increased and requests have become more complex, both complaints and compliments, as a proportion of demand, have fallen. Fewer complaints are progressing to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Areas which require attention

- 15 During quarter one, we were able to assess 43% of service requests against a performance standard. Although the standard was only met in 61% of cases, it is important to note that greater service demand and increased complexity have led to extended service delivery times over the reporting period.
- 16 Dissatisfaction continues to be mainly linked to not keeping customers informed of progress, not explaining our decision making, taking too long to complete tasks, and not resolving the issue long-term.
- 17 An estimated 29% of complaints escalated to independent investigation could have been avoided through either timelier or more comprehensive updates from services, and/or completion of the agreed action in the first instance.

Customer Contact

- 18 Contacts are almost 300,000 higher (+19%) than pre-pandemic, mainly driven by transferring telephone lines to our Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system, continued high demand for services, and more recently queries surrounding the £150 energy rebate.
- 19 Although the telephone remains the most frequently used method for contacting us, digital contact continues to increase and now makes up 23% of all contact. This compares to 15% pre-pandemic.
- 20 In addition, compared to pre-pandemic, the number of households with a do-it-online account has increased by 30%, customers receiving their council tax bill via e-mail has almost doubled (to around 30% of all households), and residents using the revenues and benefits open portal to view their council tax account has more than doubled to just over 73,000.
- 21 Although our Customer Access Points (CAPs), which were closed during the pandemic, have re-opened, contact is about a third of the volume received during the same period pre-pandemic.
- 22 Many service areas experienced increased demand during the pandemic. Although for most demand has since returned to their pre-pandemic volumes, some services continue to be requested in relatively high numbers, most notably across our waste services (missed bins, bulky waste, waste permits) but also account changes and birth, death and marriage certificates.
- 23 Six complaint types collectively make up 42% of all complaints. The most frequent cause for complaint remains missed bins (17% of all complaints) but this equates to only 0.003% of bins scheduled for collection.
- 24 The report in Appendix 2 provides the detailed update on Customer Feedback during quarter one 2022/23 and the actions put into place as a result

Using Feedback to inform learning

- 25 During the next quarter, work will be undertaken with services to ensure that customer feedback is being used to better understand the experience of accessing the Council's services from a customer's perspective.
- 26 Meetings will be held with service management teams during Customer First week (first week in October) to present data on customer feedback and discuss the volumes/trends/issues being raised and opportunities for improving the overall experience. The outcomes from these meetings will

inform future Customer Feedback reports and also feed into the refresh of the Digital Strategy.

- 27 As part of this process, opportunities for future co-production with our residents will be explored to ensure that the council is developing services with the customer at the core.

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable.

Finance

Information on financial remedies in relation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman is included within the report.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

Complaints regarding any equality and diversity aspect are handled in consultation with the Council's Equality Team.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.



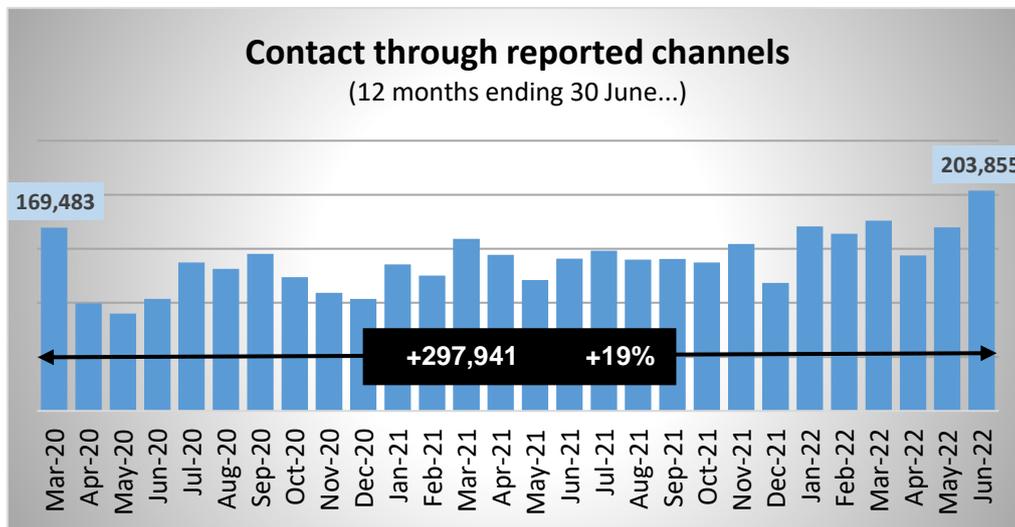
Durham County Council Customer Feedback Report Quarter One, 2022/23



Contact through our reported channels

Volume

- 1 Contact through our reported channels over the last 12 months is almost 300,000 higher than the pre-pandemic year².



- 2 There are three main reasons for this increase.
- 3 The first reason is transferring telephone lines to our automated call distribution (ACD) system³. Since the start of the pandemic, we have transferred 104 non-ACD lines to the ACD system. As we can't migrate past data, transfers create artificial increases in call volumes.
- 4 Lines transferred to the ACD system since the start of the pandemic include selective licensing, bereavement services, Durham Music Service, early help, electoral services, fostering and adoption, registrars, school admissions, trade waste, and the leisure centres.
- 5 83% of council services are now fully migrated to the ACD system.
- 6 The second reason is continued high demand. Many service areas experienced increased demand during the pandemic, and although most have since returned to their pre-pandemic volumes, some services continue to be requested in relatively high numbers.

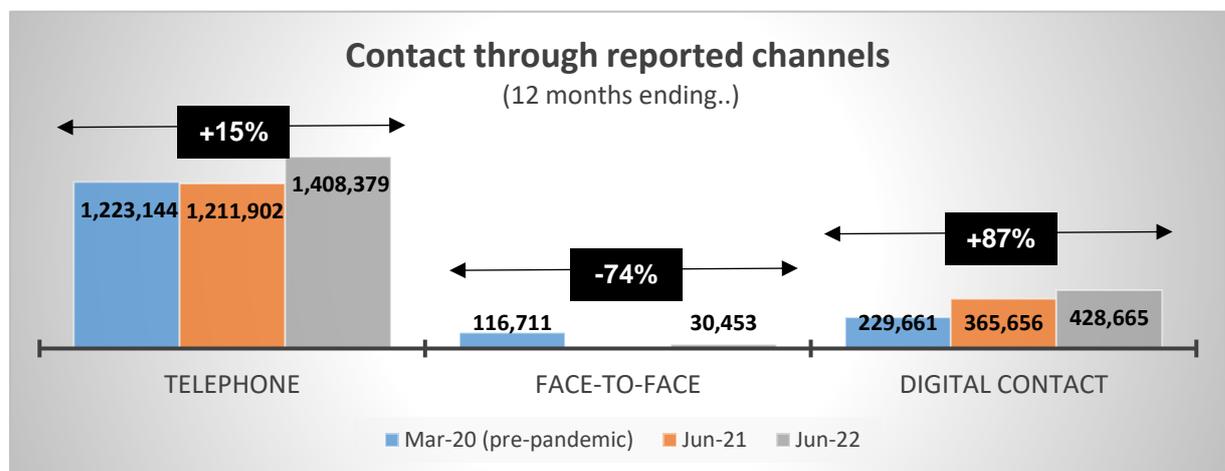
² 12 months ending 31 March 2020

³ Telephone calls are received either through our Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system, which routes calls to groups of agents based on a first-in-first-answered criteria, or directly to a telephone extension (non-ACD). Only calls received via our ACD system are included in our telephone statistics. When we transfer non-ACD lines into the ACD system, there is no past data. Consequently, it appears that call volume has increased.

- 7 Service areas experiencing increased levels of contact include council tax, waste, registrars, social care direct, welfare assistance, blue badge applications and the concessionary bus line.
- 8 Refuse and Recycling collection routes were changed across two operational areas in May. This impacted approximately 165,000 properties with around 10% having a change in collection day. However unexpected resource issues over the Platinum Jubilee Bank Holiday period (2 to 3 June) in one operational area resulted in a significant number of missed bins. Staff worked to minimise the impact and the collections were carried out as soon as possible.
- 9 Reason three is the more recent queries surrounding the £150 energy rebate. We have received more than 26,000 contacts which can be broadly categorised as: requesting help with the application (49%), general enquires related to energy rebate (37%) and customers chasing up their payment (14%).

Contact channels

- 10 The telephone remains the most frequently used method for contacting us. However, digital contact continues to increase and now makes up 23% of all contact. Compared to 15% pre-pandemic.



- 11 As mentioned earlier in the report, the increase in telephone contact is due to transferring lines to the ACD system, and more recently queries relating to the £150 energy rebate.
- 12 The reduction in face-to-face contact is a consequence of the closure of our Customer Access Points (CAPs) during the pandemic. Although, the CAPs have re-opened, contact through this channel is about a third of the volume received during the same period pre-pandemic. Two common reasons for visiting a CAP since they re-opened are providing

documentation or attending an appointment with customer services. The most frequent queries relate to the £150 energy rebate, bus passes and libraries.

- 13 The increase in digital contact is mainly driven by the increase in service requests with more customers requesting these services through Do-it-online. Our webchat function is also increasing in popularity (70% of webchat during quarter one was linked to the £150 energy rebate scheme).
- 14 In addition to more households signing up for Do-it-online, more customers are requesting their council tax bill via email, and more are using the open portal to view their council tax account.

Account		Pre-pandemic volume	12 months ending 30 June...		Change since pre-pandemic	
			2021	2022		
Do-it-online (CRM)		129,876	151,961	166,715	+36,839	+28%
Revenues & Benefits	Open Portal	33,876	37,472	73,205	+39,329	+116%
	Council tax e-bills	36,193	34,031	69,936	+33,743	+93%

Comments relating to policies, procedures, decision-making and charges.

- 15 The following table summarises the feedback received over the 12 months ending 30 June 2022.

43 objections to our decisions (-1)	Two objections related to operating hours / building closures, six for planning decisions and one for not proceeding with customer's complaints. The remainder were mainly operational decisions, e.g., road closures.
83 dissatisfied with fees and charges (-21)	Almost half of the feedback related to leisure centres (23) or replacement bins (17). The remaining comments related to a wide variety of service areas in small numbers
56 comments about policies / procedures (-139)	75% of comments related to our household waste service (about one third to our recycling centres and two thirds to kerbside collection). The remaining comments related to a wide variety of service areas in small numbers.

Performance Standards

- 16 43% of all CRM service requests received during quarter one can be assessed against a performance standard⁴.
- 17 Three service areas met their performance standard in at least 80% of cases: waste permits (96% within one day), join the garden waste scheme (81% within one day), and complaints (80% within 10 days).
- 18 However, three service areas met their performance standard in less than 50% of cases: rubbish in gardens and yards (48% within 10 days), grass cutting, shrubs and flower beds (37% in five days) and missed bins (20% in three days).
- 19 We have recently set up a dedicated team to tackle the delays in clearing rubbish in untidy yards and gardens which should lead to improved response times.
- 20 In relation to the other areas showing performance standards of less than 50%, the service areas are working with our data teams to resolve some glitches in the system which could be impacting the data and carry out further analysis to understand the issue.

Customer suggestions

- 21 Whilst we receive and review all suggestions, the majority have been addressed previously and/or considered as part of service development.
- 22 A small sample of customer suggestions received during the latest quarter is attached at Appendix three.

Customer Compliments and Star Rating Feedback

- 23 In line with previous reports, most compliments relate to satisfaction with service provision – although we continue to receive praise relating to the actions of specific individuals.
- 24 There were recurring themes in the feedback received through the star rating system. Respondents rating the service as three star and above tended to have positive feedback in relation to our website (e.g., simple to use, professional, easy to navigate); our processes (ease of completing forms); overall service delivery; and staff.
- 25 Respondents rating the service as one star or two stars tended to have negative feedback in relation to our website (slow, unresponsive,

⁴ We do not apply performance standards if the process is not fully managed within CRM which accounts for 48% of processes. We did not apply performance standards to many of the COVID-related service requests, partly due to the speed of the set-up, but also due to the complexity / unknown elements of request which often resulted in required modifications as the pandemic progressed.

confusing to use, crashes); service delivery (failure to provide); contact channels (difficulties reaching us using telephone); and the time spent on trying to resolve an issue.

- 26 A small sample of the compliments and star rating feedback received during the latest quarter is attached at Appendix four and five.

Customer satisfaction through the CRM⁵

- 27 Seven service request types attained a satisfaction rating of at least 90%; birth death and marriage certificates (98%), bulky waste (97%), waste permits (97%), joining the garden waste scheme (95%), applying for free school travel (94%), early help (92%), and changing the payment method for council tax (90%).
- 28 However, six areas recorded satisfaction levels of less than 70%: clearing litter (29%), drainage and flooding (34%), tree or hedge pruning / removal (34%), dog and litter bins (40%), bins - new, replacement, or repair to bin (41%) and service complaints (51%).
- 29 The main driver for these low satisfaction levels is timeliness (both acknowledgement and response).
- 30 The survey also showed that overall:
- 93% found it easy to contact the right service,
 - 87% were satisfied with our handling of the initial contact,
 - 97% felt their request was handled knowledgeably and effectively handled,
 - 87% felt they were treated with dignity and respect,
 - 87% were provided with clear information,
 - 79% were informed of how long it would take to complete the task,
 - 91% were kept informed of progress,
 - 83% were satisfied with the time taken to complete the task.

⁵ Customer satisfaction surveys are automatically e-mailed to the customer when their service request is closed within the CRM. The response rate has improved over the last two years and is currently around 7% of service requests. As the results are taken from a sample survey, we are carrying out further work to determine if the results are statistically relevant.

Customer satisfaction with theatre provision⁶

- 31 Overall, across the three venues of the Gala, Bishop Auckland Town Hall and Empire, respondents rated the following as 'good' or 'very good':
- Ticket booking experience: 95%
 - Staff welcome: 95%
 - Food and drink facilities: 70%
 - Quality of event: 97%
 - Value for money: 96%
 - Whole experience: 97%
- 32 The most frequent cause for complaint in relation to food and drink facilities was long queues and slow service.

Customer satisfaction through the annual care connect survey⁷

- 33 The survey showed that overall:
- 96% of respondent's calls were answered within 1-3 minutes of calling (65% of these were answered within 1 minute).
 - 100% felt staff handled their call appropriately.
 - 95% stated staff arrived at their home within 0-45 minutes (63% of these arrived within 20 minutes).
 - 99% said their support needs were met on that occasion.
 - 100% reported staff were polite and professional.
 - 100% found staff helpful.
- 34 The survey also asked customers what they least liked about the service, 31 of the 49 responses related to three specific areas: the desire for more contact, the cost of the service and issues with equipment specifically that pendants can be easily activated by mistake.

⁶ January to October 2022. After every performance, the survey is sent to attendees for which we have an e-mail address

⁷ Based on a sample of 10% of Care Connect's current customer base (selected at random) with a 28% response rate.

Customer satisfaction through the annual Adult Care and Carers Surveys⁸.

- 35 Based on those who responded to the surveys:
- 64% of service users were satisfied with service provision
 - 81% of service users felt in control of their daily life
 - 41% of service users and 42% of carers stated they would like more social contact
 - 65% of service users and 68% of carers felt they could access information easily.
- 36 All results were in line with previous years except the percentage of service users who felt they could access information easily, which was significantly lower than the 2020/21 result.

Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)

- 37 286 requests were received during quarter one, 26% more than the same period last year. We responded to 79% of requests within 20 working days, this is below the target (95%).

Priority Correspondence

- 38 The main topics of priority correspondence during quarter one were enquiries relating to housing, planning and the £150 energy rebate. We also received enquiries in relation to supporting refugees.
- 39 A pilot scheme to analyse member feedback to support service improvements is now underway.

Complaints⁹

Corporate Complaints

- 40 Corporate complaints have increased slightly compared to pre-pandemic volumes (+3%). However, this needs to be considered within the context that demand across many of our services remains high and

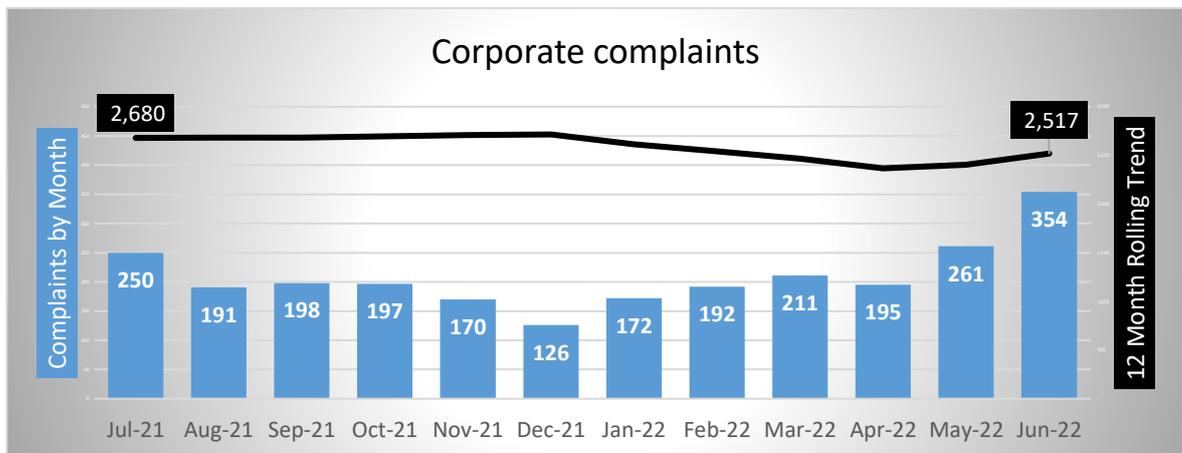
⁸ Both are 2020/21 surveys – national data not yet released.

Of the 7,890 service users in the cohort eligible for the Adult Social Care Survey, 1,430 participants were selected and 460 responded

Of the 5,115 carers in the cohort eligible for the Survey of Adult Carers, 1,023 participants were selected and 303 responded

⁹ statutory complaints that arise from our duties as a local social services authority and corporate complaints that cover all other complaints

is, in many cases, becoming more complex. Of those complaints investigated, 51% were upheld.



- 41 There were six main areas of complaint which collectively make up 42% of all complaints.
- 42 In line with previous reports, the most frequent cause for complaint was missed bins. However, although they make up 17% of all complaints, this equates to only 0.003% of bins scheduled for collection. Around 75% of these complaints were upheld.
- 43 8% related to staff practices (which includes not returning bins to their collection point) and staff behaviour; 7% to billing / payment issues (mostly council tax recovery action); 5% to maintenance activities; 5% due to not actioning a service request; 3% to issues with correspondence, mainly contamination notice disputes.

Corporate complaints subjected to independent investigation

- 44 Complaints progressing to independent investigation have become more complex, and the average time to resolve has increased. Consequently, 64% were responded to within the performance standard, compared to 76% last year.
- 45 Analysis shows that up to 29% of these complaints could have been avoided if there had been a timelier or more comprehensive update from the service at the first stage response.
- 46 Details of complaints upheld by independent investigators during quarter one are included in Appendix six.

Statutory Complaints: Adult Health Services (AHS)

- 47 There were three main areas of complaint to AHS: 30% related to dissatisfaction with charges (26 complaints), 22% to timeliness and 20% to the application of service guidance and/or procedures.

48 During quarter one, we improved the statement of account template to improve clarity and reduce confusion, and reviewed parameters for single point of contact.

Statutory Complaints: Children and Young People's Services (CYPS)

49 Complaints to CYPS are complex and up to three reasons can be recorded for each. The main reasons for complaint to CYPS during the latest 12 months were communication, staff behaviour and refusal or lack of a service.

Complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

50 17 of the 31 decisions delivered during the latest quarter were upheld (55%) and details are included in Appendix seven. Additional information regarding complaints escalated to the Ombudsman is available [here](#).

Recent developments that enhance the customer experience

51 In June 2022, we piloted our chatbot project across our waste services (selected due to the high volume and low complexity). The project will provide accurate and appropriate automated information (AI) and help reduce avoidable contact.

52 During quarter two, National Customer Service Week takes place in the first week of October. This will be used to launch a refreshed approach to using customer feedback to inform learning.

Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Previous Customer Feedback reports presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

Author(s)

Debra Kitching

Tel: 03000 268158

Sarah Welsh

Tel: 07768 994343

Mary Readman

Tel: 03000 268161

Appendix 3: Sample of suggestions received during quarter one, 2022/23

Suggestion: increase the availability of lane swimming at a weekend.

Our Response: We hope to bring back some public swimming to the weekend afternoon timetable soon.

Suggestion: open the library earlier.

Our Response: library opening hours were part of our recent customer survey which will help shape our future library offer. We are reviewing feedback and preparing proposals for consultation.

Suggestion: put in cycle lanes from Carrville, Belmont and Gilesgate to Durham.

Our Response: We are currently looking at options to improve the cycling and walking links from Belmont and Carrville to the City centre.

Suggestion: clearer information about park and ride bus stops

Our Response: Information is available on our website, on leaflets located at the park and ride sites and from the park and ride office (0191 374 1702). Drivers will also answer any queries.

Suggestion: the council's social media doesn't meet the needs of young people. Young people need more say in the decisions we make that impact them

Our Response: we created the Durham Youth Council to consult with young people across county and introduced a Durham Youth Council Facebook account.

Suggestion: we don't celebrate the achievements of young people enough

Our Response: we now hold an annual Youth Award Ceremony as part of the Durham Youth Council.

Suggestion: Allow swim memberships at Wolsingham swimming pool.

Our Response: Swim memberships are available at Wolsingham pool but this information was omitted from our website in error. The website is being updated.

Suggestion: mow lawns less frequently to encourage nature to thrive.

Our Response: We are working with local community groups and partners to reduce the cutting of vegetation and rewild where appropriate. More than 35,000 m² of land is meadow planted.

Suggestion: use electronic message boards to inform motorists of changes to the Highway Code: specifically giving way to cyclists and pedestrians going straight ahead at junctions.

Our Response: How we use variable message signs (VMS) is defined by legislation. As changes to the highway code have neither been authorised for use on VMS by the Department of Transport nor run as a national campaign, we are unable to display this information on the VMS.

Suggestion: install additional benches at Lanchester graveyard for elderly and disabled people.

Our Response: we are reviewing the locations of the current seating to ensure it is in the most appropriate places.

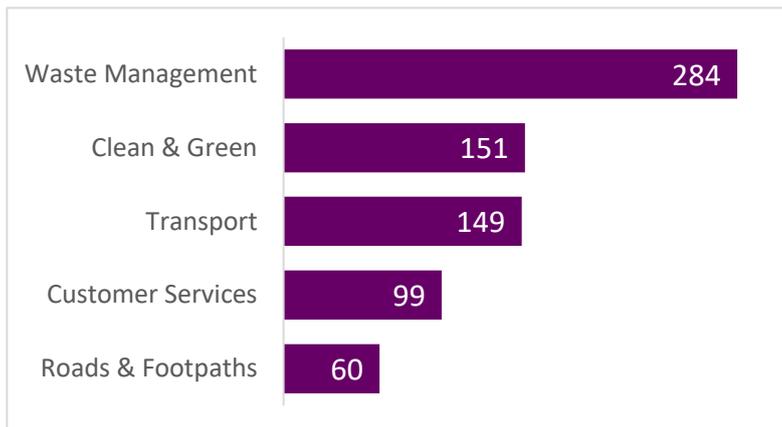
Suggestion: more dog waste bins in Hilda Park, Chester-le-Street.

Our Response: dog bin usage in the area is being monitored and an additional resource will be added if necessary

Suggestion: more charging points for electric vehicles

Our Response: 50 additional charge points are scheduled for the next three months with a further 100 scheduled for next year (as part of the pilot of LEVI funding). There are two pilot schemes for charge points outside terraced housing. We are expanding our team in response to the release of more LEVI funding which will significantly increase charging points.

Appendix 4: Sample of compliments received during quarter one, 2022/23



thank you for having missed bin returned for and emptied, customer service officer was very helpful and polite

I had a result from you within a few hours - wonderful service from Durham County Records Office.

in relation to a fly tipping incident. The warden was brilliant and very professional and helpful and so was his colleague.

thanks for the work getting the licence in place for car parking at school site.

would like to thank the Support and Recovery team for the help and support received.

The work that has been carried out along the boundary fencing is excellent. The amount of debris caused by "undesirables intent on glue sniffing and taking drugs" has rapidly reduced and they cannot carry out their actions hidden by bushes anymore. Thank the people who did the work.

Garden waste bin crew returned after emptying bin and driving away to double check that they had emptied bin following missed bin a couple of weeks prior. Great service

wanted to say how well the warden addressed the situation, very pleasant and he sorted the job in a timely manner.

thank the Clean & Green team for removing the items that were dumped on the footpath by the car park. It was done very quickly and customer and 3 x neighbours wanted to pass on grateful thanks to the team for expediting it so quickly.

to thank us for fixing streetlight promptly

Care Connect Team - wishes to thank all concerned - wonderful service - thank you all for your help :-)

wanting to pass on his thanks to everyone who helped him when he fell

thank you to the members of the Blue Badge Team who helped with the renewal process for his Blue Badge.

it was lovely to find such a caring considerate person on the other end of a phone call

thank the crew who dealt with this query in such a timely fashion. I would also like to thank them for being tidy and helpful while performing their task. WELL DONE ALL!

would like to pass on how nice she thought the you man was who collected her glass box and recycle bin today. She was amazed how quick he was and he was polite. Also the young girl who often collects her bins is also amazing. She thinks you are all doing an amazing job and she would like to thank you.

thank you for work which had been completed on the footpath outside her house. She rang on 16th to say the kerb had dropped near parking area beside her house. She said someone came out the same week to repair and was pleased it had been done so promptly.

I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the transport team who attended my address this morning and helped me following an unfortunate incident. Your member of staff is a credit to your organisation and displayed a high level of care, consideration and patience which was way beyond the call of duty.

thank the Clean & Green team for removing the items that were dumped on the footpath by the car park. It was done very quickly and customer and 3 x neighbours wanted to pass on grateful thanks to the team for expediting it so quickly.

Appendix 5: Sample of comments received with the star ratings during quarter 1, 2022/23

5★ - Retail business support enquiry – “Easy to use and helpful staff when I rang”	5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “Your collection service of bulky household furniture is outstanding”	5★ - Road or footpath obstruction (vehicle) – “Yet again easy to use site. Simple, straight forward, no waiting for someone to answer the phone”
5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “I can access digital services but some people cannot for various reasons. Being able to speak to a person should always be an option so that some people are not excluded.”	4★ - Garden waste (join the scheme) – “Yes it was very good”	4★ - Waste permit – “Would have preferred if I could have applied for more than one permit at a time. Apart from that it was OK”
5★ - Customer satisfaction survey – “Would be useful to upload videos for reports”	4★ - Tree or hedge pruning, removal – “Would have been much easier sending an email with info & pictures direct to your office”	1★ - Bin (New, replacement, repair) – “Would not let me order a replacement rubbish & recycling bin together”
3★ - Pest Control (Domestic) – “Website was very slow and I was only able to book pest control after disabling all my adblockers”	5★ - Taxis (Apply for a vehicle licence) – “Worked as expected”	4★ - Research Approval Group Application Form – “Would be beneficial if you could save and come back later”
4★ - Bulky waste, white goods collection – “Website a touch slow but easy to organise collection of fridge freezer”	2★ - Bin (Not Emptied) – “Website was a bit flakey today. I had to re-set password and programming code was visible to the right of the page throughout”	2★ - Waste permit – “Why cant you have an option to tick all the items instead of having to keep adding an item one at a time”
1★ - Complaints – “Website is not fit for purpose”	3★ - Customer document submission – “Would be good to have a message or confirmation that information/form has been successfully submitted to receive bus pass and an idea of the length of time I would be awaiting the pass. (A reminder after completing the form)”	4★ - Flytipping – “Was unable to upload more than 3 photos for evidence of fly tipping”
5★ - Move (Start your journey!) – “Very straightforward”	5★ - Customer Satisfaction survey – “Very easy, clearly set out and relevant to request. Importantly a short time to complete.	5★ - Retail Business Support Enquiry – “Very easy to navigate and straight forward”
3★ - Bin (New, replacement, repair) – “Very slow website”	2★ - Litter – “Third attempt. Crashed twice.”	3★ - Account update (Change of personal details) – “Very easy to register and get started; I got quite a way through my ‘request’ and then all was lost and finding it difficult to re-start”
		5★ - Customer satisfaction Survey – “Think for older people it’s better to talk to someone rather than try and go online”

Appendix 6: Independent investigations by Customer Feedback Team where corporate complaints were upheld

Complaint upheld	Recommendation
Customer dissatisfied with a series of missed bins.	Apologise for level of service.
Customer dissatisfied with broken glass repeatedly left behind following recycling collections.	Remind crews in situations such as this to arrange for additional cleansing as soon as possible.

Complaint partially upheld	Recommendation
Customer dissatisfied with the actions of staff when collecting bulky waste.	Remind crews to promptly report events of this nature.
Customer disagrees with the extent of the adopted highway.	Apologise for giving the customer incorrect information.
Customer disputes they are responsible for maintaining a wall adjacent to their property and is dissatisfied with our lack of response to this issue.	Although no fault was found with the decision relating to the wall, apologise for the lack of efficiency.
Customer dissatisfied with time taken to respond to challenge of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).	Apologise for the time taken to respond.
Customer dissatisfied with the assisted collection process for bulky waste collection.	Items to be collected from the front of the complainant's property.
Customer dissatisfied with our response to their complaint.	Apologise for failing to respond to all contact prior to the formal complaint.
Customer dissatisfied with a planning decision.	Offer refund of all planning fees (£512).

Appendix 7: Complaints upheld by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (the Ombudsman)

Ombudsman's final decision	Agreed action
<p>The council failed to properly determine a neighbour's planning application before granting permission.</p>	<p>Provide a written apology which addresses each area of fault and injustice identified.</p> <p>Pay £1,000 to acknowledge the distress, uncertainty and time and trouble caused.</p> <p>Pay £2,500 to acknowledge the interference with his amenity by reason of the overlooking of the development. The payment will help the complainant adopt measures to reduce the impact of this.</p> <p>Pay £540 to reimburse reasonably incurred professional costs and advice.</p>
<p>The council unreasonably refused the complainant's request for alternative school transport for their child.</p>	<p>Amend the council's school transport policy and arrange for a further appeal for the customer.</p>
<p>The council did not prosecute the complainant's former landlord for illegal eviction.</p>	<p>Apologise in writing for the fault causing injustice.</p> <p>Pay £100 for the distress and uncertainty caused.</p> <p>Remind relevant staff to routinely ask people about any reasonable adjustments.</p>

Data Tables

Key to Symbols

Performance against target		Performance against comparable groups		Direction of Travel	
★	meeting or exceeding target	★	same or better than comparable group	↑	higher than comparable period
●	within 2% of target	●	worse than comparable group (within 2%)	→	static against comparable period
▲	more than 2% behind target	▲	worse than comparable group (greater than 2%)	↓	lower than comparable period

NB: oldest data in left column

Types of indicators

There are two types of performance indicators throughout the report:

1. Key target indicators – targets are set as improvements can be measured regularly and can be actively influenced by the council and its partners; and
2. Key tracker indicators – performance is tracked but no targets are set as they are long-term and / or can only be partially influenced by the council and its partners.

National Benchmarking

We compare our performance to all English authorities. The number of authorities varies according to the performance indicator and functions of councils, e.g., educational attainment is compared to county and unitary councils, however waste disposal is compared to district and unitary councils.

North East Benchmarking

The North East figure is the average performance from the authorities within the North East region - County Durham, Darlington, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle upon Tyne, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees, South Tyneside, Sunderland.

More detail is available from the Strategy Team at performance@durham.gov.uk

Description		Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:			Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter	
						Pre-COVID	National	North East						Nearest neighbour
No. of contacts through reported channels		1,867,497	Jul-21 to Jun-22		1,577,558	1,569,556	-	-	-	↑	→	↑	↑	Yes
% of contact through reported digital channels		23%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		23%	15%	-	-	-	↑	↑	↓	→	Yes
% of contact received through reported non-digital channels		77%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		77%	85%	-	-	-	↓	↓	↑	→	Yes
% of CRM requests meeting performance standard		61%	Apr-Jun-22		57%		-	-	-		↓	↑	↓	Yes
% respondents were satisfied with overall service delivery (CRM)		82%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		79% ★	81% ★	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	→	Yes
% of customers who request a service via an online form who give a rating of 4 or 5 stars		83%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		83%	N/A	-	-	-	↑	↓	↑	↓	Yes
statutory complaints	No. received	86	Jul-21 to Jun-22	75 ▲	78 ▲	84 ●	-	-	-	↑	↓	↓	↑	Yes
	% within performance standard	100%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		100% ★	100% ★	-	-	-	→	→	→	→	Yes
Adult and Health Services	% upheld (fully or partially)	64%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		40%	44%	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↑	Yes
statutory complaints	No. received	30	Jul-21 to Jun-22	46 ★	46 ★	100 ★	-	-	-	↓	→	→	↓	Yes
	% within performance standard	77%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		74% ▲	76% ●	-	-	-	↓	↑	↑	↑	Yes
Childrens' Services	% upheld (fully or partially)	53%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		39% ▲	33% ▲	-	-	-	↑	↑	↑	↓	Yes
No. of corporate complaints		2,517	Jul-21 to Jun-22		2,691 ▲	2,447 ★	-	-	-	↓	↑	↓	↑	Yes

Description	Latest data	Period covered	Period target	12 months earlier	Performance compared to:				Direction of Travel - last four reporting periods				updated this quarter
					Pre-COVID	National	North East	Nearest neighbour					
Ratio of corporate complaints to service requests	0.6	Jul-21 to Jun-22		0.6	0.7	-	-	-	➡	➡	➡	➡	Yes
No. of Independent investigations	198	Jul-21 to Jun-22		211	192	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬆	Yes
No. of complaints submitted to Ombudsman	43	Jul-21 to Jun-22		79 ★	91 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬆	⬇	Yes
% of complaints responded to within performance standard	43%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		81% ▲	81% ▲	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	Yes
% of corporate complaints upheld	51%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		51%	55%	-	-	-	⬇	➡	⬇	⬆	Yes
No. of priority correspondence	2,009	Jul-21 to Jun-22		2,113 ★	N/A	-	-	-	⬆	⬇	⬆	⬆	Yes
% of priority correspondence responded to within performance standard	75%	Jul-21 to Jun-22		72% ★	N/A	-	-	-	⬇	⬆	⬆	⬆	Yes
% Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Regulations requests responded to within 20 working days	79%	Apr-Jun 2022	95% ▲	83% ▲	86% ▲	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬇	⬆	Yes
% of CRM service requests received which were self-serve	72%	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	65% ★	49% ★	-	-	-	⬆	⬆	⬆	⬆	Yes
No. of compliments	737	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	1,007 ▲	688 ★	-	-	-	⬇	⬇	⬇	⬇	Yes
No of suggestions	526	Jul 21-Jun 22	Tracker	576 ▲	546 ▲	-	-	-	⬇	⬆	⬇	⬇	Yes