



**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

1st October 2013 – 31 December 2013



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

1. Introduction

This report details the customer feedback received by Bromsgrove District Council during the period from 1 October 2013 to 31 December 2013.

It also provides information about the customer demand received through the customer service team and payment channels.

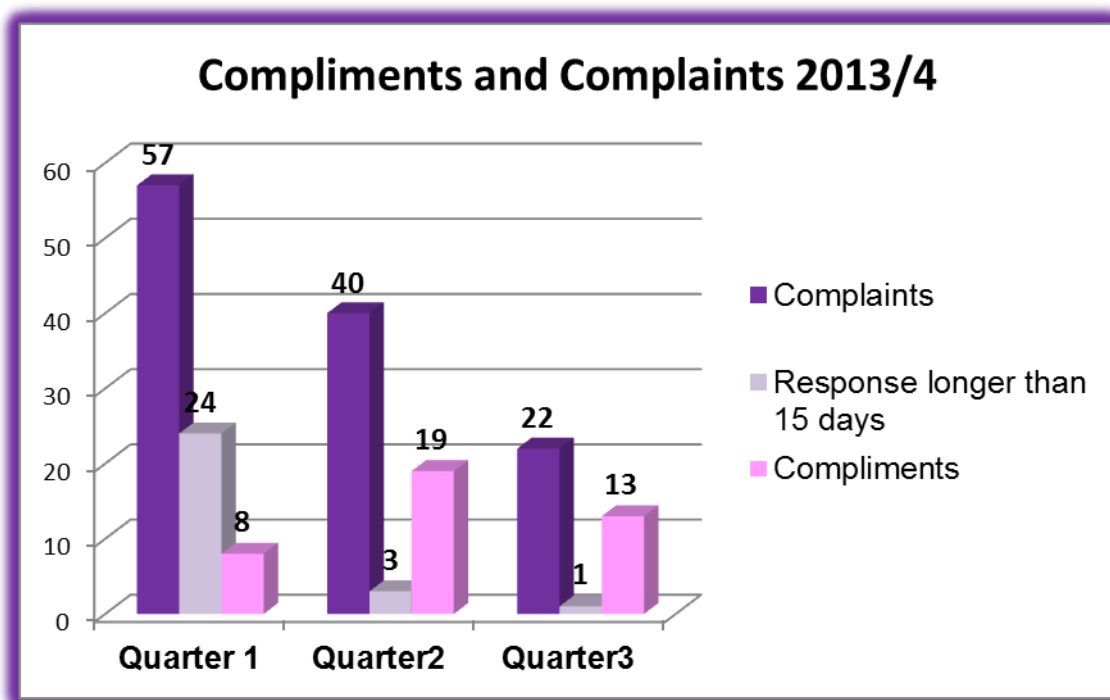
2. Customer Feedback Analysis

22 complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome. Details of all complaints received can be found at the end of this report in Appendix A.

21 complaints (95%) were answered in 15 working days or less and **1** complaint took longer than 15 working days to respond to.

We also received **13** compliments.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments for Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. We will continue to chart this as a comparison through the year.



Complaint figures have significantly reduced since last quarter when we received 40 complaints across the Council.

There has been a very marked decrease in complaints about waste collections from **22** in quarter 2 to **3** this quarter. Refuse Crews have worked hard and adopted new processes to make the new collection service work and it seems that customers are appreciating this.

There has also been a drop in complaints for Planning from **7** in Quarter 2 to **2** this quarter. The Development Control team has been making a concerted effort to keep customers updated and informed of their application progress or any developments with objections and this seems to have had a positive effect on the number of complaints received.

Although we have seen a slight rise in complaints about car parking, 4 of the 6 complaints received were in reality parking fine appeals and were registered as the customer wanted them dealt with as a complaint, even though our policy suggest that parking fine complaints should not normally be dealt with through the complaints system.

Number of complaints by service (detailed)

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown of complaints by service



“You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:-

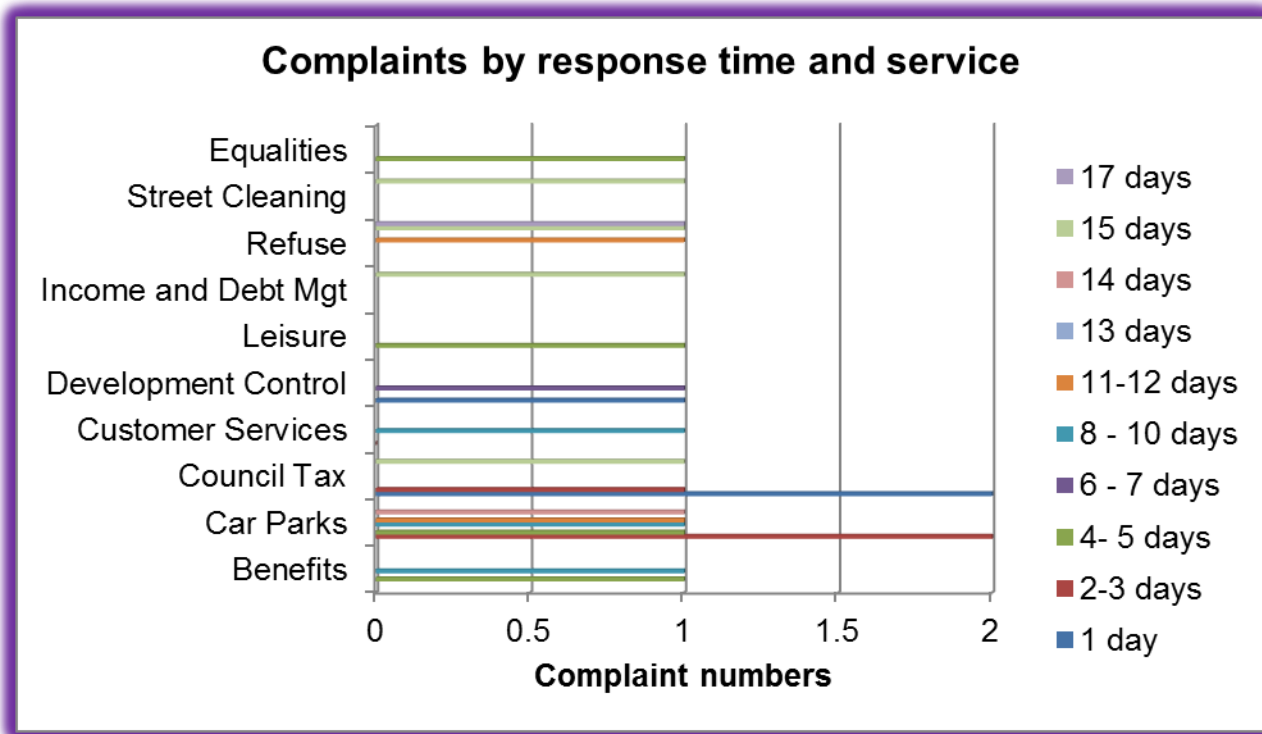
- Refuse Crews now have a total list of all assisted collections to help them when they cover different rounds.
- Reminder and Demand letters are being reviewed to make them clearer and more customer friendly.
- We will be developing some training for front line staff to help them when serving vulnerable customers.

Number of complaints escalated to Head of Customer Services or to Stage 2

There were no complaints escalated to the Head of Customer Services for further investigation.

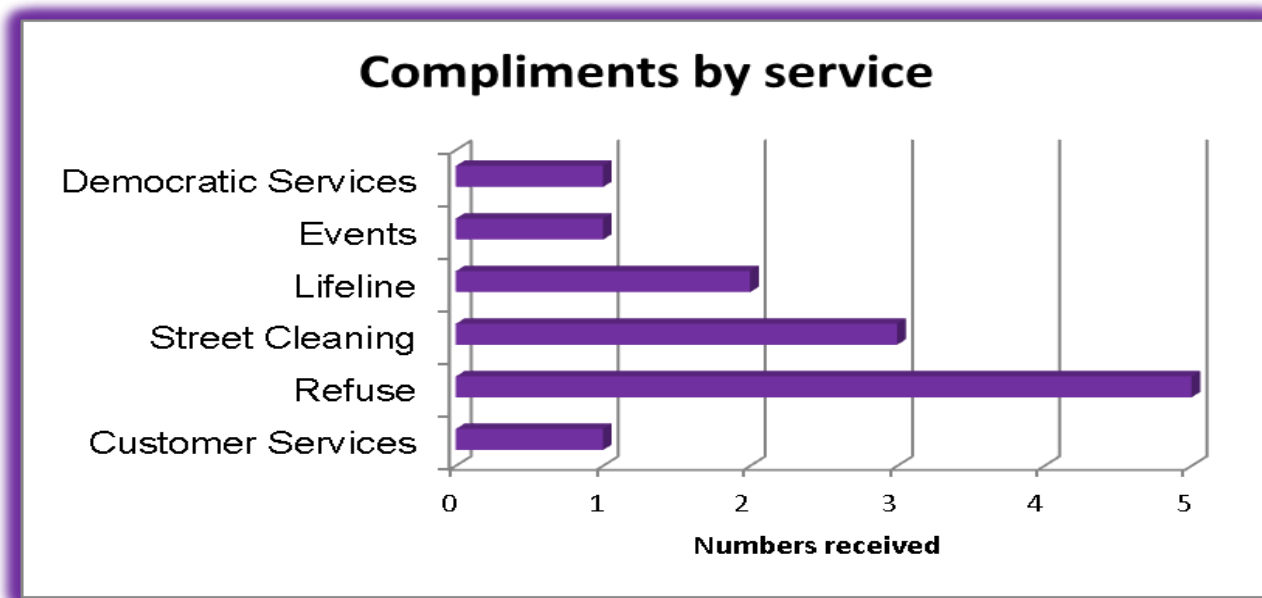
Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days and 95% of complaints received during this quarter were dealt with within that timeframe. Only 1 case took longer to respond than expected, and an apology was given to the customer for the delay.



Happy Customers!

13 compliments were recorded and the following chart shows compliments by service.



The following table details all of the compliments recorded this quarter.

Team	Compliment Detail
Lifeline	Customer wished to thank us so much for our help and was pleased with the service she had recently.
Lifeline	Customer's son wanted to thank operator Alan Anderson, for his help in getting medical assistance for his mother. He believes that his prompt actions may have saved her life.
Customer Services	Thank you to the two ladies in reception who guided us to the Premier Inn when we were lost especially to the lady whose car we followed and showed us the way in her sports car {in her dinner hour} we found the locals very friendly during our stay only too willing to help with directions and advice.
Customer Services and Refuse	Thank you to both customer services and the depot regarding rubbish and recycling for sorting out my concern. It is easy to complain but we often forget to praise
Refuse	Customer happy that crew member went back to collect bin from garage - was lovely and very helpful
Refuse	Please convey mine and my elderly mother's thanks for the excellent service the waste collection team showed when dealing with my mother's recent bin 'oversight'. Entirely her fault but the team dealt with the problem expertly and with a great deal of sensitivity and understanding. From being dealt with on the telephone to the guys who picked the bin up she says they were excellent and made her feel so much better.
Refuse and Support Services	Customer rang to say a big thank you to Kim who helped him recently when he was having difficulty with his refuse collection. Kim took the full brunt of his frustration and dealt with it really well. She arranged a smaller bin and assistance with his collection. He is very appreciative of all the help and support that he has been given.
Refuse	Customer wanted to pass on her compliments on how delighted she is with the service she received for garden waste. She informed us that she no longer dreads calling as she said the service has improved in the last 3 months.
Street Cleaning	Street Cleansing team have been cleaning the area around Wheelwright Close and Cllr Bernie wanted to express what an excellent job has been carried out and what a difference this has made.
Street Cleaning	Customer wants to say thank you for the quick service we provided sweeping the leaves from drain area
Street Cleaning	Customer reported some graffiti on her estate recently and she has been really impressed by how quickly and how well the graffiti has been cleaned off. She wanted to say thank you.
Democratic Services	Customer gave a thank you for all the hard work on the Joint Scrutiny Task Group
Events Team	Customer says "Fabulous firework display this year. So well choreographed it lifted my spirits and brought out the child in me. A wondrous sight."

3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There was 1 complaint referred from the Ombudsman this quarter.

Planning Committee

Customer has complained about the planning committee's decision to grant planning permission for a residential development at the Avoncroft Cattle Breeders site against officer recommendation. A response has been sent and is currently being considered by the Ombudsman.

4. Customer Service Centre Information

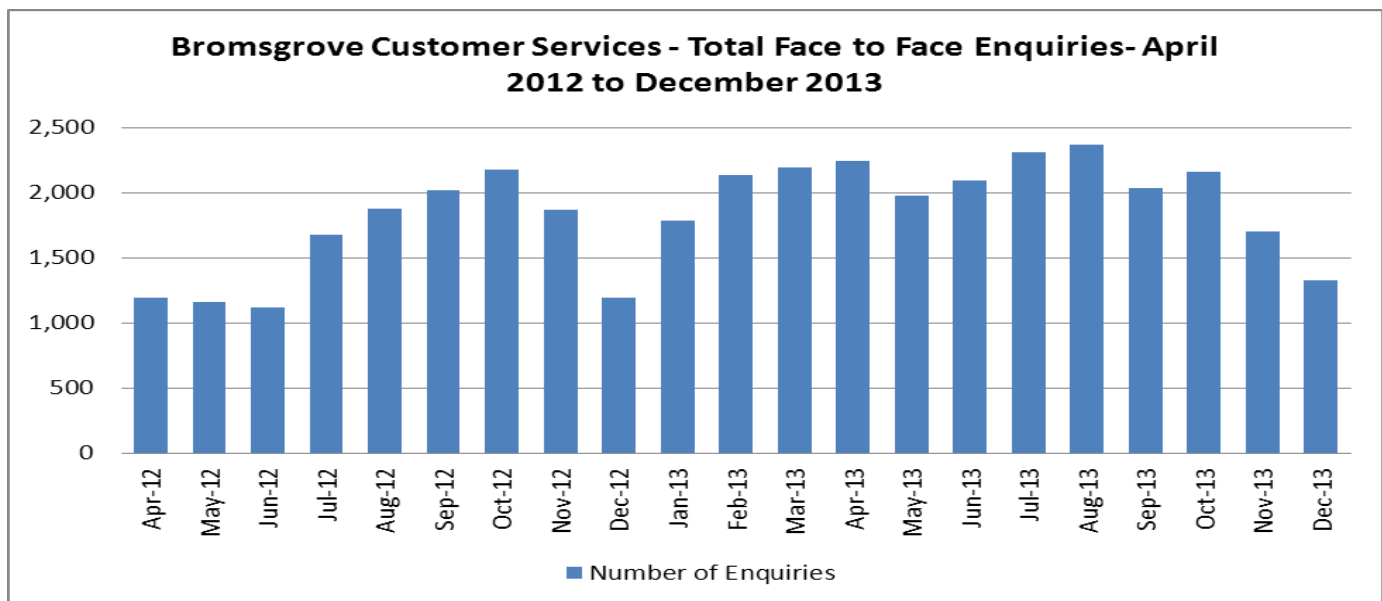
This section provides some statistical information in respect of the amount of customer demand received via the telephone, face to face and through our payment channels.

The operational purpose of the Customer Services team is **'Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem'**. Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service staff act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert. We use this information to help us understand the demand on all Council services.

The following tables and charts show the numbers of customer transactions recorded and trends over time.

Face to face demand at the Customer Service Centre

The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre on a month by month basis since April 2012 to December 2013.

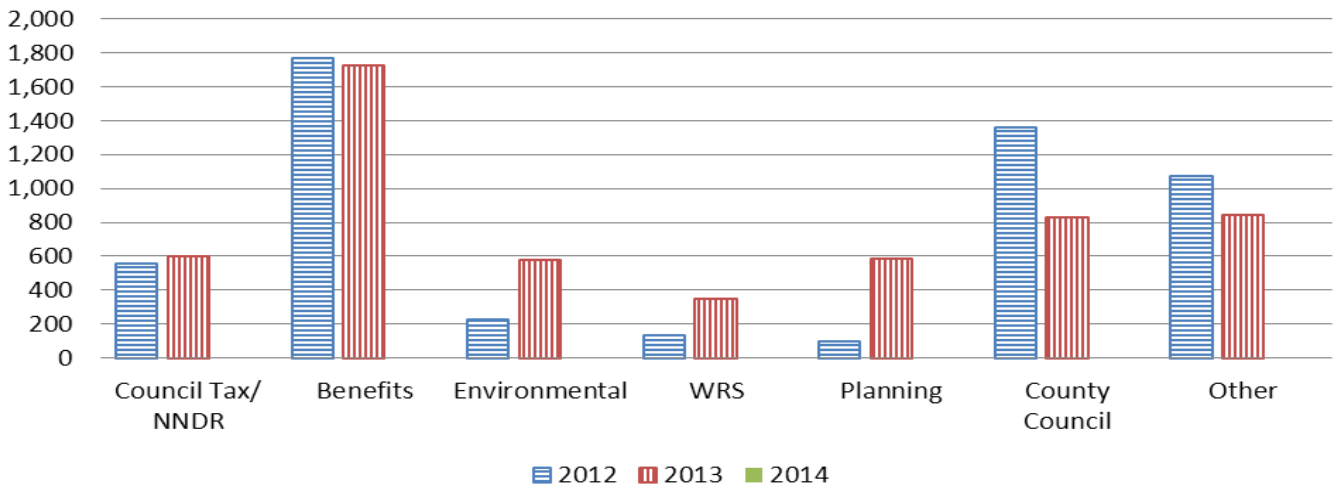


The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face customer enquiries received during the 3rd quarter of 2013/14, compared with the same period last year.

The chart shows that compared with the same period in 2012 the number of Council Tax and Benefits enquiries has reduced; however we have changed how we were recording numbers of enquiries, therefore this data cannot be used as a comparison, only as an indicator of the spread of volumes.

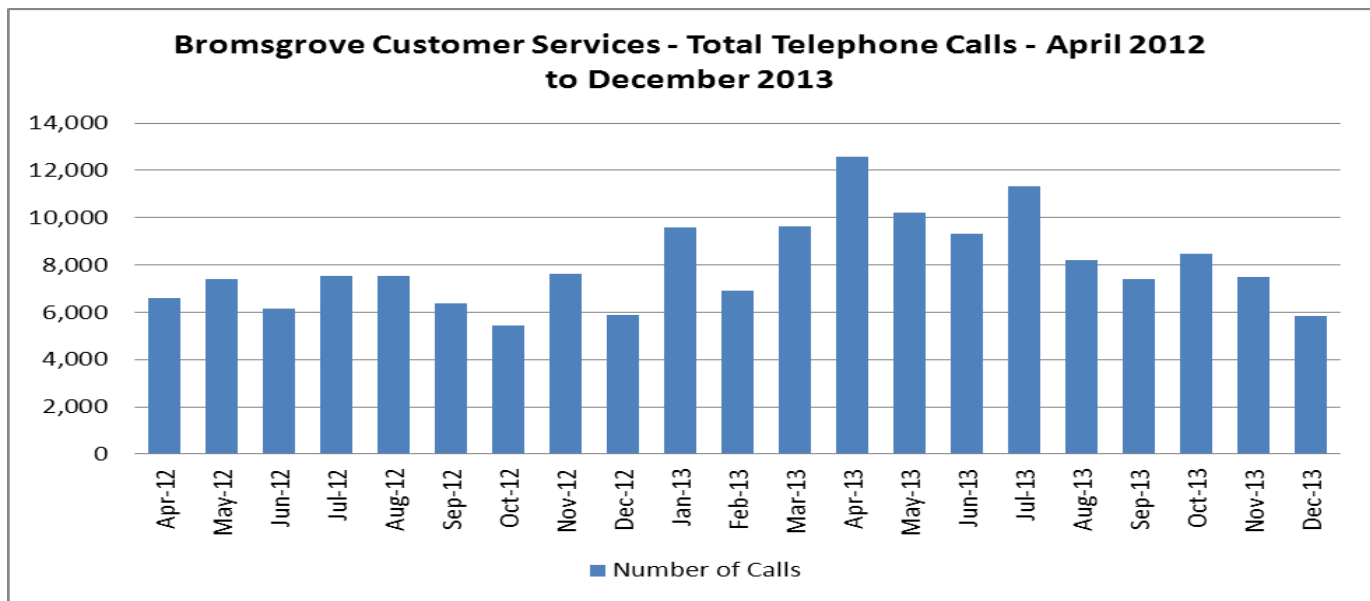
We are seeing a reduction in the number of County Council enquiries since October 2013 when Worcestershire County Council changed access to Blue Badge, Concessionary Fares and Waste Permits to online access.

Enquiries Breakdown - Total



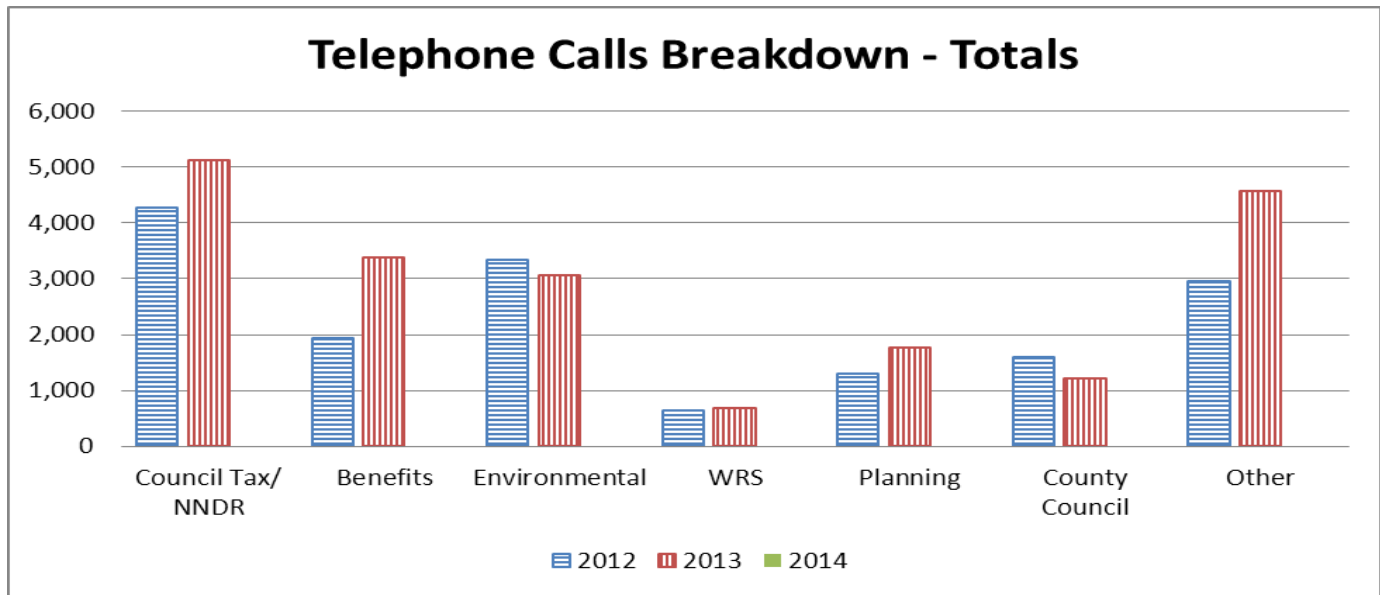
Telephone demand received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2012 until the end of December 2013.



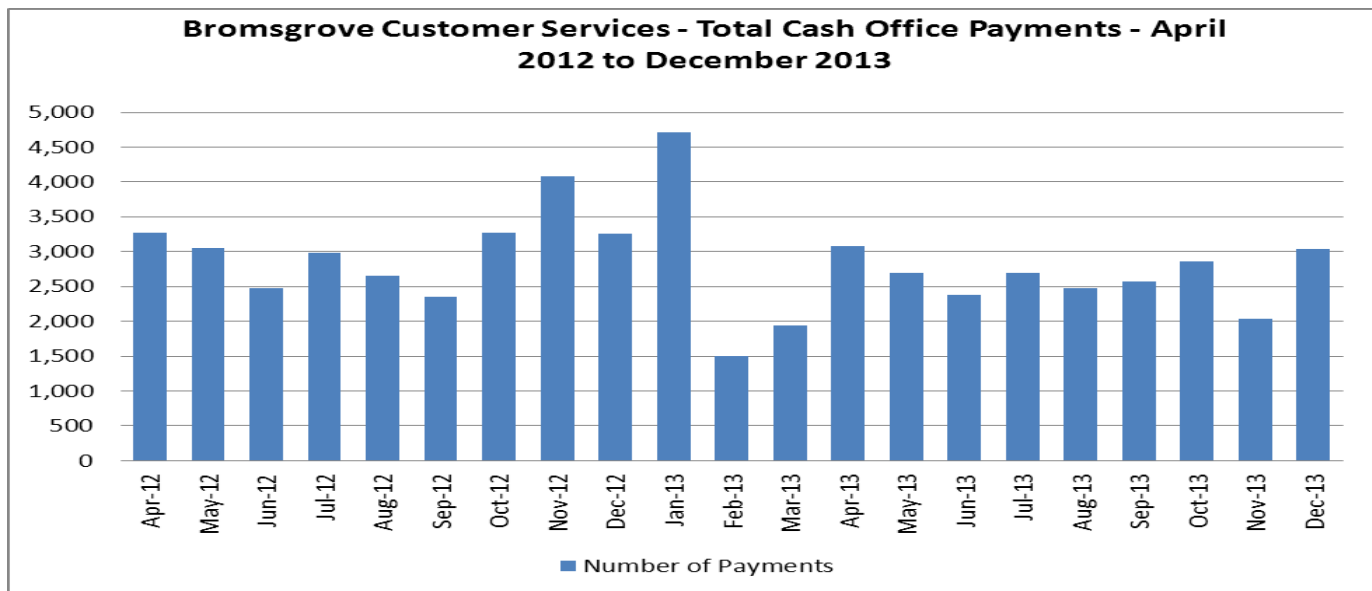
The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer contact centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.)

The majority of calls are now transferred to an expert within the services, but the customer service staff provide a welcoming service and ensure that customers get through to the right expert.



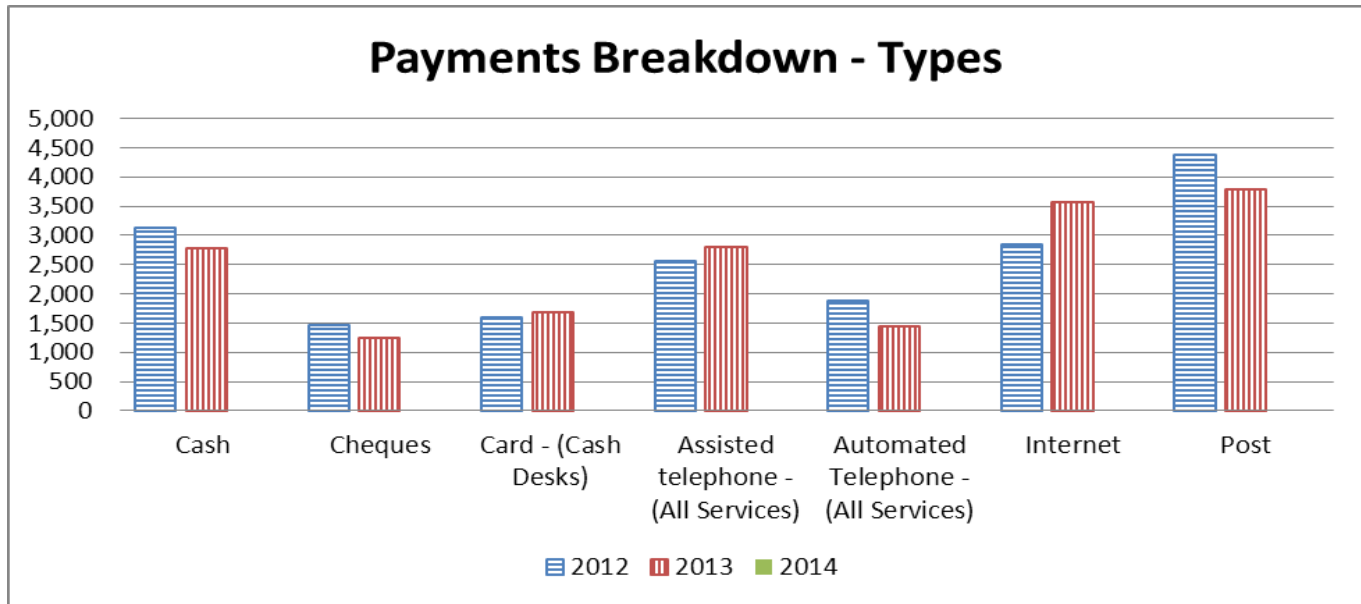
Payments

The following chart shows a month by month comparison of payments received by the cash office and customer services staff during the period April 2012 – December 2013. The chart shows a reduction in payments by cash office compared with the same period 2012.



The chart below shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels. We can see a reduction in cash, postal and cheque payments compared with the same period in 2012, and an increase in internet payments.

There is also a small increase in card payments through the cash office.



Lynn Jones
Customer Services Manager
January 2014

Details of complaints received

Complaint details	Days taken to respond	Action taken	Outcome update from Head of Service
Customer Services			
<p>Customer called at CSC on Christmas Eve to renew car park permit but offices closed. Customer is frustrated that he could not renew permit and had to pay full rate over the Xmas period (including Xmas day and Boxing day as no sign to indicate free parking on those days), he believes our Car Parking policy is not compatible with the operation of the Service Centre. Also states that the ticket machine is out of order today.</p>	11 days	<p>Apologised given to customer for inconvenience, advised that the dates and times of office closure over the Christmas period had been advertised well in advance in a variety of places.</p> <p>A response is being sent from the Parking Team to explain our car parking policy.</p>	<p>Christmas opening arrangements always reviewed in light of total customer demand to ensure least possible disruption to the majority.</p>
Leisure and Culture			
<p>Contractor unhappy about our tendering process for Barnsley Hall. He feels that the company that won the tender didn't supply the correct quotes and he has evidence of this. He has discussed this with officers & HOS and remains unhappy with the process that has been followed and the outcome.</p>	5 days	<p>HOS and the Procurement Manager met with the Contractor to explain our process in detail and to give feedback on the submission provided to try and resolve their concerns and improve future submissions. Ultimately they remained unhappy as they were unsuccessful with their submission and they feel the process that was followed was unclear to them.</p>	No further action.
Environmental Services			
<p>Customer unhappy that hedge had been removed behind his house as it helped with security.</p>	15 days	<p>The footpath was cleared as requested and the hedge was trimmed. We worked with BDHT and they painted his fence with anti climb substance and customer is happy</p>	<p>Customer has commented on what a good job BDHT have done with the painting and 'anti climb' Paint signs erected on the fence.</p>
<p>Customer unhappy that she received a parking fine for being 7 minutes over the time on her ticket. She had issues with her children which caused her to be late and asked the enforcement officer to cancel the fine to no</p>	3 days	<p>Customer has also appealed which was unsuccessful. Letter sent explaining that our charges are some of the lowest in the area and that we do have pay on foot machines in two of the car parks</p>	<p>No further action There is a full appeals in place for PCNs including an independent review when they</p>

avail. She feels that parking charges in Bromsgrove are causing businesses to suffer.			reach the final stage.
Customer feels that enforcement officers are favoring certain customers and letting them park in parent and child spaces.	9 days	On investigation via the appeals system it was found that the customer involved did have a child with him. This was explained in a letter.	No further action
Customer's elderly mother's blue badge ran out and they applied for a new one but in the meantime she parked and was fined for not displaying a badge even though she had paid. Customer is very unhappy and thinks this fine and the new blue badge system is very unjust to the elderly.	5 days	This will be reviewed via the appeals process once the customer can produce a valid blue badge.	Waiting to hear from customer.
Customer unhappy that one of the pay machines in the car park is constantly out of use.	9 days	A new part was ordered for the machine and this was explained to the customer and an apology given. The machine has now been fixed.	No further action
Customer unhappy as he was called to a flooding problem at one of the properties above the shops on the High Street and had to park as close as possible with his equipment. The car park enforcement officer then issued a ticket and wouldn't listen when the customer was asking what he should do and she also told him not to appeal.	12 days	Apology given to customer and fine cancelled via the appeals process.	No further action
Customer sent in an appeal for parking fine but the response was sent to wrong address although he had given correct address. When he eventually got the appeal decision, his appeal had been refused and he only had a very short time to pay.	3 days	Apology given and customer given more time to pay.	No further action
Customer unhappy that her bins weren't collected over the Christmas period and that she hadn't had any notification of the collection times.	11 days	Customer doesn't have access to internet and doesn't read the papers so didn't know when collections were. Waste Promotions Officer visited her at home and apologised. The service are planning to leaflet properties that have changes to their collections next Christmas as this will cost the same as	No further action.

		advertises but be more customer focused.	
Customer unhappy that a refuse vehicle has been parked in a residential street for about one hour every week day for the last 3 months and is causing damage the footpath.	17 days	This has been investigated and has been dealt with.	This will be monitored closely.
Customer is on an assisted collection and is unhappy that since the collections have been changed his bins have not been returned to his property. He has made numerous phone calls about this to no avail.	15 days	Apology given to customer. Crews have been spoken to and this will be monitored	Crews now have a total list of collections to check for each round.
Equalities and Diversity			
Customer is unhappy that the Chair of the Equality and Diversity Forum ruled at the meeting on 12th December that his item was political in nature and was not appropriate to the Equality and Diversity Forum meeting.	5 days	Customer met with Equalities Officer to discuss his concerns. Customer is a member of a movement which he says tackles the corruptness that undermines the English Constitution, Lawfulness and Legalities. It was explained that their views are not compatible with the Aims and Objectives of the Bromsgrove Equality and Diversity Forum.	No further action.
Planning and Regeneration			
Customer unhappy about the application for development on the Meadow School site.	1 day	Customer's queries were responded to and situation explained. Other queries regarding waste collections have been forwarded for action.	No further action
Customer unhappy about construction work taking place at Romsley.	6 days	Customer's queries were responded to and situation explained.	No further action
Benefits			
Customer unhappy with the way she was treated by a member of the benefits team	9 days	Customer contacted and apology was given.	After talking to staff involved their perception of events were different to the customer. However they were reminded to be aware of how customers can perceive their actions.
Customer unhappy that he had received a parking ticket whilst at	5 days	Customer has moved to Redditch now and his new benefits claim	We have reminded our

the CSC. At the time he was starving and homeless and applying for a food parcel from the emergency living fund, He feels that the benefits advisor treated him very badly and took a lot longer than he should have.		has been resolved with him. The parking ticket has been paid for from the ELF fund.	staff to consider parking requirements for vulnerable customers.
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Council Tax

Customer's advocate was unhappy that a revenues officer wouldn't listen to him and kept talking across him when he rang about his client's council tax bill.	1 day	The officer concerned couldn't find any record of the customer and tried to explain this to the advocate but he wouldn't accept what she was telling him.	The address given was not in our area and details were given of other Council. No further action.
Customer unhappy with the way she was treated when she informed us she was moving house and also had difficulties trying to report this to a manager.	1 day	Customer contacted and complaint discussed in full. Apology given.	Further training will be given to the staff involved.
Customer unhappy that the office was closed when he called about his council tax even though it says on the bill that it was open on that day.	2 days	Customer contacted and apology given. We failed to remove information from the reverse of our bill causing the customer to believe he could speak with a member of staff on a Saturday morning.	Information on reverse of bill has now been corrected.
Customer rang to complain about a member of council tax team, saying he was rude confrontational and unprofessional when dealing with his enquiry.	15 days	Customer was repeatedly using foul language and making personal comments about the officer concerned, making it impossible to deal with the initial complaint. He has been informed that this is not acceptable and we have now limited his contact to one officer who will deal with queries in future.	No further action at this time but contact is being monitored.

Income and Debt Management

Customer unhappy with wording on a final reminder letter for his allotment and says he had to ring to find out what the amount was as it wasn't on the letter.	15 days	Apology given to customer. Wording on the reminder is a standard format and the amount owed was on customer's letter. However with the introduction of our new payments system we are looking to change the format and wording of final reminders to make them clearer and more customer friendly.	Reminder letters are being reviewed.
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