

Annual Complaints Report 2023 - 2024



Mansfield
District Council

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Foreword

Welcome to Mansfield District Council's annual report on customer complaints. At the heart of our commitment lies a dedication to delivering exceptional service to all our customers.

To achieve this, we rely on the invaluable feedback we receive from you. Your input allows us to celebrate our successes, maintain high standards, and continuously evolve to better meet your needs.

We recognise the importance of transparency and accountability when addressing areas where we fall short. Your feedback guides our improvement efforts, ensuring that we learn from any mistakes and adapt our services accordingly.

Our collaborative approach involves all departments working together to resolve complaints promptly and effectively, with a focus on achieving positive outcomes for our customers.

Throughout this report, we provide insights into the volume of complaints received over the past year, shedding light on which services generated the most feedback. Furthermore, we offer practical examples of how we've turned challenges into opportunities for growth, demonstrating our commitment to ongoing improvement.

Rest assured, we handle all complaints with professionalism and sensitivity, understanding the impact they may have on our customers.

By sharing this report, we aim to foster transparency, accountability, and trust, while reaffirming our dedication to delivering exceptional service to the community we serve.



Adam Hill,
Mansfield District Council CEO

Introduction

Mansfield District Council is committed to providing a high standard of service to all our customers.

As part of our continuing effort to improve the services we provide, we rely on the feedback we receive. We want to know when we get it right so the standards can be maintained, and we welcome customers' suggestions on how we can improve.

We also want to know when something has gone wrong, so we are able to learn from our mistakes and improve our services.

We have a collaborative approach to resolving complaints working across departments to ensure that our customers receive a positive outcome.

We also take responsibility for the shortfalls that may be identified in our service failure and ensure that lessons learned are truly learned and that our services change and adapt to better meet the needs of our customers.

At all times we ensure to act professionally and sensitively when handling complaints. Our annual report demonstrates the volume of complaints that the council has received over a twelve-month period and shows which services we receive the most complaints about.

We also give practical examples of the lessons learned.

How to complain

Customers are encouraged to submit a formal complaint through our online form which is integrated with our Customer Relations System. This enables service areas to handle customer complaints directly.

They can also complain on email, telephone or in person by contacting the Customer Services team who will take the complaint and add it to our CRM system.

Alternatively, any member of staff can take a complaint from a customer and allocate that complaint to the appropriate service. We classify a complaint as any dissatisfaction (of council services) expressed by the customer which they wish to be treated as a complaint.

Complaints can be about many things including, a lack of response to an enquiry, lack of service or the quality of service provided, ongoing problems, poor customer care or when customers believe that they have been disadvantaged by policies or decisions.

Requests for service are not treated as complaints such as missed bins, reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and requests for housing repairs.

Customers are reassured that we value feedback and see it as an opportunity to improve what we do and how we do it. Raising complaints does not impact on the level of service delivered to that customer in the future.

Complaints Policy

All raised concerns are treated as formal Stage One complaints, which must be thoroughly investigated and resolved within 10 working days.

However, if the matter is complex, an extension may be requested. During the resolution process, customers will receive information on the complaint stage, the decision reached, and the rationale behind it, along with any applicable remedies and lessons learned.

Additionally, customers will be informed about the procedure for escalating their complaint to Stage Two, if necessary.

Should a customer remain dissatisfied with the initial response, they have the option to escalate the complaint to Stage Two. At this stage, complaints are handled by a designated officer, typically the Communications and Customer Experience Manager/Team Leader, acting on behalf of the Chief Executive, and overseen by the relevant Head of Service.

Stage Two complaints are expected to be resolved within 20 working days.

Unresolved complaints may be further escalated to the appropriate Ombudsman service for resolution.

Complaints summary

Typically, the council handles over 600 complaints a year. The most complaints received over the last two years were regarding Neighbourhood Services encompassing waste and recycling, parks and open spaces, street cleansing and town centre operations. Followed by complaints regarding housing repairs and tenancy issues. The figures sighted in this document are taken from the council's quarterly performance management reports.

Total number of complaints received:

	2022/2023	2023/2024
Total number of complaints	638	670
Total number of stage one complaints	616	613
Total number of stage two complaints	22	57

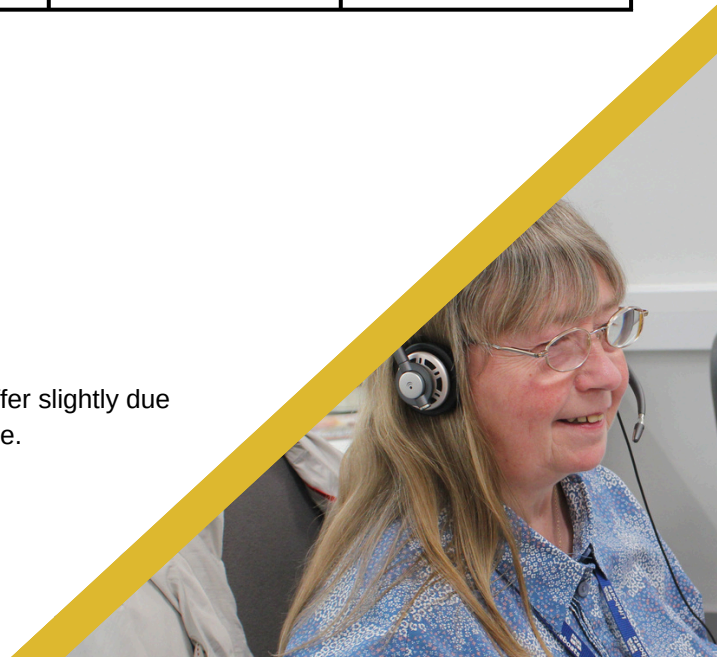
Complaints by department:

Number of stage one complaints by department	2022/2023	2023/2024
Housing*	198	174
Finance	68	40
Health & Communities	32	23
Law & Governance	1	4
Neighbourhood Services	293	357
People & Transformation	7	9
Planning	17	6

* The information we provide to the housing regulator may differ slightly due to requirements specified in the new complaints handling code.

Number of stage two complaints by department	2022/2023	2023/2024
Housing	9	32
Finance	5	5
Health & Communities	1	1
Law & Governance	0	0
Neighbourhood Services	6	15
People & Transformation	1	2
Planning	0	2

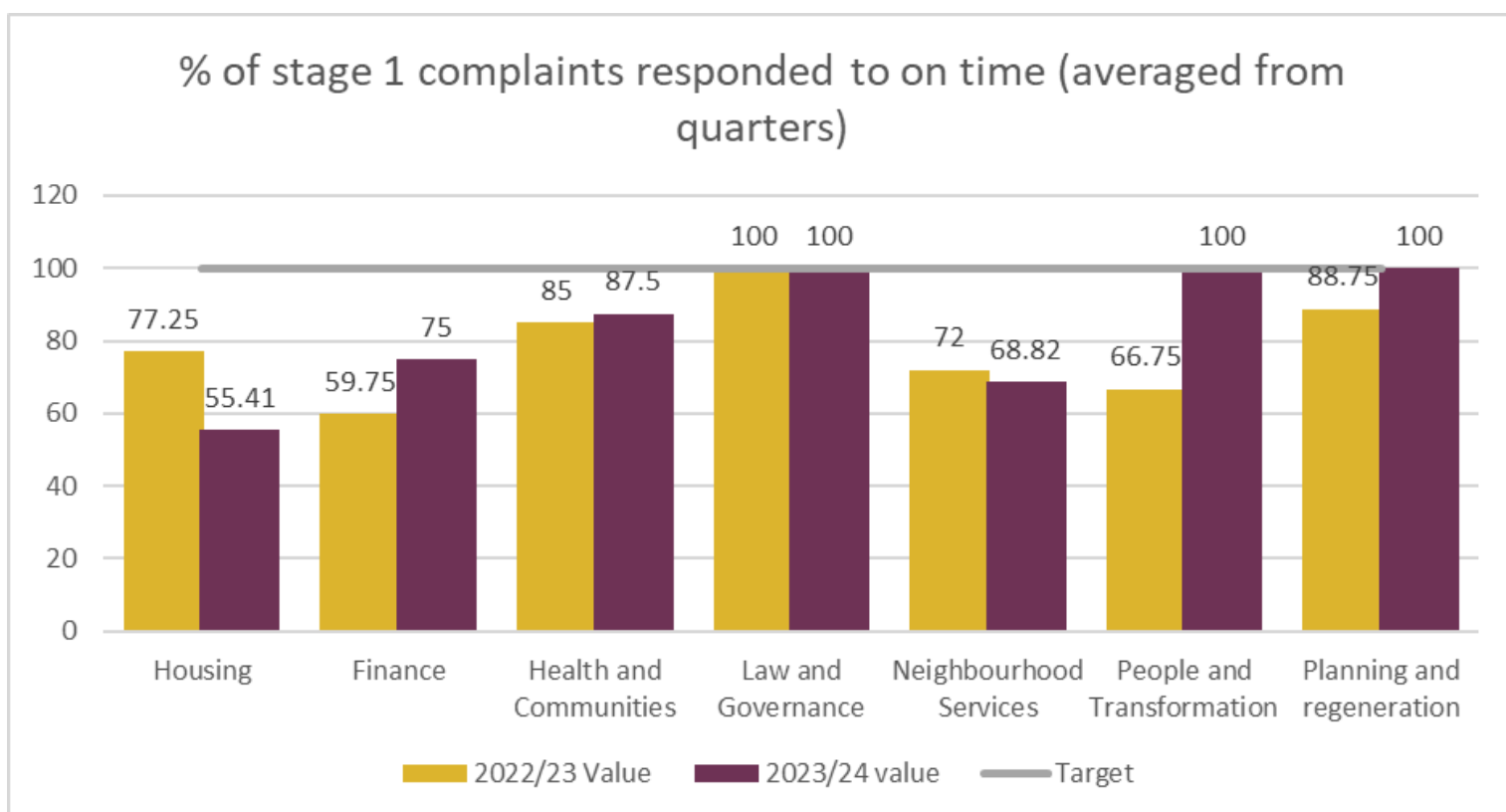
* The information we provide to the housing regulator may differ slightly due to requirements specified in the new complaints handling code.



Responding to complaints

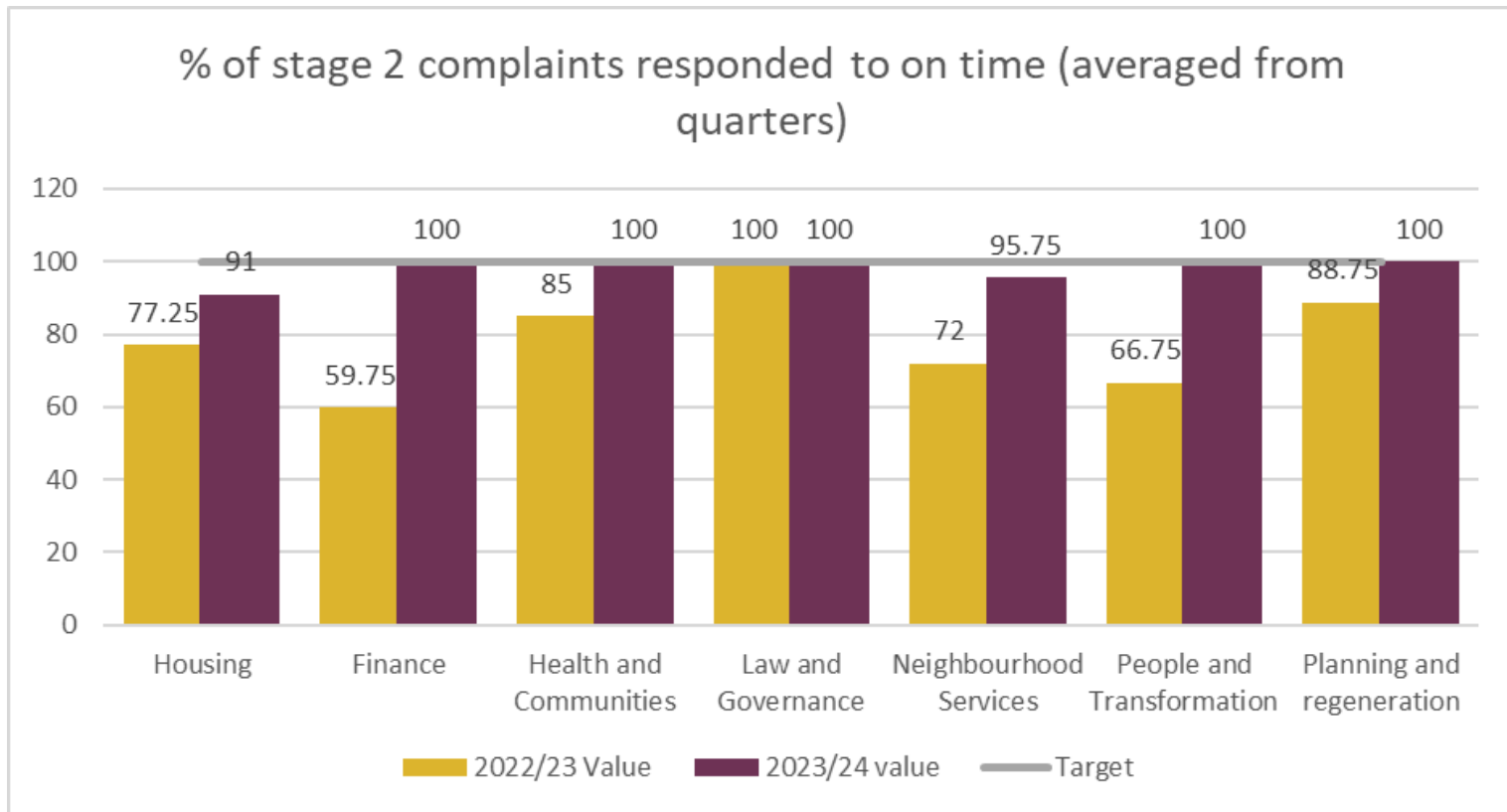
In 2023/24, the council responded to 84% (on average) of Stage One complaints on time, within 10 working days.

Three departments met the council's target of 100% those being Planning and Regeneration, Law and Governance and People and Transformation.



On average 98% of stage two complaints were resolved on time, within 15 days (note our policy changed on 1 April 2024 to 20 days).

Four departments responded to stage two complaints on time those being Planning and Regeneration, People and Transformation, Law and Governance and Finance.



Improving complaints handling and customer experience

The council has extended its online services to encourage self-service and to make access to systems, payments and reporting issues easier for our customers. Over 400,000 visitors (of which more than a quarter are returning visitors) bring nearly 2 million page views to the council's website each year.

We will encourage customers to use our online services for information gathering and reporting issues rather than resorting to complaints.

The council provides a contact centre service on Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 5pm and until 4pm on Fridays. We offer an online email enquiry service along with social media messenger to further support our customers.

To enhance the handling and response to complaints, the council has implemented comprehensive training sessions for supervisors and managers aimed at improving their proficiency in using the corporate Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Monthly reports are submitted to the corporate performance clinic to address and resolve challenges and deficiencies at a senior level.

Training will continue to ensure that all officers responsible for complaint handling are confident. This ongoing training ensures that all officers responsible for managing complaints are adept at utilising the system and fully comprehend the council's timelines and expectations outlined in the customer standards.

Ombudsman from 2022/23


Seven complaints were made to the Local Government Ombudsman of which one was upheld regarding Environmental Protection.

One complaint was made for Housing which was closed after initial enquiries made.

Two complaints were made against Planning and Development which were referred for local resolution or not pursued by the Ombudsman.

Advice was given regarding one complaint against Highways and Transport matters.

Ombudsman reports are provided one year in arrears therefore, the report for 2023/24 will be circulated in February 2025 in accordance with the council's publications schedule.



The Ombudsman
Resolving a
complaint

Compliments

The council also receives compliments from customers regarding the standards of service we deliver. We are pleased to announce that in 2022/23 we received 49 instances of positive feedback across 14 service areas.

Service Area	No. of compliments
Assist	1
Assist Team	1
Benefits	1
Council Tax Recovery	1
Customer Services	14
Environmental Health	2
Housing	1
Marketing & Communications	3
Parks & Open Spaces	6
Property Services	1
Repairs	12
Street Cleansing	1
Town Centre Management	1
Waste & Recycling	4
Grand Total	49

What people said:

MDC, I can honestly say that the level of care and support afforded him has been incredible. Through being allocated safe emergency housing and a support worker, he has successfully transitioned into sheltered accommodation in one of your facilities.

Many thanks – may I say how helpful you have been.

Many thanks to Green Bin collect staff. Great respect, decorum and Most Graceful, Please pass on to All.

I would like to compliment Parks and Gardens - Road cleaners - bin collectors... the square looked lovely even though the residents do work keeping the tubs nice so do MDC the rubbish bins had been emptied... how lucky we are to have such a great team at MDC.

In 2023/24, this increased to 59 instances of positive feedback across 17 service areas.

Service Area	No. of compliments
Council Tax Recovery	1
Customer Services	18
Environmental Health	2
Health & Communities	2
Housing	1
Law & Governance	1
Leisure	2
Licensing	1
Marketing & Communications	2
Parks & Open Spaces	5
Planning	2
Repairs	9
Street Cleansing	5
Town Centre Management	1
Waste & Recycling	7
Grand Total	59

What people said:

“The operative who attended was wonderful...he was lovely so wanted his manager to know and sends thanks.”

“We went to the Light Night on Sunday 11 February. It was so enjoyable, good to see so many turn out to enjoy themselves, an amazing free event. The light show was superb, everything was well organised.”

“How nice and helpful the bin men were on her last collection...she was struggling to get her bin out as they were coming down the street, they saw this, helped her and told her to call us and apply for assisted collection - offers her thanks to the team.”

“Not sure who he spoke to but thanks everyone on reception for all their help.”

Creating a customer focused culture

Our aim is to put customers at the heart of our service delivery where all colleagues put the customer first. In doing so, we will build trust and create a positive and lasting relationship with residents, businesses and stakeholders.

We will foster an environment where the organisation is committed to understanding, prioritising and satisfying customer needs.

Key steps to doing this are:



Leadership and customer champions

Senior leaders must champion the importance of customer – focus and this shall set the tone for the entire organisation



Customer understanding

Encouraging employees to develop a deep understanding of customer needs through feedback, research and interaction. This feedback should be utilised to develop and enhance service delivery thus adopting a learning culture.



Employee Empowerment

All employees are empowered to address customer issues effectively within the parameters of service remits and standards



Training and Development

Ongoing training will be offered to all colleagues to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to deliver exceptional customer service



Cross departmental working

Working as one council to provide a consistent and seamless customer experience through cross departmental working, feedback and service development



Customer-centric processes

Service redesign that is customer-focused



Continuous improvement

We will learn from successes and failures in order to continually improve the services we deliver for Mansfield.