

Customer feedback annual review

2024/2025



We receive a variety of customer feedback – from stage-one and two complaints, through to MP enquiries, ombudsman enquiries, and compliments. We see all feedback, and particularly complaints and MP enquiries, as a way of driving change and making improvements in the way we deliver services and the way we communicate with our customers.



This report gives an overview of the feedback we received last year (1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025). Thank you to all our customers who took time to give us feedback last year. If you have any questions, please email our customer services team at feedback@lichfielddc.gov.uk

98
thank
you's

Key facts about compliments

We received 98 compliments, which was a decrease on last year (109). We define a compliment as feedback from a customer over and above common courtesy. This year the most complimented service was planning with 18 compliments. The next were street scene, parks and joint waste. Thank you to all our staff involved and thank you to all our customers for taking time to let us know when we've done a good job.

We appreciate it!

Why we said sorry and what we've done

We issued more apologies this year. Below and overleaf is an overview of the key reasons we said sorry and how we're working to improve our services as a result.

Why we said sorry	What action we've taken
Waste bins/bags not being returned to the correct location.	Team leaders have spoken to the crew involved requesting that this does not occur again.
More information should have been given by our customer services team.	Manager addressed issues with team members to encourage an improvement in the information we provide. Customer services team now has regular training mornings so issues can be addressed.
Time taken to respond to a planning enforcement request.	Reviewed ways of working within the team.
Actions and attitude of staff working within our joint waste teams.	We spoke to those involved about the behaviours we encourage from team members.
Delay in responding to a report of an overhanging tree.	Staff were reminded of the importance of responding to reports in a timely manner, even if the query relates to something not owned or managed by the council.
Lack of communication about planning applications.	Case officers were reminded to provide timely updates to customers.
Postal votes not received on time.	We liaised with our third-party provider to discuss the cause and to ensure this does not occur again.

Why we said sorry	What action we've taken
Repeated missed bins/bag (and assisted bin/bag) collections.	When this happens, crews return to collect the bin/bag, and a reminder is put in the appropriate round folder. If needed a new round map is also issued.
Poor customer service from housing officers.	Concerns were discussed with team members so that this can be avoided in the future.
More information should be available on the planning section of our website.	Additional information was added to our website.
Slow processing of a refund.	Customer services team was reminded to fully explain the refund process to the customer so that time scales are understood.
Poor customer service contact from environmental health.	Manager spoke to the team member about the lack of communication provided to the resident.
Revenues call ended too soon.	Manager spoke to team member about why this should not have happened.
Name not updated for election purposes.	Following restructuring of the elections team we have new processes in place to assist with all related requests.
Long waits to connect with a customer service advisor.	Apologised to the customer that on that day there was a high volume of calls for several reasons. Advised that if this occurs in the future to use the option of leaving their number and we will call back without them losing their place in the queue.
Poor customer service contact from environmental health.	Manager spoke to the team member about the lack of communication provided to the resident.

Key facts about complaints

'The best authorities use complaints as a barometer of external opinion and as an early warning of problems that might otherwise stay unseen. They take that a step further and use critical feedback to drive a sophisticated culture of learning, reflection and improvement.' Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman

We received 110 stage-one complaints, eight were not investigated because they were withdrawn by the customer. **This is an increase compared to last year, when 76 stage-one complaints were investigated.**

102 complaints investigated

**59
upheld or
partially
upheld**

Following investigation, **59** stage-one complaints were either **upheld or partially upheld**, compared to **33** last year.

43 complaints were not upheld because, while the customer was not happy with the service they received, or the decision the council made, teams had delivered the service or decision in line with policy. Poor practice or injustice was not found.

We issued **55** apologies this year, compared to **19** last year.

We responded to 15 stage-two complaints, which is one less than in the previous year. **Two** were upheld, **three** were partially upheld and **ten** were not upheld.

15 stage-two complaints

Most frequent complaint areas.

Upheld or partially upheld

The most upheld or partially upheld complaints related to joint waste (**39%, 23**), revenues, benefits and corporate debt (**12%, 7**), planning, elections and customer services (**8%, 5**). Whilst upheld complaints about our joint waste service increased slightly this year (four additional relating mainly to missed bins, assisted collections and blue bag returns), when you consider the service emptied over **8,816,589** bins from **84,596** households, the number of complaints is still very low. Upheld planning-related complaints increased to five, compared to one last year.

Response times

83% (85) of stage-one complaints were responded to within the target timescales, which is slightly less than last year when **89% (68)** of complaints met our target timescales. Stage-two complaints can be complex and often require further information and input from third parties which can cause delays in responses being sent. If this is the case customers are kept informed. In 2024/2025 **40% (6)** were responded to without an extension.

Ombudsman complaints

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) received **nine** complaints during 2024/2025. **Three** were not within their jurisdiction, **three** were assessed and closed without investigation. Of the three investigated, two were **upheld**, one of which was in the assessment stage when a suggestion was made allowing the complaint to be classed as upheld. Another was discussed with officers and then closed after their initial investigations.

Key facts about MP enquiries

We received 66 MP enquiries. MP enquiries are often like a complaint, but the customer has asked the MP to act on their behalf instead of coming to the council directly. **92% (61)** were responded to within target timescales, which is an increase on the previous year when **81% (79)** were processed in a timely manner. MP enquiries covered a wide range of services with the most in **housing (20%, 13)**, **planning (18%, 12)** and **environmental health (8%, 5)**. Enquiries about elections, car parking, trees and council tax were also responded to.

66
received

The number of **stage-one** complaints we received this year increased and the number we upheld/partially upheld also increased. We did not uphold **10** of the **15** stage-two complaints, which is a positive increase from last year when **8** of the **16** stage-two complaints we received were upheld. Whilst it's not possible to evidence this, we continue to believe that the more robust processes we put in place to record and oversee complaints through customer services allows customers to contact us more easily. Whilst we upheld, or partially upheld 59 stage-one complaints, we only issued 54 apologies. **We believe that if any complaint is upheld or partially upheld, we should always issue an apology.** We continue to encourage teams to do this. We continue to be proud of the number of compliments we receive.

Feedback analysis

If you have any questions, please email our customer services team at feedback@lichfielddc.gov.uk

* In line with our complaint policy, where there has been a service failure which is easily rectified, e.g., a report of litter in a park, or a missed bin collection, these are not logged as complaints unless they become repeat issues, and the customer asks to log a complaint.