



Falkirk Community Trust

Complaints Performance Report

2017-18

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Introduction

This is the Trust's annual complaints performance report which provides information on the Trust's performance in responding to complaints, covering the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018.

The Trust always aims to provide the highest possible quality of service to our customers, but recognise on occasion things go wrong and fail to meet customer expectations. The Trust welcomes feedback as it provides information that helps us to learn from complaints and to adapt and improve the way services are delivered.

As an arm's length external organisation, Falkirk Community Trust is bound to follow the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's (SPSO) model Complaints Handling Procedure.

Our Complaints Procedure

The Trust's complaints procedure is based on a two-stage process outlined below. The procedure seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints.

Stage One Issues that are straightforward and easily resolved, requiring little or no investigation. This means "on the spot" apology, explanation or other action to resolve the complaint within five working days or less. Complaints are addressed by staff or referred to the appropriate point for resolution. Complaint details, outcome and action taken are recorded and used for service improvement.

Stage Two Issues that have not been resolved at the first stage, or that are complex, serious or "high risk". This means a definitive response is provided within 20 working days following a thorough investigation of the points raised. Investigations are carried out at Senior Manager level.

SPSO Following investigation, if customers are still dissatisfied with our decision or the way we dealt with their complaint, they can ask the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman (SPSO) to look at it. The SPSO cannot normally look at a complaint that has not completed our complaints procedure first.

Full details of the Trust's complaints procedure and how to complain are available on our website: <http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/about/complaint/>.

Reporting our Complaints Performance

The SPSO have clear governance arrangements for complaints. It is a requirement of The Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 for the Trust to have a compliant Complaints Handling Procedure and to satisfy these requirements for reporting and publishing.

This is the Trust's third published report of Complaints Performance and further reports will be published on an annual basis.

Statistics on complaints are based on eight key performance indicators devised by the SPSO in conjunction with all 32 Scottish councils. These are detailed within:

<http://www.valuingcomplaints.org.uk/wp-content/media/SPSO-performance-indicators-for-the-Local-Authority-Model-Complaints-Handling-Procedure.pdf>.

Complaints Performance 2017-18

Indicator 1 – Complaints received per 1,000 of population

The total number of complaints received per thousand of population.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Falkirk area population	157,140	159,380	160,130
Total number of complaints received	135	106	89
Number of complaints per 1,000 of the population	0.9	0.7	0.6
One complaint received per XXX residents of the Falkirk area	1,164	1,504	1,799

The Trust recorded 12% fewer complaints in 2017-18 than last year. The 89 complaints received equates to 1 complaint for every 1,799 residents of the Falkirk area, a small improvement compared to last year.

Indicator 2 – Closed complaints

Complaints closed at stage one and stage two as a percentage of all complaints closed.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Total number of complaints closed	126	99	93
Complaints closed at stage 1	123 (98%)	94 (89%)	83 (93%)
Complaints closed at stage 2	3 (2%)	3 (3%)	6 (7%)
Complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation from stage 1	3 (2%)	2 (2%)	4 (4%)

The term “closed” refers to a complaint where the customer has received a response with no further action required.

The majority of 2017-18 complaints were closed at stage one. This is a small improvement compared to last year (89% vs 93%) with more complaints closed as close as possible to the point of service delivery.

Only a small number of complaints required further investigation at stage two to reach resolution.

Indicator 3 – Complaints upheld, partially upheld and not upheld

The number of complaints upheld/partially upheld/not upheld at each stage as a percentage of complaints closed in full at each stage.

		2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Stage 1 complaints	upheld	44 (36%)	38 (40%)	27 (33%)
	partially upheld	37 (30%)	28 (30%)	27 (33%)
	not upheld	42 (34%)	28 (30%)	29 (35%)

Stage 2 complaints	upheld	0 (0%)	1 (33%)	1 (17%)
	partially upheld	2 (67%)	2 (67%)	1 (17%)
	not upheld	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	4 (67%)
Escalated complaints	upheld	0 (0%)	1 (50%)	0 (0%)
	partially upheld	2 (67%)	1 (50%)	1 (25%)
	not upheld	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	3 (75%)

In general, there was a change in the outcome of complaints with fewer complaints upheld by the Trust. Of the 89 complaints recorded, 37% (33 complaints) were considered not to have genuine merit and were not upheld. The remainder were either upheld (29%, 26 complaints) or partially upheld (30%, 27 complaints).

Indicator 4 – Average times

The average time in working days for a full response to complaints at each stage.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Average time to respond to Stage 1 complaints	4	8	4
Average time to respond to Stage 2 complaints	9	2	16
Average time to respond to complaints after escalation	17	4	24

The average time to respond to complaints improved for stage one complaints from 8 to 4 days, and was within the 5-day timescale for resolution. Stage two complaints took on average 16 days for a full response, an increase compared to last year and within the 20-day timescale for stage two complaints. Due to the complex nature of escalated complaints, the average time to respond was 24 days.

Every effort will be made to improve Trust responses and quickly resolve complaints within required timescales.

Indicator 5 – Performance against timescales

The number and percentage of complaints at each stage which were closed in full within the set timescales of five and twenty working days.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Stage 1 complaints closed within 5-day timescale	102 (79%)	71 (70%)	68 (84%)
Stage 2 complaints closed within 20-day timescale	2 (33%)	3 (60%)	3 (38%)
Escalated complaints closed within 20-day timescale	2 (67%)	2 (100%)	2 (50%)

A greater percentage of stage one complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale, although the percentage of stage two and escalated complaints closed within the timescale reduced.

Customer satisfaction of complaints handling is enhanced by quick resolution, thus the Trust will continue to ensure timescales are met in all cases.

Indicator 6 – Number of cases where an extension is authorised

The number and percentage of complaints at each stage where an extension to the five or twenty working day timeline has been authorised.

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Stage 1 complaints where extension was authorised	9 (7%)	3 (3%)	4 (5%)
Stage 2 complaints where extension was authorised	2 (33%)	1 (20%)	none
Escalated complaints closed within 20-day timescale	2 (67%)	1 (50%)	none

Our complaints procedure allows for an extension to the timescales to be authorised in certain circumstances. A small reduction was seen in the total percentage of complaints requiring an extension to resolve.

Indicator 7 – Customer satisfaction

Falkirk Community Trust is committed to delivering high quality services that enrich the lives of all Falkirk's residents and visitors. Customer perception and opinion is integral to Trust service improvement: we listen to our customers and act on what they tell us in order that our customers are satisfied. Responding quickly to customer complaints and comments builds a sense of trust between the Trust and its users.

Indicator 8 – Learning from complaints

The Trust takes all complaints seriously and is committed to using information gained from complaints to improve our services. Our complaints handling procedure helps us address customer dissatisfaction and may prevent the same problems that led to the complaint from arising again. Complaints received in 2017-18 are summarised below, and categorised where specific themes have emerged.

Complaint theme	No. of complaints		Learning outcomes
	2016/17	2017/18	
Access to facilities	3	4	Access requirements reviewed and improvements considered when upgrading facilities.
Anti-social behaviour	1	2	Management arrangements reviewed regularly.
Asset condition	4	16	Informs capital planning and facility improvement works.
Cleanliness	6	4	Informs facility operating plans, specifications and training needs.
Customer service	9	14	Customer care focus and the continuation of world host training.
Policy	9	10	Comments from customers are taken account of where possible and/or appropriate.
Pricing	3	3	Customer comments considered in the review process undertaken annually.
Programme	13	11	Taken account of where possible and/or appropriate.
Service provision	18	7	Needs of majority of customers taken account of when introducing changes.

Staff	7	14	Dealt with in individual staff meetings and appraisals.
Systems	5	2	Customer comments help the commissioning of new customer-facing systems.

Categorising complaints by theme shows that asset condition was the most common reason to complain during 2017-18. The other most common reasons for complaints were customer service, staff, programme and policy.

Complaints regarding asset condition were split between Falkirk Town Hall (6), sports venues (4), Libraries (2), Parks (2), Callendar House Tearoom (1) and Helix (1). The majority of Falkirk Town Hall complaints referred to the condition of the seating which was addressed by replacement seating being installed in July 2018.

The increases in complaints regarding customer service (14 vs 9 last year) and staff (14 vs 7 last year) are disappointing given a focus on customer care undertaken during 16-17. It should be noted that almost all (24 of the 28) customer service and staff complaints were either upheld or partially upheld, meaning the Trust considered the majority of these complaint to have genuine merit.

Summary of Complaints Performance

For our staff, complaints provide a first-hand account of customer views and experience. Resolving complaints early saves resources and creates better customer relations. Every Trust employee has received training of our complaints procedure, with appropriate staff trained in complaint handling and recording using our Customer First system.

The Trust's senior management team scrutinise complaints performance twice-yearly at their management meetings and are reported annually to the Trust Board. Complaints performance is also published annually on the Trust's website in line with the SPSO's complaints handling procedure.

In summary, complaints performance for 2017-18 included:

- A reduction in the number of complaints received;
- A decrease in the relative number of complaints upheld;
- The average time to respond to stage 1 complaints halving;
- An increase in the average time to respond to stage 2 complaints;
- A reduction in complaints requiring an extension to resolve.

Contact Us

If you would like to find out more about our complaints procedure, or about our annual report, please contact us.

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Or via our website: <http://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/about/contact.aspx>