



Falkirk Community Trust

Complaints Performance Report

2018-19

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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 2018 to 31st March 2019.

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.

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 2018-19

Indicator 1 – Complaints received per 1,000 of population

The total number of complaints received per thousand of population.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Falkirk area population	159,380	160,130	160,340
Total number of complaints received	106	89	64
Number of complaints per 1,000 of the population	0.7	0.6	0.4
One complaint received per XXX residents of the Falkirk area	1,504	1,799	2,505

The Trust recorded 28% fewer complaints in 2018-19 than last year. The 64 complaints received equates to 1 complaint for every 2,505 residents of the Falkirk area, a reduction in the number of complaints per resident compared to last year.

Indicator 2 – Closed complaints

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

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Total number of complaints closed	99	93	61
Complaints closed at stage 1	94 (89%)	83 (93%)	57 (89%)
Complaints closed at stage 2	3 (3%)	6 (7%)	4 (6%)
Complaints closed at stage 2 after escalation from stage 1	2 (2%)	4 (4%)	3 (5%)

The term “closed” refers to a complaint that has had a response sent to the customer with no further action is required.

The majority of 2018-19 complaints were closed at stage one. This is a small reduction compared to last year (89% vs 93%) with slightly fewer complaints closed as close as possible to the point of service delivery.

Only a small number of complaints (4, equating to 6% of all 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.

		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Stage 1 complaints	upheld	38 (40%)	27 (33%)	15 (26%)
	partially upheld	28 (30%)	27 (33%)	21 (37%)
	not upheld	28 (30%)	29 (35%)	21 (37%)
Stage 2 complaints	upheld	1 (33%)	1 (17%)	none
	partially upheld	2 (67%)	1 (17%)	none
	not upheld	0 (0%)	4 (67%)	4 (100%)
Escalated complaints	upheld	1 (50%)	0 (0%)	none
	partially upheld	1 (50%)	1 (25%)	none
	not upheld	0 (0%)	3 (75%)	3 (100%)

There was a change in the outcome of complaints with fewer complaints upheld by the Trust. Of the 64 complaints recorded 26% (equating to 12 complaints) were upheld, compared to 37% (28 complaints) last year. 23% (21 complaints) were partially upheld, indicating that they were considered to have some merit.

The remaining 44% of complaints received (equating to 28 complaints) were considered not to have genuine merit and were not upheld. This compares to 40% of complaints not being upheld last year.

Indicator 4 – Average times

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

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Average time to respond to Stage 1 complaints	8	4	3
Average time to respond to Stage 2 complaints	2	16	48
Average time to respond to complaints after escalation	4	24	48

The average time to respond to complaints improved for stage one complaints from 4 to 3 days, and was within the 5-day timescale for resolution.

Stage two complaints took on average 48 days for a full response, an increase compared to last year and out with the 20-day timescale for stage two complaints.

Due to the complex nature of escalated complaints, the average time to respond was 48 days.

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

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.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Stage 1 complaints closed within 5-day timescale	71 (70%)	68 (84%)	50 (82%)
Stage 2 complaints closed within 20-day timescale	3 (60%)	3 (38%)	3 (100%)
Escalated complaints closed within 20-day timescale	2 (100%)	2 (50%)	2 (67%)

A similar percentage of stage one complaints were closed within the 5-day timescale compared to last year. All stage two complaints were closed within the timescale, although only 2 of the 3 escalated complaints were closed within the 20-day timescale.

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.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Stage 1 complaints where extension was authorised	3 (3%)	4 (5%)	1 (2%)
Stage 2 complaints where extension was authorised	1 (20%)	none	none
Escalated complaints closed within 20-day timescale	1 (50%)	none	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 2018-19 are summarised below and categorised where specific themes have emerged.

Complaint theme	No. of complaints		Learning outcomes
	2017-18	2018-19	
Access to facilities	4% (4)	2% (1)	Access requirements reviewed and improvements considered when upgrading facilities.
Anti-social behaviour	2% (2)	2% (1)	Management arrangements reviewed regularly.
Asset condition	18% (16)	9% (6)	Informs capital planning and facility improvement works.
Cleanliness	4% (4)	5% (3)	Informs facility operating plans, specifications and training needs.
Customer service	16% (14)	8% (5)	Customer care focus and the continuation of world host training.
Data Protection	none	3% (2)	Staff training and awareness raising is essential to avoid data breaches, and to ensure these are correctly recorded in Customer First
Policy	11% (10)	8% (5)	Comments from customers are taken account of where possible and/or appropriate.
Pricing	3% (3)	none	Customer comments considered in the review process undertaken annually.
Programme	12% (11)	11% (7)	Taken account of where possible and/or appropriate.
Service provision	8% (7)	36% (23)	Needs of majority of customers taken account of when introducing changes.
Staff	16% (14)	14% (9)	Dealt with in individual staff meetings and appraisals.
Systems	2% (2)	3% (2)	Customer comments help the commissioning of new customer-facing systems.

Categorising complaints by theme shows that *service provision* was the most common reason to complain during 2018-19, accounting for the greatest proportion of complaints received. This is a change from last year when *asset condition* was the most common reason for customers to complain. The next most common reasons for complaints were regarding *staff* (14%), *programme* (11%) and *asset condition* (9%).

The 23 complaints received regarding service provision included: 4 complaints relating to the refurbishment of the Tea Room and Green Room at Callendar House; 3 complaints about the Fire & Light event; and 3 complaints relating to changes at the Mariner Centre and introduction of the soft play. Other service provision complaints ranged from unhappiness at quality of the coffee at the Helix Visitor Centre to complaints about Muiravonside parking charges. It should be noted that only 7 (of the 23 complaints) were upheld or partially upheld, meaning the Trust considered the majority of these complaints not 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 2018-19 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 reducing;
- 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: <https://www.falkirkcommunitytrust.org/contact-us/>