

Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2014/15 to 2016/17

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report advises Members of summary details regarding the compliments and complaints received during 2016/17, with comparisons to 2015/16 and 2014/15.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

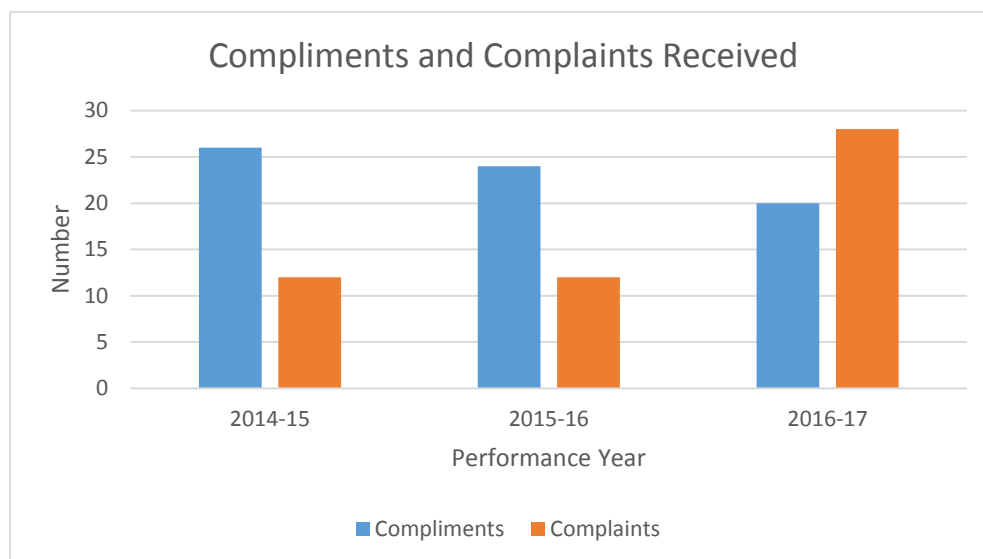
The Fire Authority's vision and strategic aims stress a commitment to providing high quality services to the community of Shropshire. The Service takes seriously both compliments and complaints made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments are also used to review the effectiveness of the provision of these services. Complaints are recorded, as are compliments, when they are addressed to the Chief Fire Officer or come to the attention of Executive Support Officers.

The Fire Authority has in place a Comments and Complaints Procedure to ensure complaints are handled in a fair and objective manner and that views expressed about the quality of services provided are acknowledged.

4 Summary of Compliments and Complaints Received during 2014/15 to 2016/17

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the number of compliments and complaints received in 2016/17, compared with the previous two-year period.

Figure 1



Where appropriate, compliments are posted on the Service's website. The details of all complimentary communications received via the Executive Support Officers are circulated to the personnel concerned, their line management and Executive Officers. They are also published in the Service's weekly internal newsletter, 'The Pink', for all staff to appreciate and on the Service's website for public information. Care is taken, at each stage, to ensure that any personal, identifying details are removed.

The number of compliments received is actually greater than shown in Figure 1, which represents only those addressed directly to the Chief Fire Officer or Headquarters. Many more compliments are sent to stations, watches or departments and are not always passed on to Executive Support Officers.

The number and variety of compliments received make it difficult to benchmark specific areas of performance over a given period of time. However, Appendix A to the report provides a breakdown by type of the compliments received in 2016/17, together with some examples.

The appendix provides a breakdown of complaints received. There are no nationally prescribed classifications for recording complaints but, to facilitate local benchmarking between the periods 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, complaints received have been categorised into six key areas.

These are:

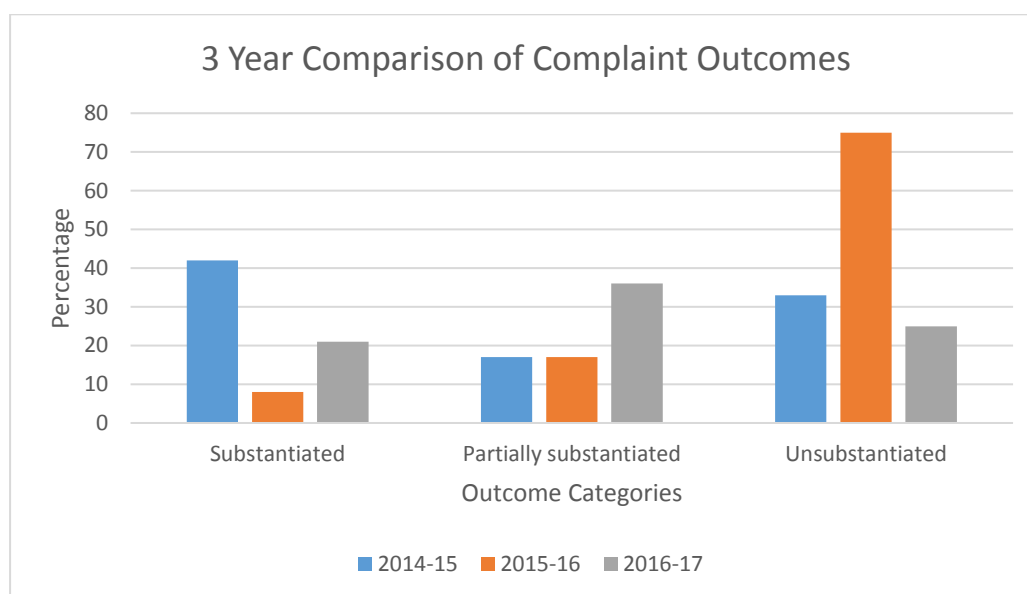
- Damage to property
- Poor driving behaviour
- Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service
- Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection / procedure
- Environmental

- Other – for 2016-17, this concerned the drop in water pressure on activation of the Ludlow Fire Station hydrant and was referred to Severn Trent Water Ltd. The Service supported STW's investigations into the problem.*

Of the 28 complaints lodged during 2016/17, six were substantiated, 10 were partially substantiated and seven were unsubstantiated. The remainder were either anonymous or not formal complaints.

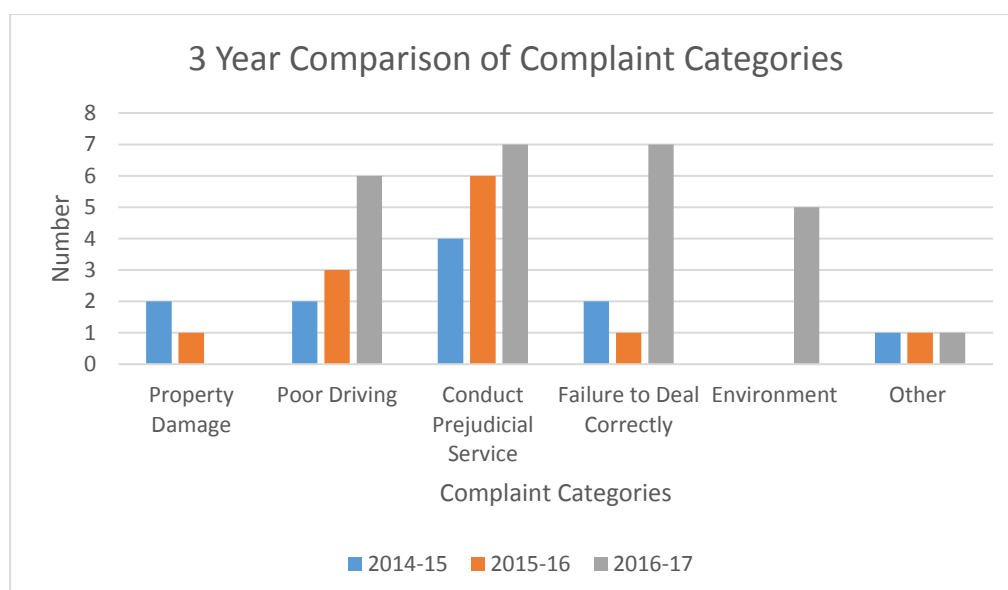
There was a decrease in the percentage of complaints that were unsubstantiated in comparison with the previous two years. In addition, there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of complaints partially substantiated (see figure 2).

Figure 2.



This year saw a significant increase in the total number of complaints. The reason is unclear; however five of the complaints related to station grounds maintenance. This spike and the Service's drive towards environmental management generated a new complaint category of 'environmental.'

Figure 3



5 Management of Compliments and Complaints

Performance Standard

All complaints are fully investigated, with a written response provided to the complainant, advising of the outcome of the investigation. The Fire Authority sets a performance standard of 28 working days, in which to furnish the complainant with a written response, or advise of an extension of time, where necessary. This standard has consistently been achieved.

Appeals

Complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation are entitled to appeal to the Chief Fire Officer and / or the Chair of the Fire Authority. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following this, an appeal may be directed to the Local Government Ombudsman.

No appeals against the outcome of a complaint have been made to either the Chief Fire Officer, Chair of the Fire Authority or the Local Government Ombudsman during 2016/17.

Lessons Learned

All lessons learned from complaints are communicated in the most appropriate manner to staff, with remedial action taken as necessary, e.g. retraining, discipline etc. Actions taken in relation to individuals are not published within this report, as it would not be appropriate.

The upward trend in complaints relating to poor driving behavior, coupled with the significant accident that occurred in Newport at the end of 2016, has led the Service to undertake a review of the whole subject of driving risk. The results from this review are expected later this year.

6 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

7 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

8 Initial Impact Assessment

This report contains merely statements of fact / historical data. An Initial Impact Assessment is not, therefore, required.

9 Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Compliments received 2016/17

Appendix B

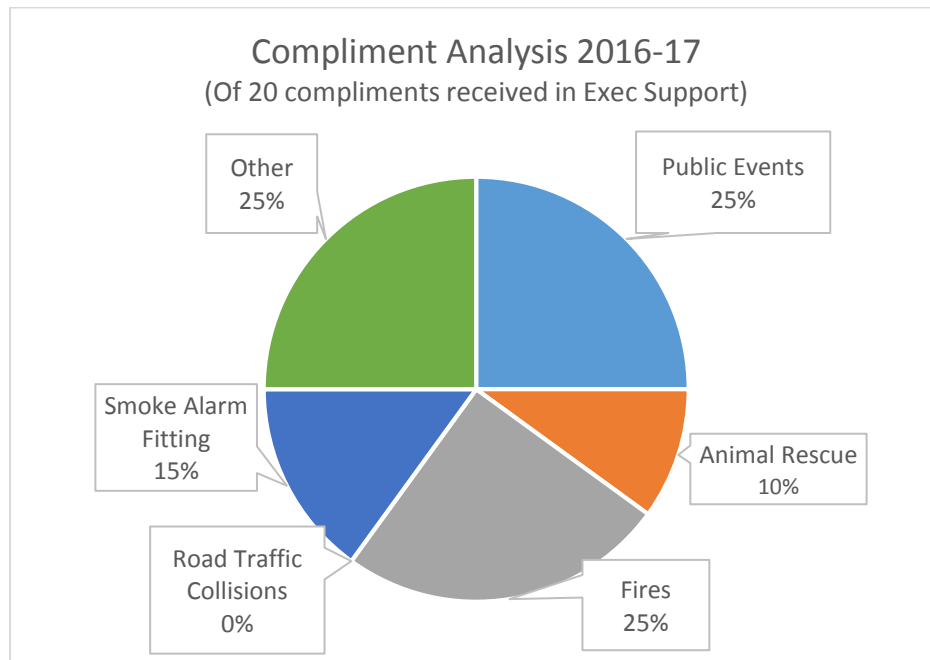
Summary of Complaints received 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17

10 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Summary of Compliments Received 2016/17

Figure 4



NB 'Other' includes casualty evacuation from difficult terrain, body recovery and roadside assistance.

Examples of Compliments Received

Below are some examples of compliments received during 2016/17. More can be viewed on the Service website via the following link:

<http://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/management-support/compliments-and-thanks>

**'Thank you' received following a house fire near Cound on 17 April 2016.
(Attended by crews from Much Wenlock and Shrewsbury, and by operational officers)**

"We write to congratulate you on the way your fire fighting people dealt with a recent fire; from the initial emergency call to dealing with the fire and calming what was obviously a very distressing situation.

There were no people trapped in the house, however it was uncertain if a cat was trapped. Everyone feared the worst until, lo and behold, a firefighter came out of the house clutching a very alive and struggling cat. What joy!

Would you be so kind as to pass our heartfelt thanks onto the two teams involved please."

Received from a Church Stretton resident on 28 June 2016

"Profuse thanks to the really kind Fire & Rescue man who stopped when we had a flat tyre on the A49 last night. I'm sorry I didn't ask his name. He guided us to safety then changed the wheel for us in about two minutes flat! I had been struggling to contact our car recovery people so it was such a relief to get instant help. I offered him a tip but he refused point blank. A true gentleman.

NB:we were on our way to Theatre Severn and managed to get there about five minutes before curtain up, so the whole evening was saved. Many thanks once again."

Compliment received on 5 July 2016 following a quad bike accident near Snailbeach. (Mobilised crews were Minsterley, Church Stretton, Bishops Castle and Wellington White Watch)

"On Thursday, 19 May, my husband was involved in a quad bike accident at home – not an easily accessible place for fire crews but we are so grateful to them.

Three crews attended and we can't thank them enough for their professionalism and their kindness. Also for their strength in managing to carry him to the ambulance and then to the Air Ambulance; he's no light weight!

He had eight fractured ribs (now plated), a laceration to the liver, a kidney injury and multiple bruises. He spent two weeks in an induced coma at Stoke, a week in PRH and a further four days in the RSH. Although home now he is due for further surgery this month.

We do not know the names of the crews who attended or where they were from but we hope you can pass on our thanks and best wishes to all involved."

Compliment received following Shrewsbury Fire Station Open Day on 6 August 2016

"I would just like to say how outstanding the Open Day was. All the firefighters were so polite, and happy to answer any questions. Myself and my children had a fantastic day. Well done to all involved."

Received following an animal rescue requested by the RSPCA on 20 September 2016. (The cat in question was stuck on a three storey high chimney and the aerial ladder platform was used to effect rescue).

"Thank you, Shrewsbury Red Watch Crew, who rescued my cat from the Jackfield Tile Museum chimney on Tuesday. I have done a linocut print for the station wall or to sell/donate/fund raise. Just wanted to say Thank You and let them know I haven't forgotten."

From the carer of an elderly lady, whose apartment Green Watch Shrewsbury effected entry to on 12 October 2016.

"She wished to let us know that the crew of four "were absolutely wonderful" and how "lovely and kind" they were to her client, who suffers from dementia. Her client "hasn't stopped talking about them and their kindness" She especially mentioned the kindness and understanding shown by the female firefighter."

Summary of Complaints Received 2014/15 to 2016/17

Type of Complaint	Total 14/15	Outcomes		Total 15/16	Outcomes		Total 16/17	Outcomes	
Damage to property	2	1	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		1	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Poor driving behaviour	2	2	Substantiated	3	0	Substantiated	6	2	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated
		0	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn
Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service	4	1	Substantiated	6	1	Substantiated	7	0	Substantiated
		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		2	Partially substantiated
		3	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn
Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection/ procedure	2	1	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated	7	1	Substantiated
		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated
		0	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn
Environmental							5	3	Substantiated
								1	Partially substantiated
								1	Unsubstantiated
								0	Withdrawn
Other	1	0	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated	1*	0	Substantiated
		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated
		0	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn (Referred to other organisation)
Anonymous		1			1			2	
Total		12			12			28	