

Summary of Compliments and Complaints 2022/23 to 2025/26

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Executive Summary

This report advises Members of summary details regarding the compliments and complaints received during 2024/25, with comparisons to the previous three years.

2 Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report.

3 Background

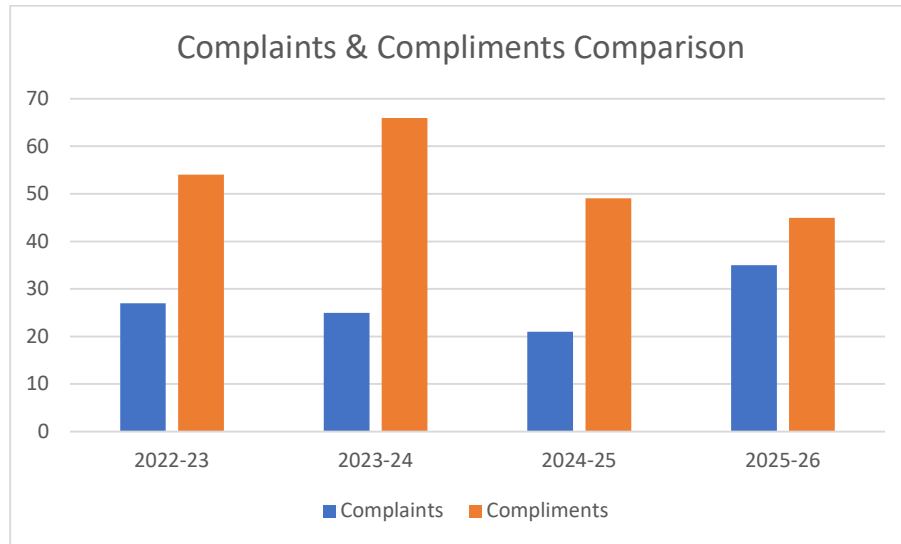
The Fire Authority's vision and strategic aims stress a commitment to providing high quality services to the community of Shropshire. The Service takes seriously both complaints and compliments made about the quality, nature or delivery of the services provided. Comments are also used to review the effectiveness of the provision of these services.

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

Compliments are recorded when they are addressed to the Chief Fire Officer or are brought to the attention of Executive Support Officers as per established process.

4 Summary of Complaints and Compliments received during 2022/23 to 2025/26

Figure 1 (below) illustrates the number of complaints and compliments received in 2025/26, compared with the previous three-year period.



Compliments

The details of all complimentary communications received via the Executive Support Officers are circulated to the personnel concerned, their line management, the Service Management Team and Members. Compliments 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, where appropriate. Care is taken at each stage, to ensure that any personal, identifying or sensitive details are removed.

The number of compliments received may be greater than shown in Figure 1, as this only captures those coming in through the Service's website, passed to Executive Support or formally addressed to the Chief Fire Officer. Compliments are sometimes sent directly to stations, watches or departments and may not always be relayed to Executive Support Officers. There is a noticeable drop in the number of compliments recorded in 2024-25 as opposed to the previous two years.

Compliments are now reported on a six-monthly basis to the Service Management Team in summary form, identifying the recipients of the compliment.

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 2025/26, together with some examples.

Complaints

Appendix B provides a breakdown of complaints received in comparison with previous years. There are no nationally prescribed classifications for recording complaints but, to facilitate local benchmarking across the period from 2022/23 to 2025/26, complaints received have been categorised into six key areas.

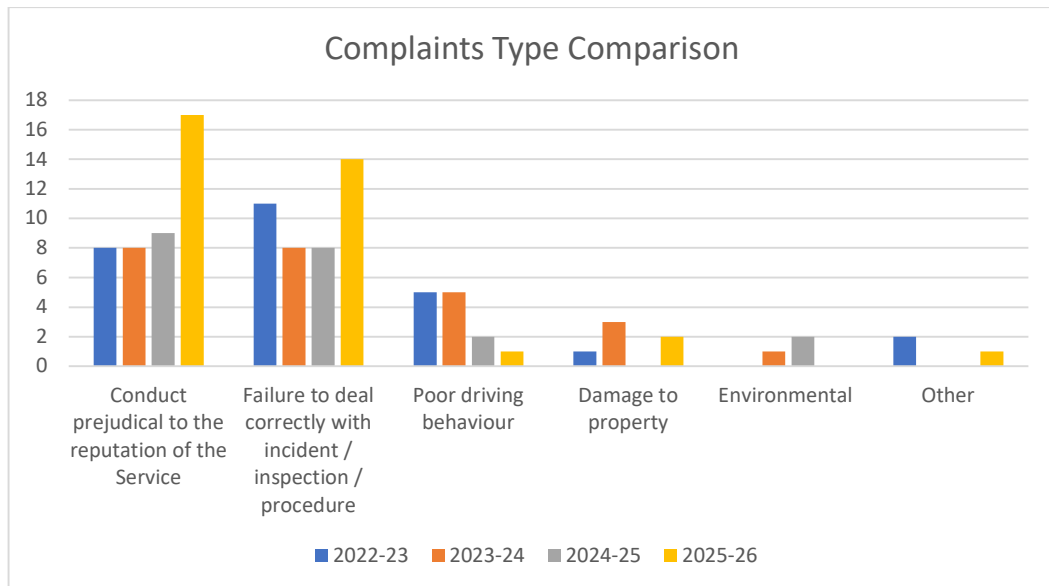
These are:

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

Of the 35 complaints lodged during 2025/26:

- 17 related to 'conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service'
- 15 related to 'failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection / procedure'
- 1 related to 'poor driving behaviour'
- 1 related to 'damage to property'
- 0 related to 'environmental'

Figure 2



It is worth noting the significant decrease in driving complaints, which historically used to be one of the largest categories.

Of the 35 complaints lodged during 2025/26:

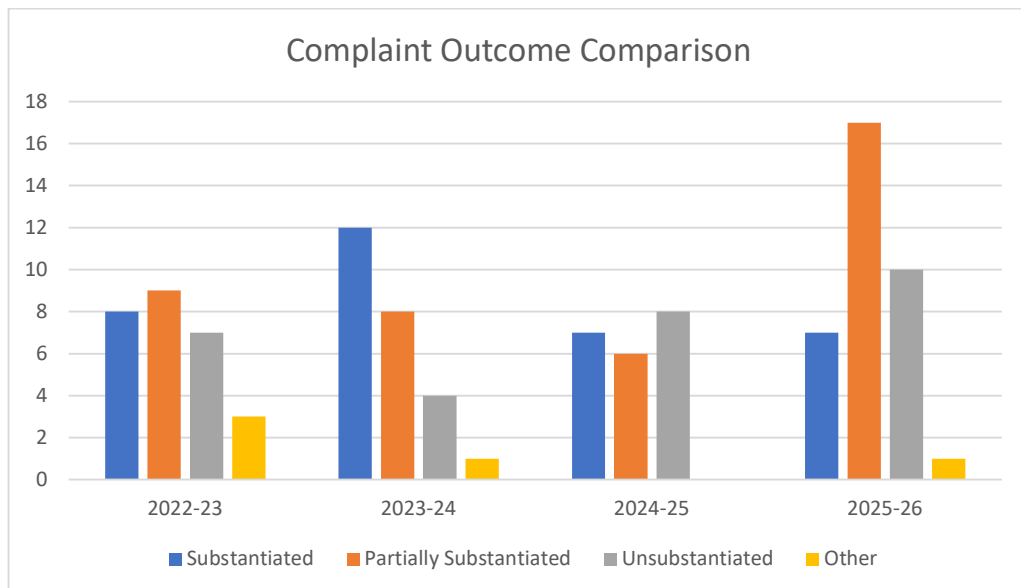
- 7 were substantiated
- 17+- were partially substantiated
- 10 were unsubstantiated

69%* of the complaints were either fully or partially substantiated. This was an increase of 7% on the previous year (2024-25). The previous two years had seen an increase in the percentage of substantiated and partially substantiated complaints.

Please note the small sample size involved and the corresponding impact on the statistics of just one or two complaints.

*Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Figure 3



The outcome category 'Other' refers to where the complaint was withdrawn or the outcome was not shared with the Service i.e. if the complaint was referred to a sub-contractor.

In all cases, even those that were found to be unsubstantiated, the Service looks to identify any improvements that may help to avoid similar complaints arising in the future.

Complaints are reported six-monthly to the Service Management Team. In addition, complaints that are either fully or partially substantiated are reported to the People Management Team in closed session. Complaints arising from operational activities that are either fully or partially substantiated are reported to the Operational Learning Board.

5 Management of Compliments and Complaints

Compliments addressed to the Chief Fire Officer are recorded by Executive Support and replied to by the Chief Fire Officer. Staff are encouraged to pass compliments to Executive Support that they receive direct. These are also acknowledged with the originator where contact details are available and shared with all staff concerned and their line management. Compliments are also shared with the Service Management Team and Members as part of that circulation, and with the wider Service via 'The Pink' Compliments are posted on the Service's website, where appropriate, and with regard to GDPR.

Complaints Performance Standard

Where contact details are provided, receipt of the complaint is formally acknowledged to complainants within five working days. All complaints are fully investigated irrespective of whether the complainant has identified themselves. Where possible, a written response is provided to complainants, 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 was achieved in 2025/26 apart from 15 occasions (43%).

On one of these occasions it was due to difficulties contacting the complainant for details and another occasion related to difficulties contacting the employee for relevant information to inform the investigation.

The remaining occasions were due to factors impacting the previous Service Complaints Officer's capacity to assess the completed investigations, approve the findings and provide an outcome to the complainants. The length of delay varied from 3 working days to 22 working days beyond the outcome timeline.

This was an increase from the previous year 2024/25, when there had been three instances (14%) of a delayed response to the complainant and one (4%) instance the preceding year (2023/24).

Appeals

Complainants dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation are entitled to appeal to the Chief Fire Officer within 28 days. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following this, an appeal may be directed to the Local Government Ombudsman.

During 2025/26 there were one formal appeals to the Chief Fire Officer.

No appeals against the outcome of a complaint have been made to the Local Government Ombudsman during 2025/26.

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 that would not be appropriate.

6 Capacity

In 2023-24, the Service's Complaints Officer and the complaints administrator were asked to record the time taken for their roles, in addition to that of the investigating officer. This doubled the recorded time commitment from the previous year to an average of 8.68 hours.

In 2025-26 the average time commitment recorded for the process was 6.11 hrs. This was a reduction from the previous year's reported average of 6.79hrs.

7 Fire Alliance / Collaboration / Partnership Working

There are no opportunities for collaborative working at the current time. Both the compliments and complaints relate solely to the actions of the Service and its personnel and need treating with discretion.

8 Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

9 Legal Comment

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

10 Communications

There are no communications impacts arising from this report.

11 Community Safety

Lessons learnt from complaint investigation outcomes are fed back into the Service to improve performance and therefore, where applicable, community safety. The compliments positively reflect the Service's impact on community safety.

12 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

13 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no equality or diversity implications arising from this report.

An e-EQIA is not, therefore, required.

14 Health and Safety

Lessons learnt from complaint investigation outcomes are used to mitigate any health and safety impacts.

15 Fire Standard Core Code of Ethics and Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no impacts on compliance with the Fire Standards Core Code of Ethics or human rights arising from this report. The data collected during the management of complaints and compliments is subject to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

16 ICT

There are no ICT impacts arising from this report.

17 Insurance

There are no insurance impacts arising from this report.

18 The On-call Service

There are no impacts on the On-call service arising from this report.

19 Public Value / Service Delivery

There are no public value or service delivery impacts arising from this report.

20 Reputation

Lessons learnt from complaint investigation outcomes mitigate against any negative impact on the Service's reputation. The compliments positively reflect the Service's reputation within the community.

21 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

22 Training

There are no training impacts arising from this report. However, guidance notes to support awareness of the complaints process have been circulated to officers and Fire Control.

23 Appendices

Appendix A

Summary of Compliments received 2025/26.

Appendix B

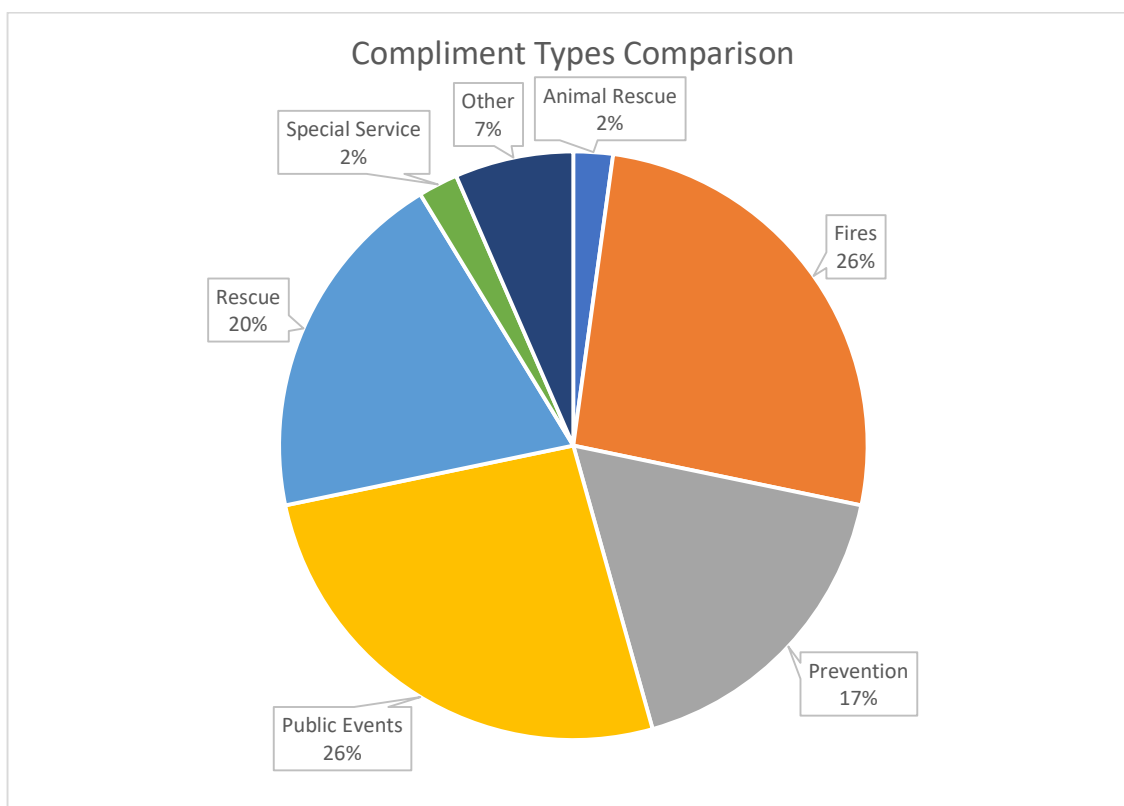
Summary of Complaints received between 2022/23 and 2025/26.

24 Background Papers

There are no background papers associated with this report.

Summary of Compliments Received 2025/26

Figure 4



Examples of Compliments Received

Below are some examples of compliments received during 2025/26. More can be viewed on the Service website via the following link:

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

Thank you following Road Traffic Collision

We have received the following thank you from the individual released from a vehicle at this incident on 4 April. The incident was attended by Ludlow, Craven Arms, Green Watch Wellington and an Operations Officer.

“I just wanted to say a big thank you to you and the crew for getting me out of my car at the RTA. For supporting my neck and spine in cramped conditions and explaining everything that was going on around me. I will never forget that. I am back at home now after a week at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham. When I'm better I will pop down to say thank you in person”.

Thank you following attendance at a fire in Telford on 6 April 2025

On Sunday evening the Service attended a Fire in the Open involving a fence and bushes. Green Watch Telford attended the incident. We received the following comments: “Thank you for attending the fire in Oakengates. Our house is attached to the one affected and we were all scared. The team did an excellent job. Thank you.”

Rescue from height

The following comments were received after a rescue from height attended by Much Wenlock, Red Watch Telford, Red Watch Wellington and an Operations Officer.

“On behalf of the family of the lady, who slipped and fell, down the side of Benthall Edge on the afternoon of Saturday 17th May 2025, may I extend our sincere and grateful thanks to the Shropshire Fire and Rescue for the fantastic team work in restoring her back to the path from which she fell and onwards to Telford Hospital.

A disabled lady who was extremely frightened to find herself in the position she was. Helped by her partner’s sister who slid the 25 ft down to her immediately after her fall to assess her medically, attempt an aborted rescue and keep her calm.

A particular shout out to the young firefighter who went down to them both, stayed with them and worked tirelessly, with all the team, to rescue them both, something he had only previously done in training, thank you so much, we shall be eternally grateful. She is back at her home in Kidderminster, feeling very sore, uncomfortable, and a little stiff. Her partner’s sister is on her way home to Leeds, to go on duty tomorrow as a District Nurse.

Thanks again to the Fire and Rescue team. Shropshire is in safe hands with you all”.

Animal Rescue

Last weekend crews from Blue Watches Telford and Wellington and an Operations Officer attended an incident in Shifnal where a horse was cast in his stable. Today the Service received the following thanks.

“I would like to send my thanks to the Wellington Animal Rescue and Shropshire Fire Brigade teams who on Sunday morning 18th May when contacted, (along with the Vet), by myself and my friend assisted our elderly horse who had got cast in his stable.

Without your teams’ assistance we would have been faced with having him put down. He wouldn’t be with us now without the Team. They treated him with kindness and respect through out and we are so pleased to report that he is out and about in his field.

We would really appreciate it if you could send out a special mention to these teams, as we can’t thank them enough for what they did for Gnashie and us. The Animal Rescue Team that your Service provides is amazing and we can never thank them enough for what they did”.

Prevention team attendance at Whitchurch Food Festival

We received the following thanks from one of the Assistant Section Leaders in the Tern Valley Scout District. This was after our Prevention team attendance, in particular one of our Prevention Advisers – Community Initiative.

“I would like to thank you and your team, especially ‘Mo’ for his enthusiasm and help in providing some fantastic material on Fire Prevention and knowledge for young people. Please continue to do so – our Scouts range 4 – 18 and you cater for all”.

Thank you following attendance at house fire on 4 August 2025

We received the following thank you after a fire on 4 August due to an unattended candle in a conservatory. Ellesmere attended; one hose reel jet was used, and the thermal imaging camera.

“Due to an incident with a citronella candle, I had to call out the Ellesmere Fire Brigade who were rapid in responding and professional. I am extremely grateful to all the men and for the aftercare (Safe & Well visit). A full 10/10.”

Summary of Complaints received between 2022/23 and 2025/26

Type of Complaint	Total 22/23	Outcomes		Total 23/24	Outcomes		Total 24/25	Outcomes		Total 25/26	Outcomes					
Damage to property	1	0	Substantiated	3	2	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	2	1	Substantiated				
		1	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated				
		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn				
Poor driving behaviour	5	1	Substantiated	5	2	Substantiated	2	0	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated				
		2	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated				
		2	Unsubstantiated		2	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn				
Conduct prejudicial to the reputation of the Service	8	4	Substantiated	8	3	Substantiated	9	3	Substantiated	17	3	Substantiated				
		1	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		2	Partially substantiated		7	Partially substantiated				
		3	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		4	Unsubstantiated		6	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		1	Withdrawn				
Failure to deal correctly with an incident / inspection / procedure	10	4	Substantiated	8	4	Substantiated	8	2	Substantiated	14	3	Substantiated				
		4	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		3	Partially substantiated		8	Partially substantiated				
		2	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		3	Unsubstantiated		3	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn				
Environmental	0	0	Substantiated	1	1	Substantiated	2	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated				
		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		1	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated				
		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn				
Other	0	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	0	0	Substantiated	1	0	Substantiated				
		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated		0	Partially substantiated				
		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		0	Unsubstantiated		1	Unsubstantiated				
		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn		0	Withdrawn				
Anonymous Total		0		1		2		3		27		25		21		35