

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: GOVERNANCE AND CONSTITUTION COM
DATE: 5 JULY 2017
REPORT OF: DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND COMMISSIONING
AUTHOR: NAOMI THOMAS

SUBJECT: COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL
REPORT 2016-17

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with information about compliments and complaints about the Service made during the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

Recommended That:

- [1] the information regarding compliments and complaints made during the period 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017 be noted.

Background

2. New procedures were introduced in January 2010 with a separate record kept of those complaints resolved at initial contact. From 2010 onwards three categories have been measured: formal complaints, informal complaints (previously comments) and compliments. The reporting period was also re-aligned to the reporting periods for other Service information such as financial and performance data reporting i.e. from 1st April to 31st March. Data from previous years was also re-aligned to provide historical context.
3. Since 2010 the Compliments and Complaints Procedure has been reviewed on a regular basis to identify any further improvements with the next review scheduled in 2017. The main focus of this review will concern how the Service processes and resolves compliments and complaints received through social media. There has been an increase in the number of compliments and complaints received through social media and there is a need to revise the procedure to accommodate for this as it is often difficult to identify the sender and follow up on a complaint.

Information

4. The Compliments and Complaints Procedure has a two-tier approach to complaints. The Service aims to resolve all complaints received at initial contact classifying them as informal. If the initial response does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, the complainant is asked to submit a formal complaint. This approach is detailed on the Service's

website and also in the Compliments and Complaints leaflet available at all stations and in the reception at Headquarters.

Statistics for 1st April 2016 to March 2017

5. The statistics for 2016-17 are:
- i. Formal Complaints - 1
 - ii. Informal Complaints - 34
 - iii. Compliments - 78

Performance Comparison

6. Comparison of the overall numbers is a crude indicator because of the relatively low numbers. The comparison figures for the past five reporting periods are presented below:

	2016-17	2015-16	2014 - 15	2013-14	2012-13
Formal complaints	1	0	1	2	1
Informal complaints	34	28	38	42	38
Compliments	78	82	86	98	48

7. As can be seen from the table, overall, there is a slight increase in the number of informal complaints received and one issue was escalated to a formal complaint in 2016-17.
8. Performance on compliments has been steady for the past three years, with an increasing number of compliments being received via the Service's social media platforms.
9. Appendix 1 of this report provides brief details of the informal complaints received and whether they have been dealt with within the timescales set out in the Service's procedures. Appendix 2 provides a summary of the formal complaint and Appendix 3 details the compliments received. The following observations can be made:-
- (a) The complaints cover a range of issues with the vast majority being resolved quickly and on occasion resulting from a misunderstanding. The nature of complaints received can be categorised into key areas as follows:
- Home Safety Assessments and enquiries (8)
 - Alleged damage to property (4)
 - Press Releases/Communications (3)
 - Construction of new stations (3)

- (b) The formal complaint received concerned the Service's findings at an incident and was escalated to a formal complaint due to its nature and complexity.
- (c) Most compliments received relate to the Service's departments that have direct interaction with members of the public with the highest number of compliments resulting from the Service's work with the community (25 responses) and the Service's response to incidents (25 responses). Other areas include:
 - Animal rescue (4 recorded)
 - Road Safety (7 recorded)
 - HSA visits (10 recorded)

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

11. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Equality & Diversity Implications

12. There are no equality & diversity implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: NONE

Appendix 1 – Informal Complaints recorded
Appendix 2 – Formal Complaints recorded
Appendix 3 – Compliments recorded