

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE COMPLAINTS POLICY - MONITORING REPORT
FROM 1 MARCH – 31 MAY 2014

1. Background

The Corporate Complaints Policy was approved by the Cabinet at its meeting held on 28 May 2013, to take effect from 1 June 2013.

The Policy sets out a two stage process as follows:

- **Informal Complaint Stage**
- **Formal Complaint Stage**

This Policy replaces the previous policy which allowed for a three stage process including the option for a review by an officer appointed by the Monitoring Officer. There is no option for a Monitoring Officer review in the current Complaints Policy.

2. Informal Complaints (Stage 1)

The Policy recognises that complaints should be dealt with as quickly as possible and where possible informally as part of the normal working of the Authority. It advises customers to contact the office or officer responsible for the service to provide an opportunity to solve the problem.

3. Formal Complaints (Stage 2)

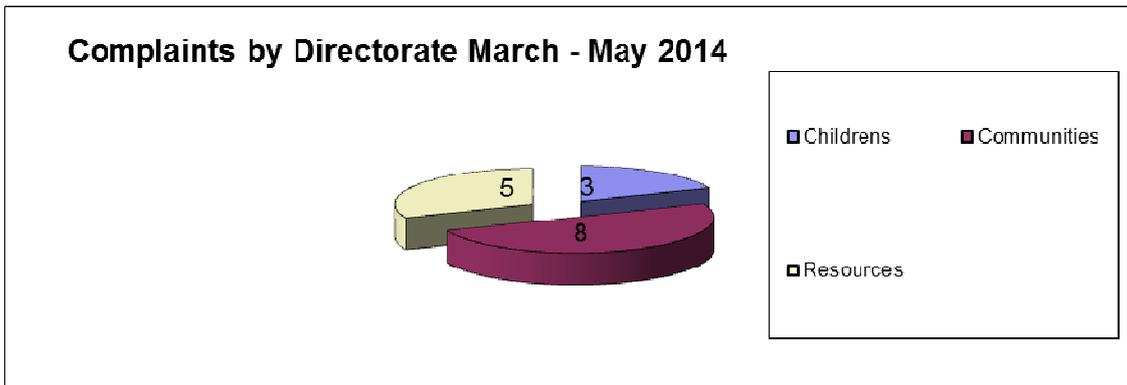
3.1 Formal complaints are received by email, telephone, letter or complaint form. All formal corporate complaints with the exception of schools and social services (which have their own statutory procedures) are received, logged and acknowledged centrally by the Information Team within 5 working days. These complaints are then sent to the relevant Head of Service concerned for the appointment of a senior officer to investigate the complaint and respond directly within 20 working days. The Information Team is then provided with a copy of the response to close the complaint. If an investigation is more complex and more time may be needed, the customer is advised of the likely timescale and kept informed of progress.

3.2 The Information Team has received, logged acknowledged and referred a total of 16 formal complaints for the period from 1 March – 31 May 2014. The breakdown for the period is as follows:

	March – May 2104
No. of Complaints Received	16
No. acknowledged in 5 working days	16
No. acknowledged outside 5 working days	0

3.3 Where complaints have been acknowledged after five working days, it was in cases where complaints had not been sent directly to the Information Team, located within the Legal and Regulatory Services Department, in accordance with the Council's Policy. In some instances the Team were not aware of the complaint until a copy of the response was provided. The relevant Directorates have since been reminded of the process, which has resulted in an increase in compliance with the policy.

3.4 For the period from 1 March – 31 May 2014, the number of formal complaints received by each Directorate was as follows:



3.5 For the period 1 March – 31 May 2014 there were no formal corporate complaints made in the Welsh Language, regarding service provision via the medium of Welsh.

3.6 As required by the Equalities Strategy, an equalities monitoring questionnaire has been developed to accompany the Corporate Complaints Form. The information collected will inform an annual report.

3.7 A breakdown of the complaints received for the period 1 March – 31 May 2014 by subject, is shown in the following table:

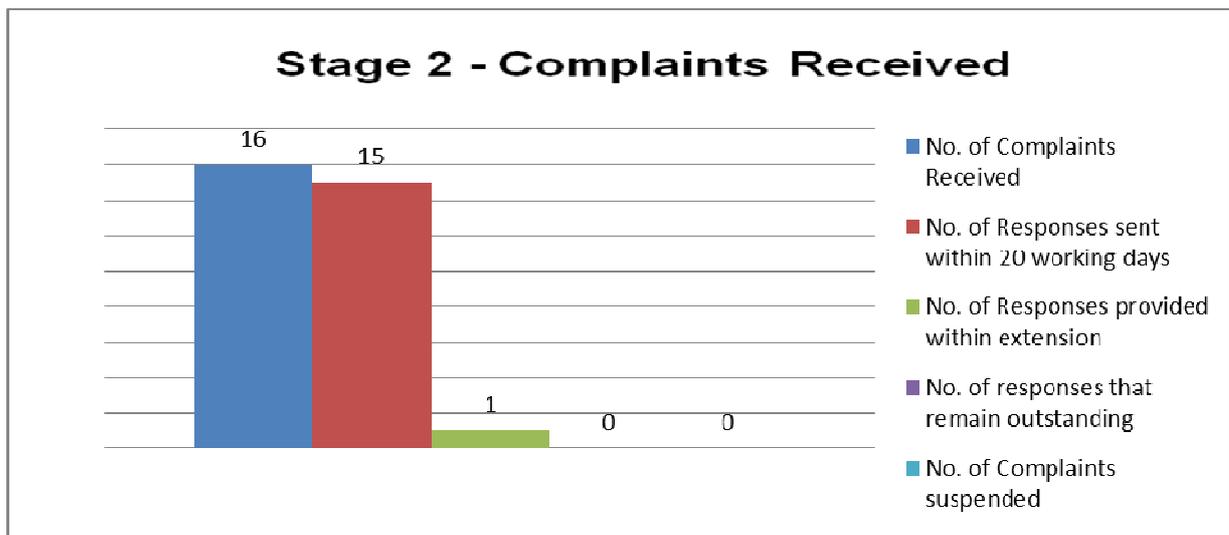
Subject of Complaint	No. of Complaints
	March - May 2014
Council Tax	4
Education	3
Highways	2
Housing Benefit	1
Housing Benefit	1
Parking	1
Planning	2
Property	1
Street Lighting	1

Total	16
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3.8 The following information sets out the breakdown of formal complaints received regarding each County Borough Council Ward shown, which has been particularly requested by elected Members:

<u>Breakdown of complaints by Ward:</u>	<u>March - May 2014</u>	<u>Ward Cumulative Total</u>
Brackla	1	1
Cefn Glas	2	2
Coity	1	1
Llangeinor	1	1
Oldcastle	1	1
Newton	1	1
Pontycymmer	1	1
Porthcawl West Central	2	2
Outside County Borough	3	3
By Email / Address Unknown	3	3
Total	16	16

3.9 The chart below provides for each quarter, a breakdown of the number of formal Complaints received, those responded to within 20 working days, those for which it was necessary to request an extension to the response deadline, those that remain outstanding and those complaints currently under investigation within the respective 20 working days.



4. Complaints made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

- 4.1 Customers have the right at any stage to refer their complaint to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for his consideration of maladministration e.g. unfairness or delay. However, the Ombudsman will usually give the Authority a reasonable opportunity to investigate and respond to a complaint, before he investigates.
- 4.2 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales received 1 complaint about the Authority during the period 1 March – 31 May 2014; the complaint did not proceed to investigation by the Ombudsman.

5 Code of Conduct Complaints

- 5.1 During the period 1 March – 31 May 2014 a total of 4 complaints were made to the Ombudsman that a Community Councillor or County Borough Councillor had broken the Code of Conduct.