

Complaints and Service Requests Summary

Complaints and Service Requests

The Council records corporate complaints made against the service as those resulting from alleged service failures or a failure to rectify an identified problem arising from service activities. Complaints should form the bulk of those submitted through elected members as the resident will typically submit a service request on the phone or online before complaining that their request had not been satisfactorily addressed. However if the channel through which service requests are submitted becomes slow or inefficient for any reason elected members can start receiving service requests.

The difference between complaints and service requests may have led to comments at Council that the number of complaints appeared too low.

In addition to complaints about the service the total number of service requests received in the period January to June 2014 was 9,221. The corresponding number of service requests for the first 6 months of this year was 8,826.

The service requests received by the Waste & Recycling Services typically fall into the following categories:

- General enquiries and disputes
- Missed bins (glass, recycling, residual, garden)
- Replacement or damaged bins, extra capacity requests, bins on pavements etc.
- Bulky waste collection bookings
- Garden waste requests

Missed Bins

One of the measures used to indicate service failure is missed collections per 100,000 collections (a benchmark that is used by other authorities). Between 1 Jan - 30 June 2015, there was an average of 38 missed collections per 100,000 population reported against a target of 30 per 100,000. Each domestic collection crew collects between 1,000 and 1,500 bins per day.

The total number of missed bin requests received by the service from January to June of last year was 5,964. This equates to an average of around 3 missed bins per collection crew per day. The first six months of 2015 have seen the number of missed bin service requests reduced to 5,607, which would equate to an estimated annual reduction of 600.

The service also has a target of collecting missed bins within 48 hours of the receipt of a service request. Currently 70% of missed bins are collected within this target. Work is currently being carried out to reduce the number of missed bins and to ensure that progress is made with regards to the 70% figure.

Recent Figures for September show that the total number of missed collections was 448. The total number of misses cleared in 48hrs was 366, which means that the % of misses cleared in 48hrs was 82%.

Improvement Plan

A number of actions have been taken to bring about a reduction in missed bins. This includes significantly reducing the number of outstanding daily service requests for all waste services (see list above) from a high of 1,600 in June of 2014 to an average current daily figure of around 200. This also ensured that a much larger number of service requests received could be actioned within their respective resolution targets.

Management systems are now in place to reduce the number of instances of rounds not completing on their allotted days. This includes clearer communications and supporting crews who experience breakdowns or other delays.

Data shows that repeatedly missed bins are the main reason residents have raised corporate complaints and raise concerns with their ward councillor. Work has been carried out to reduce the overall number of misses per round and reduce the large number of repeat misses.

The service is also working closely with Actionline to ensure that residents contacting the Council receive an informed and timely response at first point of contact and in any subsequent actions required. Any delays in responses from Actionline has a significant impact on response times to service requests. In the case of missed bins the bin could have been collected before the respective service request is received.