



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Overview & Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	22 July 2020
OFFICER	Graham Britten, Director of Legal & Governance
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor Steven Lambert
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	2019/20 Compliments, Concerns and Complaints
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>This purpose of this report is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compare concerns, complaints and compliments data across the three years 2017/18; 2018/19 and 2019/20. • advise of any corrective action taken to reduce or remove problems that led to a complaint being made. • identify opportunities to improve public perception of the services the Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (the Authority) provides. <p>It includes details of the complaints that were upheld, corrective action taken to reduce or remove the problem and improve public perception of the services we provide.</p> <p>As the numbers of concerns and complaints received directly from the public is relatively low, data from the externally hosted annual satisfaction survey "After the Incident" is also included to capture the perceptions of those experiencing an incident in the home or in non-domestic premises.</p> <p>There were no complaints arising from an information security incident and no complaints were investigated by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) or the Information Commissioner, during this reporting period.</p>
ACTION	Noting
RECOMMENDATIONS	That the report be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	The public are encouraged to report concerns or complaints and, if required, are given assistance to do so. Processes are in place to ensure that concerns and complaints are rigorously investigated, resolved as quickly as possible and, wherever possible, to the

	<p>satisfaction of the complainant.</p> <p>During the complaint investigation personal data is retained to enable the investigating officer to keep in contact with the complainant and, in discussion with the Data Protection Officer (DPO), to consider if a Data Protection Impact Assessment is necessary to ensure that no aspect of the investigations is privacy intrusive. When the investigation is complete and sufficient time has passed to confirm no further action is required, all personal data is removed, and the anonymised data is retained to consider any patterns of risk. If a complaint is upheld and actions to prevent a similar incident occurring cannot be put in place immediately, the need for a risk treatment will be recorded in a project or department risk register and may be escalated to the corporate risk register. These risk registers are reviewed frequently.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>Whilst there are costs associated with investigating complaints, the cost associated with corrective action continues to be small as issues of liability are thoroughly investigated and, if appropriate, referred to the Authority's insurance. Reserves are held in the event of a serious incident occurring.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>Actual or potential legal implications are considered during the investigation of a complaint. To proactively avoid complaints, projects, policies, processes and procedures are reviewed when changes in legislation or good practice occur.</p>
CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE	<p>The Policing and Crime Act 2017 requires the Authority to keep opportunities for collaboration with the police and ambulance services under review. The Authority has committed to a default position of collaboration with Thames Valley Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) unless a clear business case favours an alternative collaborative option. Complaints could arise from any of a number of business projects, processes or procedures. Many of these have been developed in collaboration with other Fire and Rescue Services or other partner agencies. During development and through to implementation, these are risk and impact assessed to reduce incidents that may lead to complaints arising.</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>Any actual or potential health and safety issues are considered during the investigation of a complaint.</p>
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>Any actual or potential equality and diversity issues are considered during the investigation of a complaint.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority is a public authority, complaints against which may be subject to investigation by the LG&SCO. The LG&SCO</p>

	will usually decline investigation until the public authority's internal complaints procedure has been exhausted. It is therefore important that there is a robust complaints procedure in place that is understood by the public and the Authority, so that complaints do not need to be escalated.
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	The last report was made to the Overview & Audit committee on 17 July 2019. "After the incident" report 2017/18 - 2018/19 .
APPENDICES	Appendix A Compliments, concerns and complaints received 2017/18 – 2019/20
TIME REQUIRED	5 minutes
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	Gerry Barry gbarry@bucksfire.gov.uk 01296 744442

Appendix A

Compliments, concerns and complaints received 2017/18 – 2019/20

1. Purpose

This purpose of this report is to:

- compare concerns, complaints and compliments data across the three years 2017/18; 2018/19 and 2019/20.
- advise of any corrective action taken to reduce or remove problems that led to a complaint being made.
- identify opportunities to improve public perception of the services the Authority provides.

It includes details of the complaints that were upheld, corrective action taken to reduce or remove the problem and improve public perception of the services we provide.

2. Scope

As the numbers of concerns, complaints and compliments received directly from the public is relatively low, data from the annual satisfaction survey "After the Incident" is also included, to capture the perceptions of those experiencing an incident in the home or in non-domestic premises.

3. Concerns and complaints

There were no complaints arising from an information security incident and no complaints were investigated by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LG&SCO) or the Information Commissioner, during this reporting period.

2017/2018 19 concerns/complaints were received. However, only three of these were upheld:

- Fire appliance going through the village with lights and sirens at 9:15 pm and woke children. This was in the run-up to Christmas and collections were being made for charity. - *Crews were reminded that the use of lights and sirens is restricted for emergency response.*
- "Bleeping" from boiler room at Haddenham. - *This was caused through an electrical fault which was corrected as soon as the maintenance engineer arrived.*
- Pager messages sending updates after an incident has been "stood down" – disturbing the family sleep. - *This has been corrected with the move from pagers to the new mobilising App.*

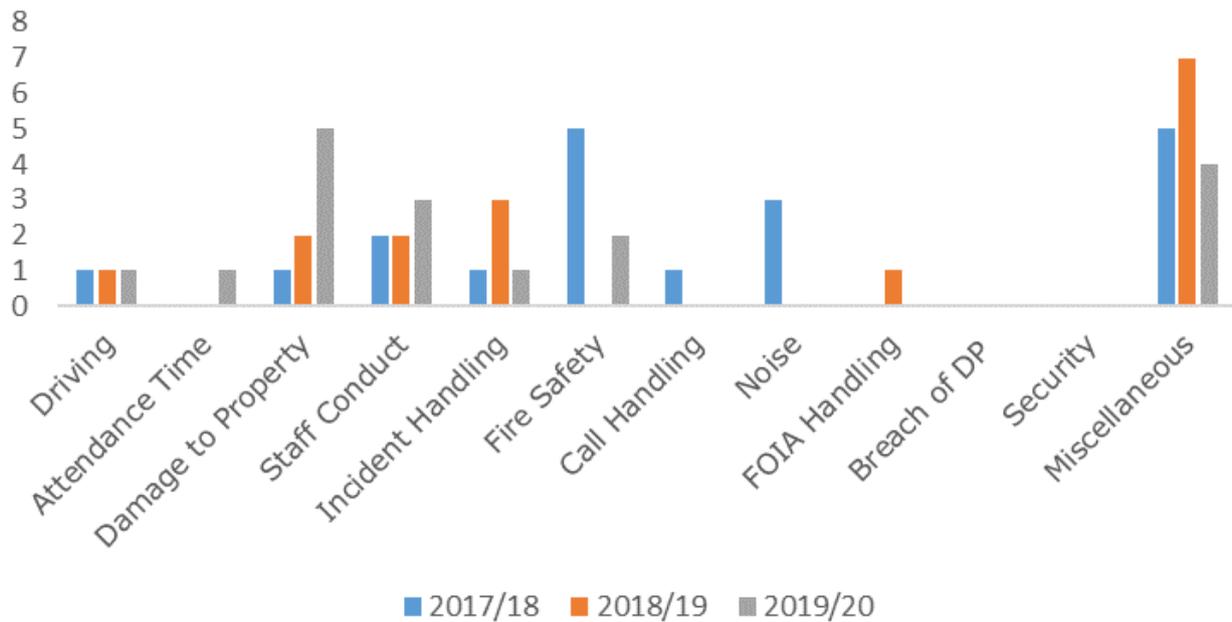
2018/2019 The numbers of complaints/concerns decreased to 16, six of which were upheld:

- During training dirty water from a hose was sprayed onto a neighbour's window. – *Crews were advised to be cautious in considering wind direction when using water hoses in exercises.*
- Someone walked on a freshly painted fire hydrant and got paint on their shoes. – *This is an ongoing problem where it is unsafe to put anything around the painted area and, in most instances, the paint has dried before the technician has left.*
- The report of an incident, on the "latest incidents" on the website, was considered inaccurate. – *The householders felt that the incident was misreported and a correction was made.*
- An Authority driver pulled out into the path of a car. – *The driver was distracted and admitted liability. The driver was referred for refresher training.*
- The reporting of an arson finding with regard to a vehicle fire was delayed. – *The incident commander did not notify the change in incident cause. As a consequence, Thames Valley Police did not allocate a crime number immediately. The procedures have been reviewed to ensure that the correct actions are taken as soon as possible.*
- The message explaining that the switchboard was closed over Christmas did not function. – *The message had been checked and was thought to be working. Additional checks will be made in future.*

2019/2020 There were 17, concerns/ complaints five of which were upheld:

- Inappropriate use of social media which could be seen as bringing the Authority into disrepute. – *All employees reminded that social media cannot be used to present personal views whilst representing the Authority.*
- An Authority employee driving a badged vehicle was seen speaking on a mobile phone whilst driving. – *This was referred as a disciplinary investigation.*
- An officer failed to attend an appointment for a fire and wellness visit – *Officer fell sick and we were unable to make contact to advise the resident and reschedule the appointment.*
- A complainant stated that a uniformed firefighter approached him at his place of work and threatened him. – *This was found to be a family dispute. However, as the firefighter was in uniform, this was referred as a disciplinary investigation.*
- Following a visit by our contractors coming to collect scrapped vehicles, it was found that batteries had been put in the wrong place resulting in "sparking" which could have resulted in a fire. – *The procedure had changed under a new contract and the extant procedural document did not reflect this. This procedure has since been rewritten.*

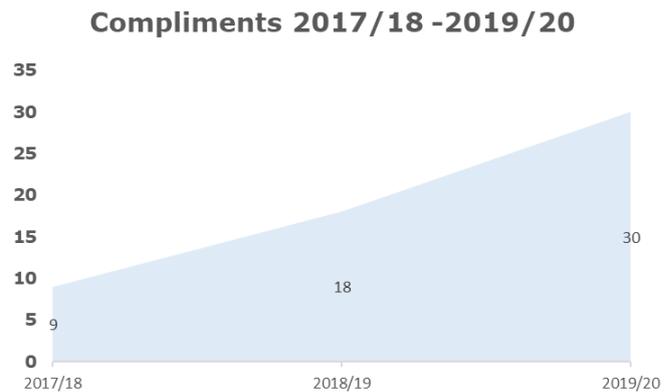
Complaints 2017/18 - 2019/20



4. Compliments

There has been a steep increase in compliments received in the number of compliments received since 2017/18.

Chart 2 Compliments 2017/18 – 2019/20



This may not be indicative of a pattern emerging as in previous years there had been a decline in compliments received (18 in 2015/16). In 2016/17 we saw an increase to 27 which dropped to nine in 2017/18. With the increase in electronic communication compliments can arrive through a wide number of media and it is thought that not all are captured and fed into the central register.

5. After the incident - Customer satisfaction report 2017/18 - 2019/20

The Authority continues to subscribe to the annual confidential survey which measures the satisfaction of members of the public who have experienced an incident in the home or in a non-domestic dwelling. The questionnaires are returned to an independent social research practice¹ who analyse the returns and publish the results annually. These surveys have been a good indication of how well the community is

¹ <https://www.ors.org.uk/>

2019/20 Compliments, Concerns and Complaints

served when an incident occurs, and a useful supplement to the compliments, concerns and complaints, received from other sources, to provide a broader range of feedback.

The decline in receipts of survey documents from to 2017/18 was owing to the halt in survey document distribution for six months whilst work to implement a new computer system was undertaken.

In 2019/20 no survey documents were distributed in the last two weeks of March when employees began to work from home.

Table 1 Domestic incidents 2017/18 – 2019/20

Domestic	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Respondents	148	52	143
Very Satisfied	89%	92%	97%
Fairly Satisfied	6%	6%	2%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	*	*	1%
Total:	96%	98%	100%

* Not captured in previous years.

The bulleted list below are comments submitted by people completing the survey of incidents in the home.

- Really appreciate their help
- So pleased it was quick to arrive
- They were brilliant – really helpful and reassuring
- They were with me within eight minutes, which was incredible. (It felt like a very long eight minutes however).
- Took longer but appreciate we are very rural.

Table 2 Nondomestic incidents 2017/18 – 2019/20

Non-Domestic	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Respondents	160	64	131
Very Satisfied	94%	90%	91%
Fairly Satisfied	6%	10%	9%
Very Dissatisfied	*	*	1%
Total:	100%	100%	101%

* Not captured in previous years.

** 101 per cent due to rounding.

The bulleted list below are comments submitted by people completing the survey of incidents in non-domestic properties.

- all as expected from a great service.
- all very quick and efficient.
- always helpful to the staff, friendly and approachable.
- arrived promptly and informative.
- arrived quickly.
- assisted to identify the location of where the fire alarm was coming from as the building work was going on and all the rooms were locked.
- call out was due to malicious activation of a call point. FRS were very understanding and gave good advice on how to try and minimise any future incidents.
- calming, took over and very supportive.
- clear communication, efficient and thorough.
- communication and swift view of alarm area.
- communication. patient.
- effective service.
- efficient and informative.
- efficient service and arrived speedily as expected and acted as expected.
- ensure safety, whereabouts of everyone. advising on actions.
- ensure the building was clear and incident was dealt with quickly.
- everything from start to finish was done quickly and professionally and no-one rushed off from the scene until they were happy.
- everything was great
- friendly and helpful, couldn't do enough for me.
- FRS team were quick, efficient and understanding of the circumstance of a false alarm. ensure the alarm was safely reset and enabled before leaving the premises.
- good communication, calming influence.
- made sure residents who were in apartment felt safe and advised them to keep drinking water, and if they got any chest pains go to the hospital.
- polite and explained everything in detail.
- polite and helpful. identified the sensor that had been triggered immediately.
- polite given it was a false alarm, also informative as told us power would be back on soon after power cut.

- polite, efficient, and left everything tidy and clean.
- polite, efficient.
- quick and efficient
- quick and helpful and was conducted it very well
- quick response and great communication.
- quick response, advice was helpful
- reassured me that they would get me out of the lift asap, clear instructions as to what was happening.
- response time and helpful information.
- sensitive to needs of people with disabilities on attending the site.
- supportive and helpful.
- speed in attending.
- the teams are always polite, friendly, and helpful to myself and the team, we have a very good working relationship.
- the way they spoke to me and they were very professional, ready to help.
- they were very understanding in their language.
- they arrived quickly, were helpful and understanding.
- they discovered why they had been called which means we can avoid another incident/false alarm in future.
- they were extremely polite and informative.
- they were very reassuring.
- to be called out in the middle of the night for a false alarm, their attitude was excellent, very pleasant.
- very helpful, calm and friendly
- very polite and helpful. they explained their process thoroughly.
- very prompt and helpful.
- very quick arrival, informative, polite, information provided was very useful.
- very quick.
- very speedy, professional response.
- willing and helpful over resetting fire alarm system after incident.

6. Next steps

During the next reporting period effort will be made to identify any complaints, concerns and compliments across a broader range of media.