



**Voice of the Customer  
Annual Feedback Report  
2013/14**

'Listening to our customers and learning  
the lessons'

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## Contents

1.	Capturing the voice of the customer is a key enabler	3
2.	We encourage feedback	3
3.	What our customers told us in 2013/14	4
3.1	The overall picture	4
3.2	Demonstrating our core values	4
3.3	Capturing complaints	5
4.	Celebrating good service	6
4.1	Comments and suggestions	6
5.	Learning more about our services	7
6.	Taking action from feedback	8
7.	Actions for 2014/15	9
	Appendix 1	10

## **1. Capturing the voice of the customer is a key enabler**

The vision for our customers in Lincolnshire:

*'We want the service provide to our customers to:*

- *Be personalised*
- *Deliver a better experience*
- *Deliver a first time solution*
- *Enable citizens to serve themselves*
- *Provide choice of how and when customers access services*

Capturing customer feedback is a key enabler in delivering a better experience and helps to identify areas where improvement is required, and where there are examples of excellence to share wider across the organisation.

Lincolnshire County Council has robust processes in place to ensure that customer feedback is routinely captured, analysed and responded to; and that lessons are learnt and form part of continual service improvements for our customers. Last year, the Customer Service Centre handled over 650,000 contacts with customers, and many more would have been dealt with in other service areas. The number of complaints represents just 0.1% of contacts with customer services, and would be much lower when combined with the many other contacts received and handled.

## **2. We encourage feedback**

Feedback is gathered from a variety of sources including:

- Compliments, Comments and Complaints process
- Touchstone surveys
- Service-led surveys
- Social and print media
- Members and colleagues

We actively encourage feedback by providing a variety of channels to enable it to be given. This includes face to face, over the telephone and via our website or email. We recognise that particularly our complaints process is only fully effective when it informs and results in service improvements, and when we tell customers what we have done and demonstrate that we have listened and acted on their feedback.

The feedback process is managed by the Customer Service Centre, which acts as a hub of customer insight to enable them and other service areas to continually improve their interactions with customers. For example, Touchstone surveys are carried out by Customer Services Advisers on behalf of service areas. This involves outbound calls to customers over a defined period, with specific questions developed with the service to determine their experience of the service.

### 3. What our customers told us in 2013/14

#### 3.1. The overall picture

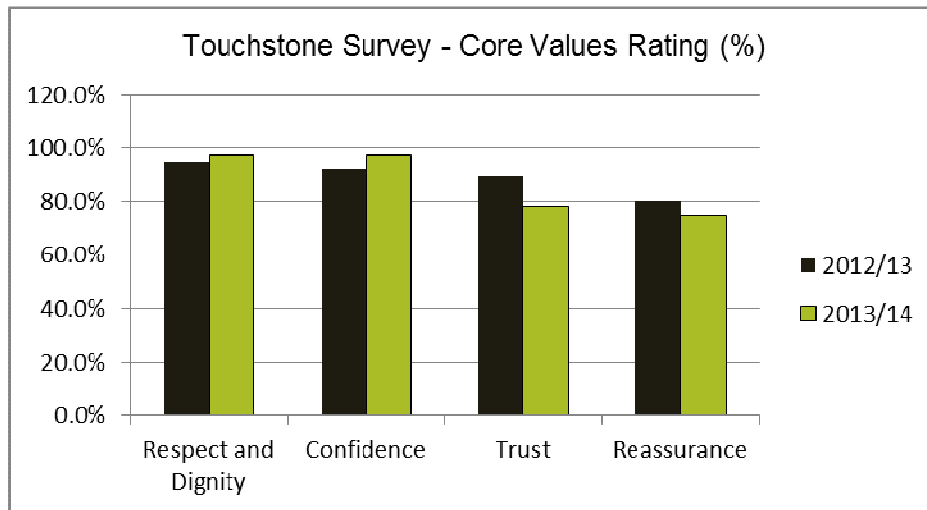
When customers are contacted by our Touchstone team, they are asked to rate their satisfaction with Lincolnshire County Council. These are customers who have received a service from us. Whilst it is a relatively low number of surveys, in comparison with the number of customers receiving services from us, it does provide a dip test of customer views. In 2013/14, there was a significant increase in the number of customers telling us that they were satisfied in the way that we had met their individual needs and expectations Overall, satisfaction decreased from 2012/13 but still remains high.



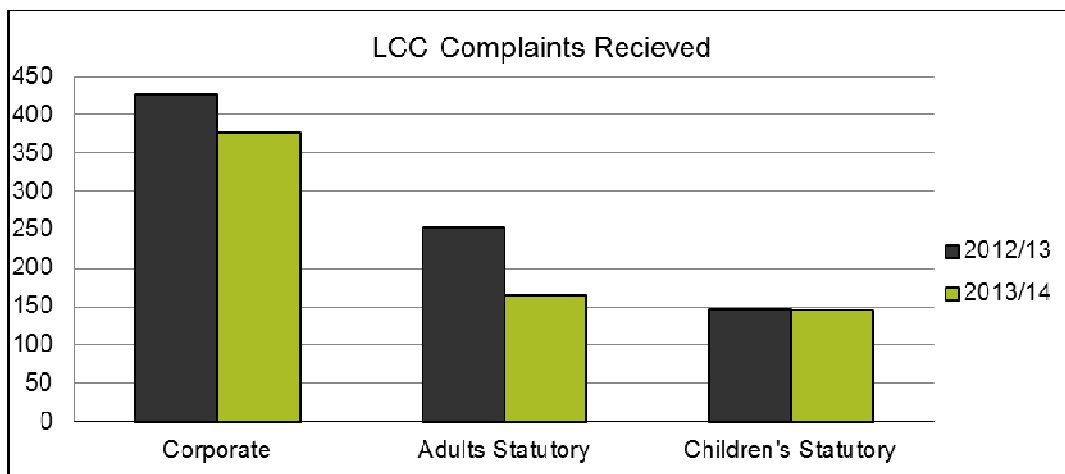
#### 3.2 Demonstrating our core values

Against our core values, our customers told us we weren't doing quite as well as the previous year in two areas, but on the values relating to respect and dignity and confidence in us, there was an increase. Again, these value questions were only asked in a small sample of surveys this year, compared to previous years and data is not directly comparable.

Whilst the reassurance rating appears to have reduced, this is because the question asked does not take into account the increasing number of queries that are handled to their conclusion within the Customer Service Centre. Customers have stated they are unable to answer the question as it has been resolved to their satisfaction. (Customers are asked whether they were reassured that their query would be answered).



### 3.3 Capturing complaints



There was a significant fall in the number of overall complaints in 2013/14 with 685 received. In 2012/13 this figure was 1173.

Following from the previous year we have remained the same in our handling of complaints, with 97% responded to within the required ten days. Of those that were not responded to, customers were kept up to date with progress.

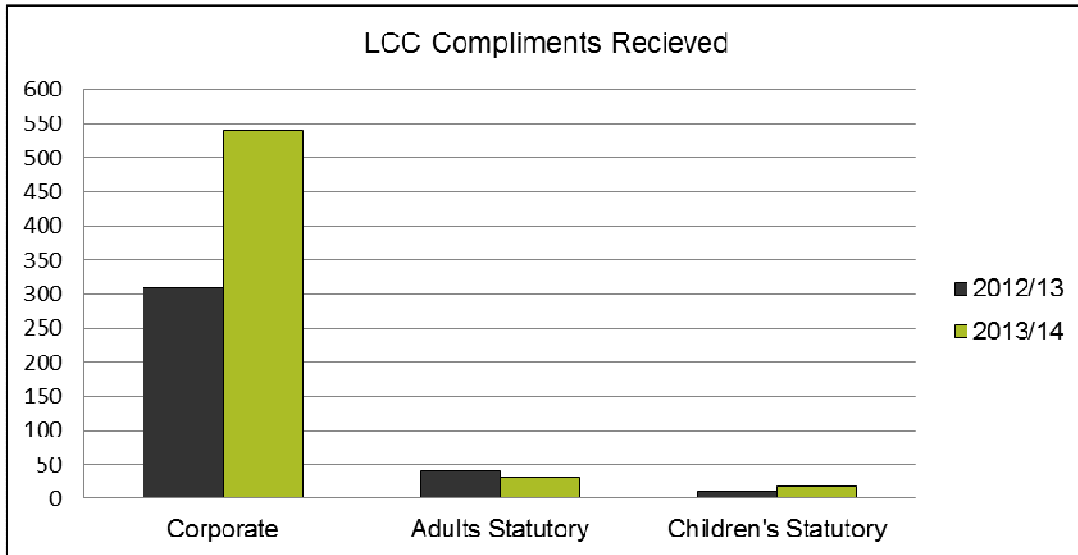
Although Lincolnshire County Council does not directly manage complaints regarding schools, they are monitored. There has been a 24% decrease in school complaints this year compared to last.

Over the year, a significant amount of work has taken place to improve the way that complaints are managed, and a new complaints handling system was introduced for Corporate Complaints in December 2013. This allows us to capture more detail relating to the complaints, particularly relating to the outcomes and lessons learnt. The reporting is also more detailed, with information on the number of complaints received that were upheld.

Further detailed data relating to complaints can be found at Appendix 1.

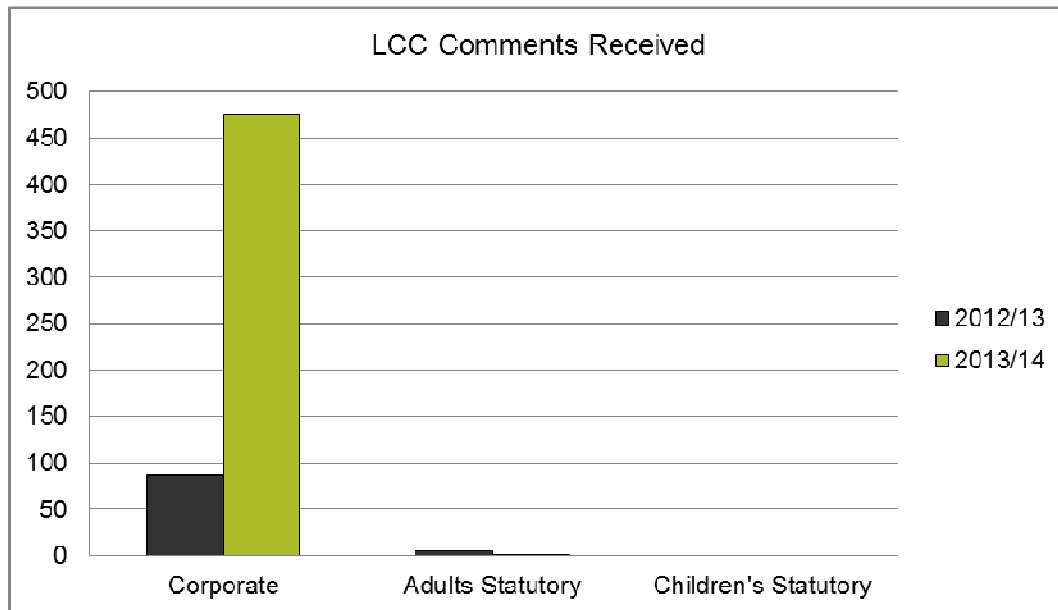
#### 4. Celebrating good service

We received a significant increase of 44% in the number of compliments about Lincolnshire County Council services in 2013/14. Corporate services received 231 more than the previous year, but less were received by Adults Statutory Services.



#### 4.1 Comments and suggestions

Comments made by customers in 2013/14 considerably increased to 476, compared to 93 the previous year. The reason for the high increase is in Quarter 2, 260 comments were made regarding the library needs assessment. Comments are defined as feedback that a customer wants to provide that is not because they are unhappy with a service, but want to make us aware of a particular issue; or where they wish to make a suggestion for improvements.



## 5. Learning more about our services

Lincolnshire County Council carries out a range of activities each year designed to capture feedback on specific service areas. Over 3000 surveys were conducted in 2013/14 using our Touchstone team. These surveys are designed to test the experience of our customers in accessing and using council services, and questions are designed in conjunction with the relevant service area.

Since January 2014, the Customer Service Centre has been carrying out surveys to find out customers' experience when they contact the council. Customers are offered an opportunity to take part in a short survey before they are connected to an adviser. If they opt into the survey, they receive a call back from a member of the Touchstone Team or selected Customer Services Adviser. This method ensures that we receive a true picture of the service they receive.

The nine questions asked are:

- How helpful was the adviser you spoke to?
- How friendly was the adviser you spoke to?
- How easy did you find it to understand the information you were given?
- Did the adviser clearly explain what would happen next?
- How confident were you that something would happen as a result of your call?
- Did the adviser give you a clear timescale for the resolution of your enquiry?
- How easy did you find it to contact us?
- Based on your overall experience, how acceptable did you find the length of time to answer your call?
- Overall, how did your experience of our service compare to your expectations?

Customers can also provide narrative feedback which is captured by the advisers and which forms part of the review of performance, and translated to an action plan which is monitored by the Customer Services Centre management team.

Scores can be broken down to an individual service area so that we can see whether any particular service is performing particularly well, or requires improvement.

Through these surveys, our insight tells us:

- 81% of customers were satisfied with their overall customer experience.
- 88% of people found that the advisor they spoke to was very helpful.
- 95% of customers found the advisor to be very friendly.
- 87% of customers found the length of time to answer their call was acceptable.

## **6. Taking action from feedback**

The current process for managing feedback has been limited in 2013/14 in recording outcomes for customers, and actions taken by service areas to learn from the comments received. The implementation of the new complaints system has enabled the council to systematically record and track outcomes and improvements in a single place, enabling the sharing of lessons learnt and best practice across service areas. For statutory complaints, a new process has been introduced to capture this information, and this will be superseded by the implementation of the new Lagan Customer Management System in April 2015, through our partnership with Serco. Quarterly reports to the Value for Money Scrutiny Committee for 2014/15 will include narrative against all upheld complaints.

Examples of the value of feedback in driving change within service areas include:

- Adult Care received a complaint regarding the timescales for assessments and feeding back of assessment. Discussions with staff at team meetings were held on the importance of recording events and of need for pro-active communication with customers. To be monitored and regularly reviewed via performance scorecards.
- A number of concerns were raised regarding the reduction in the number of current library reservations to 10. The Libraries team have agreed to monitor over the next 6 to 12 months to judge if any alterations to current processes are required.
- A complaint was received relating to the availability of a social work team when contacting the Customer Service Centre. New protocols have been put in place, and teams reminded of their obligations relating to contact with their customers.
- A customer experienced problems with a supplier for a wedding. LCC have ceased referring customers to that supplier in the future.
- A complaint was received that dates were incorrect on a support plan. Guidance was issued to staff and changes made to the AIS social care system to ensure errors were minimised.



- A customer commented that the initial telephone messages were too long when contacting the CSC. All the messages were reviewed and shortened.

## **7. Actions for 2014/15**

-We will continue to work towards our 100% response target within ten days, and look at better ways of capturing those complaints that require longer than 10 days and setting a realistic response timescale. It is not always possible to complete a full investigation within 10 days, and this may lead to dissatisfaction with the response, resulting a further stage complaint. It is better for the customer to take longer, with their consent, and resolve fully than to adhere to the target and not get the required outcome.

- We will be reviewing all of our feedback processes as part of the Customer Service Transformation Programme with Serco. This will include implementing the Lagan customer management system for all complaints, both corporate and statutory. This new system will enable a single view of the customer to make the tracking and resolution of complaints more streamlined. It will also integrate with Mosaic, the new social care system, so that those service areas can carry out their investigations within their own system, but still maintain the reporting of outcomes and analysis in one system.

-As part of the website developments, we will look at ways in which we can publish feedback and what actions we have taken.

-We will look at how we can incorporate learning from across the organisation from feedback, sharing themes and opportunities for improvements.

- We will be developing a customer insight strategy for Lincolnshire County Council.

## Appendix 1

### Corporate complaints by Directorate (previous year figures in brackets)

Directorates	Total Received	Target met for 5 day acknowledgement	5 day %	Target met for 10 day response	10 day %
Communities	222 (343)	220 (343)	99% (100%)	219 (342)	97% (99%)
Resources & Community Safety	39 (37)	39 (37)	100% (100%)	39 (32)	100% (86%)
Performance & Governance	10 (9)	9 (9)	90% (100%)	8 (9)	80% (100%)
Children's Services (Non Statutory)	46 (38)	43 (37)	93% (97%)	42 (34)	91% (89%)
Public Health	1 (0)	1 (0)	(n/a)	1 (0)	100% (n/a)
<b>Total</b>	<b>318 (427)</b>	<b>312 (426)</b>	<b>98% (99%)</b>	<b>309 (417)</b>	<b>97% (97%)</b>

\* In Quarter 4 2013/14 we were unable to collate the acknowledgement and response targets due to a new system which has been implemented. Due to this the above table only shows Quarter 1 to Quarter 3.

### Top 3 noticeable corporate complaints in 2013/14:

- **13 complaints** Brant road/Newark road junction
- **8 Complaints** Library Reservations and Text services
- **5 complaints** service received during wedding ceremony

### Adult Social Care complaints

	2012/13	2013/14	
were in relation to PODS (Personalisation and Organisational Development)	116	52	↓
were in relation to ASTI (Assessment and Short Term Intervention)	61	55	↓
were in relation to Learning Disability	40	23	↓
were Other	13	23	↑
were in relation to Mental Health Services	2	0	↓
were in relation to Safeguarding Adults	4	11	↑
were in relation to Older People	12	27	↑
were in relation to Physical Disability	1	1	→
were in relation to the Customer Relation Unit at the CSC	0	0	→
were in relation to Supporting People	4	0	↓
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>192</b>	↓

Noticeable trends this year are:

- **50 complaints** regarding Disagree with Decision
- **24 complaints** regarding Conduct and Attitude of Staff
- **22 complaints** regarding Lack of Service
- **20 complaints** regarding insufficient Service
- **19 complaints** regarding Delay in Receiving Service
- **16 complaints** regarding Disagree with Assessment
- **10 Complaints** regarding Lack of Communication
- **10 Complaints** regarding Standard of Care

## Children's Social Care

	2012/13	2013/14	
were in relation to Children	109	144	↑
were in relation to Children Looked After	25	25	→
were in relation to Children with Disabilities	10	17	↑
were Other	3	7	↑
were in relation to Children Access	0	0	→
were in relation to Children Family Support	0	0	→
<b>Total</b>	146	<b>193</b>	↑

Noticeable trends this year are:

- **70 complaints** regarding Conduct and Attitude of Staff
- **31 complaints** regarding Disagree with Decision
- **9 complaints** regarding Breach of confidentiality