

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
ANNUAL REPORT**

1ST APRIL 2022 – 31ST MARCH 2023



FOREWORD

This report provides an overview of the operation of the Customer Feedback Scheme (CFS) including details of the level of feedback received, as well as developments and improvements to the scheme for the year 2022/23.

Overall, customer contacts to the Council for 2022/23 have increased by almost 19% in comparison to 2021/22, with the number of CFS items remaining low and account for only 0.14% of contacts received. This position will be built on in 2023/24 to further improve the use of the CFS through encouraging customer interaction and the continual use of feedback to determine how well services are delivered and whether they are meeting customers' needs and their intended objectives.

Work to this end has already begun within service areas to improve how customer comments are captured and how developments and improvements can be fed back as part of 'you said we did'. Work to promote 'you said, we did' is currently being undertaken as part of the review of the Customer Feedback webpages along with exploring the potential for exploiting wider digital channels. In parallel, work this year has focused on further developing the CFS and also progressing digital improvement through the use of the new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) GOSS digital platform, where all customer interactions including comments, compliments and complaints are recorded. The outcome of this work will support further improvement to monitoring and reporting arrangements, and also communication updates to customers who have provided feedback.

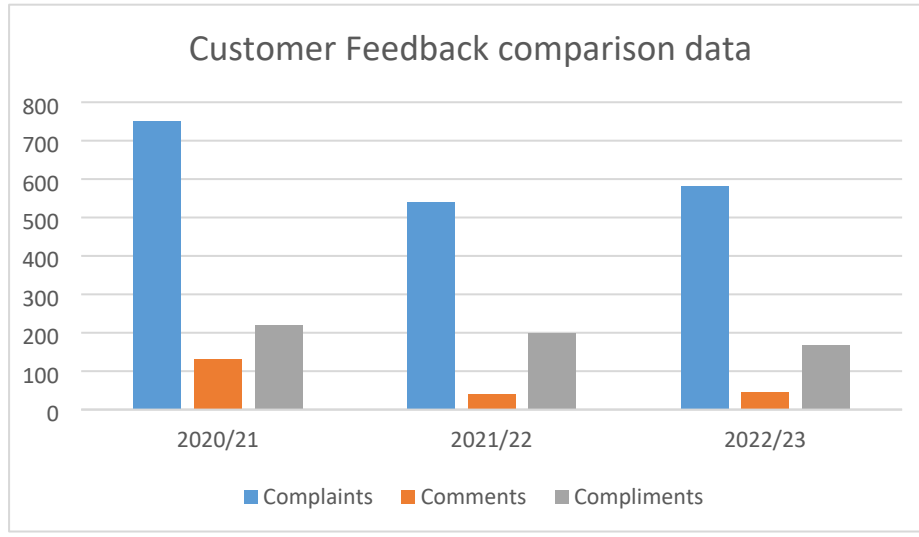
The Customer Feedback and Engagement Team continue to monitor customers interaction with the Council to ensure that the CFS offers a varied range of options that provide customers opportunity to feedback on services and make suggestions for improvements. The Team also continue to review and consider learning identified by other Councils through Ombudsman case books and direct contact with complaints officers across Wales and through regional and national forums.

Jayne Thomas, Service Improvement, Customer Feedback and Engagement Manager

SUMMARY OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FOR 2022/2023

Service Area	Complaints by Stage		Total complaints	Comments	Compliments	Total Feedback	
	1	2					
Arts and Theatres	1	0	1	0	0	1	
Benefits	56	2	58	1	0	59	
Council Tax	10	0	10	0	0	10	
Customer Care	9	1	10	0	7	17	
Corporate Estates	27	1	28	3	5	36	
Cross Service Cases (Multiple services)	13	0	13	2	7	22	
Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	
E-Access	315	17	332	28	115	475	
ESG, Highways and Street care	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Information management	1	0	1	0	0	1	
Legal (including elections and insurance)	12	0	12	2	2	16	
Leisure	0	0	0	0	2	2	
Libraries	23	1	24	2	3	29	
Parks and Countryside	25	1	26	1	1	28	
Prosperity and Development /Housing	37	7	44	3	11	58	
Public Health and Protection	4	0	4	1	9	14	
Strategy/Events	19	0	19	3	6	28	
Cases falling outside of CFS	Total	552	30	582	46	168	796

KEY THEMES FOR CUSTOMER FEEDBACK



	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
• Complaints	750	540	582
• Comments	132	41	46
• Compliments	221	200	168
TOTAL	1103	781	796

Key Themes

- A total of 796 feedback items were logged for 2022/23 which is consistent with 2021/22 and lower than 2020/21.
- Customer comments remain low in this period representing 6% of all customer contacts received, with on-going focus being afforded to this area particularly for services where customer footfall is high.
- Customer feedback through the Council's website and e-mail remains the preferred option for customers to communicate with 46% received through the Council's webpage and 36% received directly via e-mail.
- There will be continued close working with services to support the on-going capture of customer feedback and its use to inform service planning and delivery.
- Where service areas have specific complaint management and reporting arrangements, for example, the Pension Service, this information has been excluded from this report.

SUMMARY OF COMPLAINTS

In 2022/23 the Council received 582 complaints through the Customer Feedback Scheme, 95% of which were resolved at Stage 1 with only 5% dealt with at Stage 2. This is a 1% improvement on the number dealt with at Stage 1 in 2021/22. The charts in Figures 1 and 2 detail the category of complaint where these were recorded on the CRM system and the complaint outcome.

Figure 1 – Complaint Categories 2022/23

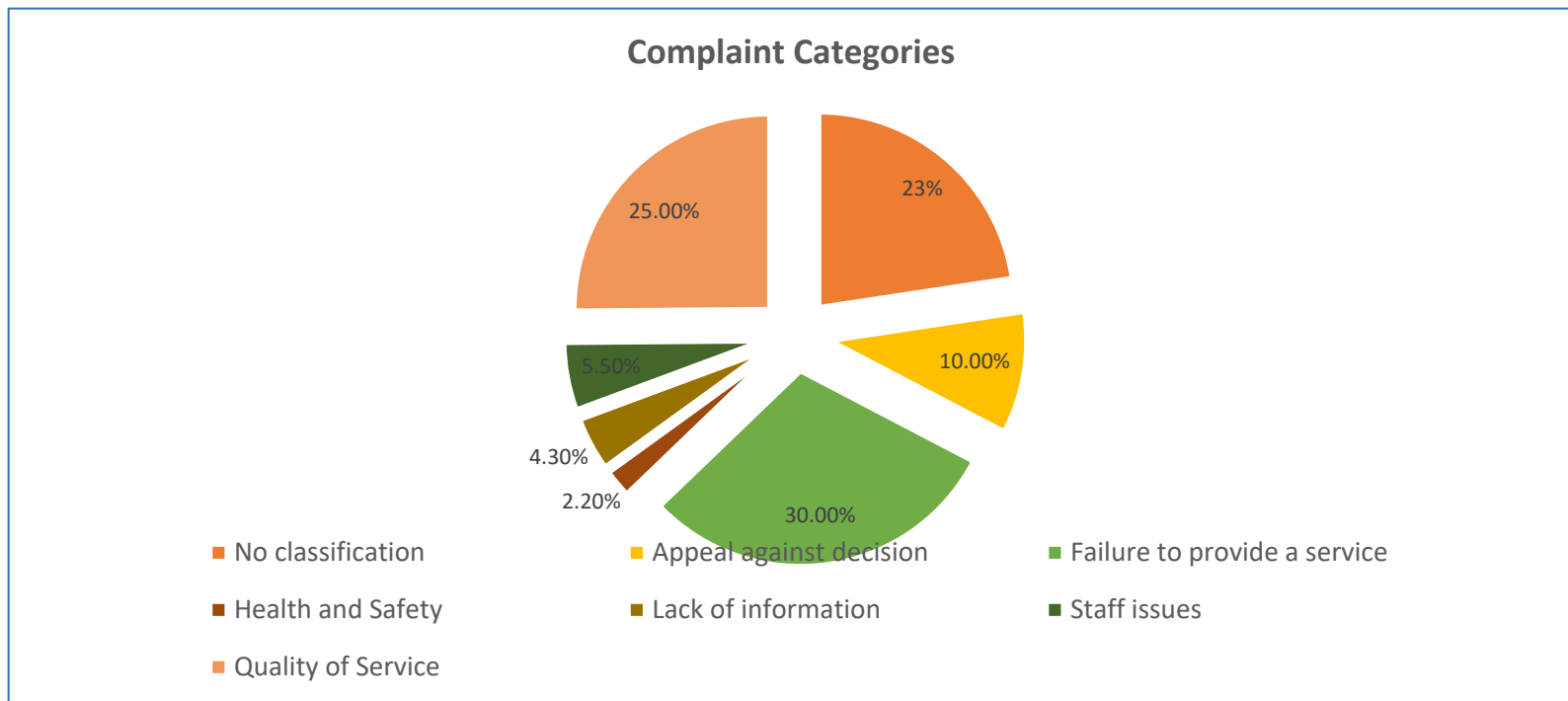
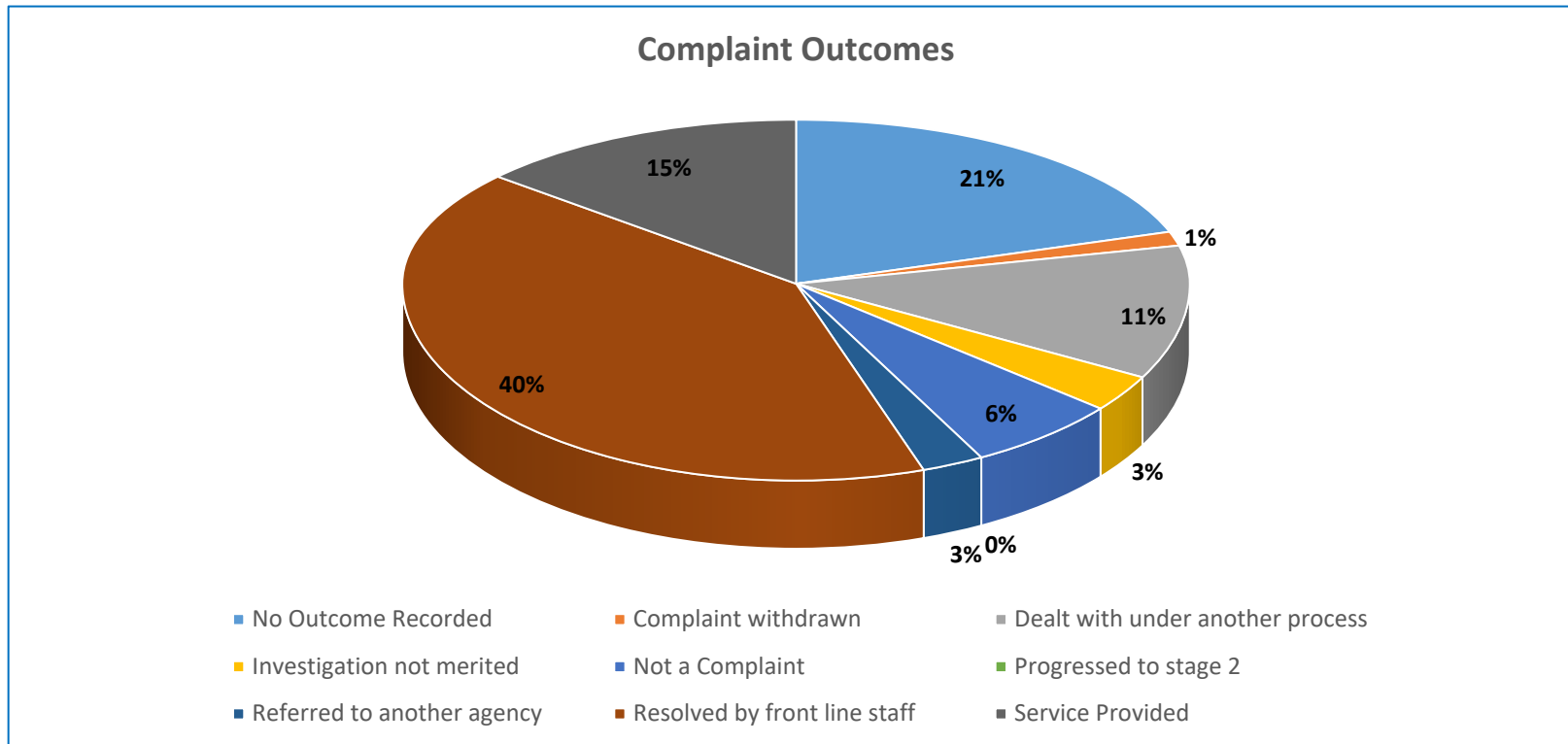


Figure 2 – Complaint Outcomes 2022/23



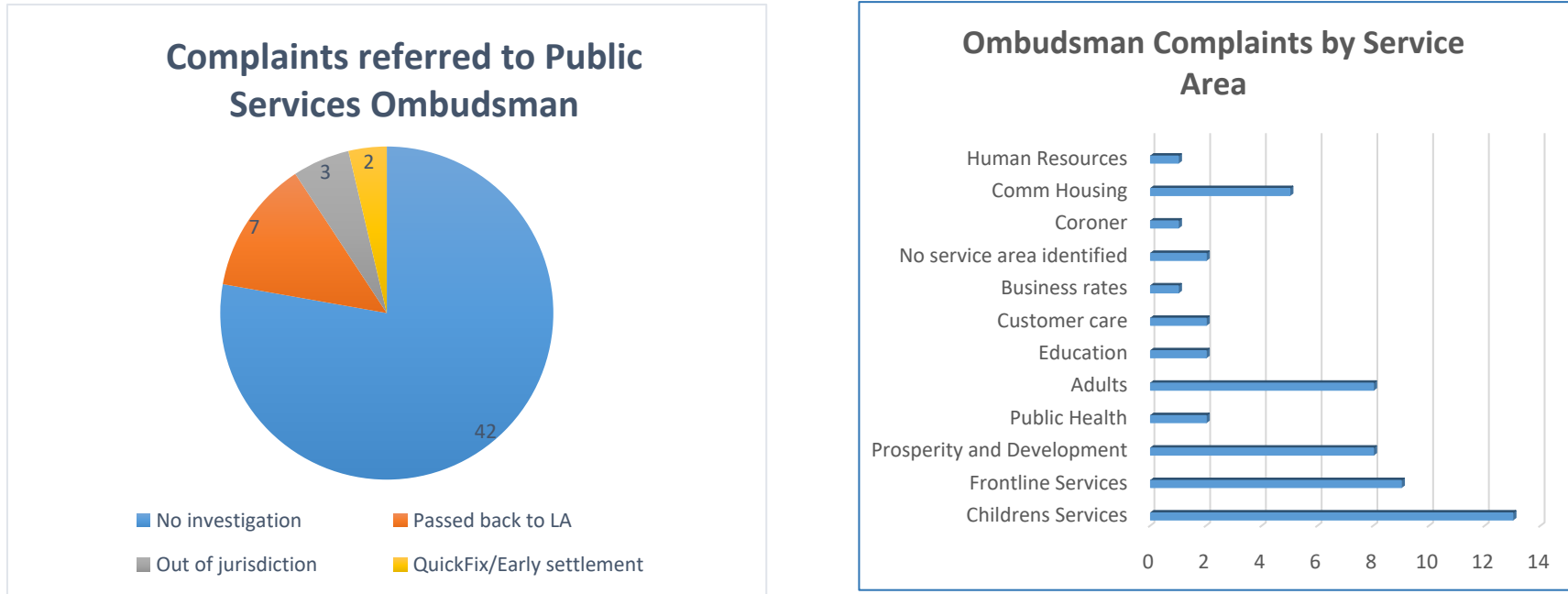
NB: Outcome categories have been changed to support improvements in reporting and will be kept under on-going review.

COMPLAINTS KEY THEMES

- Complaints in this period made up just 0.09% of all customer contacts made to the Council.
- 54% of Stage 1 complaints were dealt with within 10 working days with 18% being resolved within 20 working days. Combined, performance is 72%, slightly lower than the performance target of 75%. 11% were resolved within 3 months with 17% closed within 3-6 months or remaining unclosed on the system.
- 41.5% of Stage 2 complaints were dealt with within the designated 20 working days with 25% of those responded to within a 10-day period.
- The highest number of complaints were categorised as 'failure to provide a service' (30% / 175 complaints), with 40% of these being resolved by frontline staff.
- Positively, of all complaints received, 95% were resolved at Stage 1 with only 5% progressing to Stage 2 of the process - this being an improvement on previous years.
- 44% of complaints were determined to be not upheld with 39% being upheld or partially upheld* and 17% having no determination recorded. *(Whilst we continue to record those complaints that are partially upheld the Complaints Standards Authority no longer accepts this as a valid finding and all partially upheld complaints for their recording purposes will be considered upheld).
- 84% (128) of upheld complaints identified required action to make improvements to services; however only 12 (9.3%) of those complaints recorded learning or areas for identified improvements. This is an area for improvement in 2023/24.
- 10 complaints received identified equality issues, 3 identified Welsh language issues and 10 identified issues relation to Data Protection. Across all 3 areas the figures remain consistent with those in 2021/22 and information continues to be shared with the relevant teams within the Council in order for identified themes to be addressed.
- Whilst this report identifies some areas for improvement, Council officers demonstrate commitment to resolving customers concerns and this is evidenced by both the small percentage of complaints that escalate to Stage 2 and the low number of complaints referred to the Public Services Ombudsman.
- 54 complaints were referred to the Public Services Ombudsman, details of outcomes for these complaints are detailed in Figure 3.

COMPLAINTS REFERRED TO THE PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES

Figure 3 – Complaints Referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (2022/23)



KEY THEMES

- The number of Ombudsman complaints received in 2022/2023 (54) remains consistent with previous years and (not including complaints for Social Care).
- There are no identified themes or concerns as to a particular service area or service provision with 42 complaints requiring no investigation, 7 being referred back to the relevant service area for resolution and 2 recommending a quick fix / early settlement.
- The highest numbers of Ombudsman complaints are for Adult and Children’s Social Care followed by Frontline Services.
- The total number of complaints received by the Ombudsman for Rhondda Cynon Taf make up 0.07% of all interventions received across Wales.

EXAMPLES OF COMPLAINTS AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Complaint area	Complaint detail	Service Improvement
Leisure	Complaint regarding the reaction of staff to a lady breastfeeding in the lido pool. Also lack of policy in relation to breastfeeding.	New breastfeeding policy statement being developed in consultation with the complainant and training to be provide to all Lido staff.
Leisure	Complaint regarding safety of inflatable equipment and supervision at children’s party in leisure centre.	Review to be undertaken of set up procedures in conjunction with a review by the Health & Safety team.
Leisure	Complaint regarding access to poolside and lack of changing facilities for people with additional needs.	Technical assessment to be undertaken in regard to electric motorised doors for ease of access and for possible private changing area for people with additional needs.
Crosscutting	Complaint regarding safe route to school due to restricted access.	Additional signage in area to ensure public are aware that route is still accessible.
Parks Maintenance	Complaint regarding cutting of the conifer trees in the playground which allows a direct view into complainant’s property and lack of communication for this proposal.	Better communication in future to keep customer informed of any future work on shared boundary.

***Complaints where there are potential for service improvements, once identified, will inform ‘You said We did’ and will be fed back to the public via the Council’s web page.**

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS AND COMPLIMENTS

Service Area	Detail of Compliments (Total received 168) Comments (Total received 46)
Frontline services/recycling	<p><i>I would like to ask that the council consider adding a skip to the recycling centre for silage plastic and agricultural feed bags.Would the Council consider this option for local smallholders, farmers and anyone who has plastic waste from feed bags (such as horse owners)? Even if we had to pay a fee to drop this waste at the recycling centre.....</i></p>
Leisure	<p><i>I visited Rhondda Fach Sports centre today on bicycle. There was nowhere to lock my bike so had to leave it in the foyer. Would be good to have somewhere secure to lock bikes.</i></p>
Frontline service/recycling and household waste	<p><i>Hello, over the last few days I needed to use the RCT recycling site at Dinas, Porth on a couple of occasions to dispose of household, garden and wood waste. I would like to say well done to RCT for providing and running a first-class facility. All the members of staff working there were professional and helpful.</i></p>
School transport	<p><i>I am writing to show my appreciation to school transport team , thank you for quick action to add a bus stop for my son. It definitely releases my frustration about his safety . We are so grateful for your team understanding and empathy to our situation. Thank you so much !</i></p>
Pest control	<p><i>I would like to commend a member of the Pest Control team. His name is XXXX and he recently attended my parent's property to deal with rats in the garden. This coincided with my dad being rushed to hospital so as you can imagine it was a very stressful time. I was amazed at having submitted a request online, to be called within an hour by XXXX, customer care was exemplary. What an asset he is to Rhondda Cynon Taf Council. He was extremely diligent and I was felt reassured that the rat issue could be sorted.</i></p>

You said we did.

The following information demonstrates how services have used customer comments received either through service engagement (SE) or direct feedback (DF), to review their services and consider what improvements can be made to better meet the needs of residents and visitors to Rhondda Cynon Taf. The information will be made available through the Council's website and will be periodically updated.

Service Area	Feedback source *	You said	We did
Arts and Culture	SE	You told us about your love for Treorchy's green spaces and your want for more free community activity to take place outside.	We partnered with Friends of Treorchy Park and delivered free lantern making workshops to support their Halloween 'Park in the Dark' event. Free entrance to the event was given to all those who attended with lanterns.
Arts and Culture	SE	Young people in Treorchy told us about their love for local and grassroots sport.	We worked with the Worker's Gallery owner to deliver 'Cymru in the World Cup' themed making workshops at Ton & Gelli Boys & Girls Club and The Play Yard, where young people explored the different careers on offer in the football industry through creativity.
Transformation, Children's Services	SE	Care experienced children and young people told us that they wanted more well-being initiatives, activities with nature and theatre plays to attend.	<p>We have been working with National Organisation Voices from Care Cymru to develop wellbeing initiatives for children and young people with our 'Sky's the Limit' group for 8- to 13-year-olds and our Local RCT group for ages 14-22 years old. Some of the activities have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre shows for 'Snow White' and 'Sleeping Beauty.' • Nature walks • Sporting activities • Arts and crafts.
Heritage Services	DF	You said war memorials need to be better looked after.	We implemented a plan to ensure war memorials are inspected annually and any necessary maintenance undertaken.

Service Area	Feedback source *	You said	We did
Heritage Services	DF	You would like more accessibility to archaeology in the Heritage Park Museum.	We set up a free, monthly, afterschool club where different archaeological topics are looked at.
Leisure	DF	Class and Pool timetables are always changing and not visible online.	All webpages are now live and updated via the website and APP – when amendments are made, all timetables are updated.
Leisure	DF	You said you would like new classes such as KO8.	We have trained leisure staff and added new classes to our timetables.
Leisure	DF	You asked for more outdoor classes during the summer months.	We teamed up with Sport RCT and purchased outdoor equipment adding more outdoor classes to our timetables and more choice to customers who wish to train outdoors in the summer.
Leisure	DF	Customers with a visual impairment reported feeling unable to visit and use leisure facilities.	We have worked alongside the charity Sight Life Wales to improve accessibility for people with sight loss to our centres e.g. Sight life Wales will support us in training staff and identifying other measures that can improve the experience of sight impaired customers who wish to benefit from RCT leisure services.
Leisure	DF	You told us that the leisure app is very busy, not easy to navigate, and you get lost when using it.	We have reviewed and redesigned the App making information more accessible and the App easier to navigate.
Transport planning (Active Travel)	DF	Residents of RCT said barriers to active travel routes were preventing access for disabled cyclists using specially adapted bikes preventing them cycling safely and free from traffic.	We looked at barriers at specific locations across RCT and removed barriers where it was safe to do so, subject to consultation.
Armed Forces	DF	Veterans told us during the Coronavirus outbreak that they were feeling lonely and	We developed a new project ‘Veterans connected’ to help Veterans stay in touch with family and social connections

Service Area	Feedback source *	You said	We did
		isolated and that they missed attending their weekly groups	<p>through digital technology. 80 tablets were made available along with the offer of training and support to enable Veterans to participate in online/virtual events and meetings in their community.</p> <p>Veteran Advice Service Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (rctcbc.gov.uk)</p>

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS AND PRIORITIES

Following the review of the Customer Feedback process and analysis of the data presented in this report, below are some of the priorities for 2023/24:

Complaints Awareness & Training

Virtual training for staff was provided in 2023 by the Ombudsman's Complaints Standards Authority on both complaints handling and managing unreasonable customers. Further awareness sessions will be undertaken in 2023/24 by the Customer Feedback and Engagement Team focusing on 'what is a complaint' and ensuring all feedback received is correctly recorded. Additionally specific targeted sessions will be provided to Services that may benefit from embedding current processes for areas such as "you said, we did" and informing service improvements as an outcome of complaints.

Digital System development and workflow

Continue process improvement enabled by digital through the new CRM to be more effective and efficient. Building upon the implementation of the new customer feedback system, we will seek to improve data capture, analysis and reporting. This should in turn support the more effective allocation and timeliness of complaint management as well as ensuring service areas continue to capture accurate information.

Other improvements have been identified to meet the needs of frontline services areas and these will be undertaken in line with the ongoing development of the new system. This includes the ability to provide management reports for each service area, providing both qualitative and quantitative data to support service planning and delivery.

Improved customer feedback

There will be on-going work with services on how we feedback to both residents and visitors about how services have made improvements based on customer experiences. Also, the 'You said, we did' webpage will be launched in the Autumn 2023 in line with the revised and updated web information for the CFS.