



Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

MEETING	Overview & Audit Committee
DATE OF MEETING	24 September 2014
OFFICER	Graham Britten, Director of Legal and Governance
LEAD MEMBER	Councillor David Watson (Chairman, Overview & Audit Committee)
SUBJECT OF THE REPORT	Review of Compliments and Complaints 2011/14
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	<p>The purpose of this report is to advise on any trends and corrective action taken to reduce or remove the problem that led to a complaint being made and to identify opportunities to improve public perception of the services Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA) provide.</p> <p>The last complaints report was received by the Overview & Audit Committee at its meeting on 26 June 2013 and included data for the financial years 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13. To continue to provide three years of rolling data this report covers the financial years 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.</p> <p>Since 2013 BMKFA has been working to identify and record anything that could be considered a concern or compliant and, as a consequence, the number of complaints has risen from ten in 2012/13 to thirty-three in 2013/14 – although fifteen of these complaints were not upheld.</p> <p>The number of written compliments received has continued to fall - although Station Managers and Administrators report that the numbers of verbal compliments received are high.</p> <p>This report also includes data from the "After the Incident" survey for which monitors 'user' experiences of our emergency service provision. The survey runs from 1 April to 31 March each year and captures the perceptions of those experiencing an incident in the home or in non-domestic premises.</p>
ACTION	Information and decision.
RECOMMENDATIONS	It is recommended that the report be noted.
RISK MANAGEMENT	Complaints are rigorously investigated to ensure that standards of performance and behaviour, and the

	<p>perception of the public of staff performance and behaviour, remain high and BMKFA does not experience reputational damage.</p> <p>All personal data has been removed from the statistics and the remaining anonymised report has no residual information risk.</p>
FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>The cost of complaint investigation and any corrective actions are covered within existing budgets. The only record of costs arising from complaints in the period 2013/14 was £255.00 in carpet cleaning.</p>
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	<p>BMKFA is a public authority, complaints against which may be subject to investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman or, for complaints made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, Environmental Information Regulations 2004 or Data Protection Act 1998, the Information Commissioner. The Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner will usually decline investigation until the public authority's internal complaints procedure has been exhausted and it is therefore important that there is a complaints procedure in place that it is understood by the public and the authority.</p> <p>During the period 2013/14 no complaints were investigated by the Ombudsman or the Information Commissioner.</p>
HEALTH AND SAFETY	<p>Any complaint with Health and Safety implications is investigated at the time the complaint is made.</p>
EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY	<p>Fair treatment of complainants is monitored to ensure complainants are facilitated in making their complaint and, before a complaint is closed, in trying to collect information as to whether they are satisfied with how the complaint was resolved.</p>
USE OF RESOURCES	<p>See financial implications.</p> <p>Communication with stakeholders Any planned changes to the complaints procedure is influenced by internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the process is robust.</p>
PROVENANCE SECTION & BACKGROUND PAPERS	<p>Background</p> <p>Data used to inform this report is extracted from the complaints register. The complaints register is a summary of reports generated in the making and investigating of complaints, compiled from information recorded on written complaints.</p> <p>OVERVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE AND MILTON KEYNES FIRE AUTHORITY on WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2013 Agenda</p>

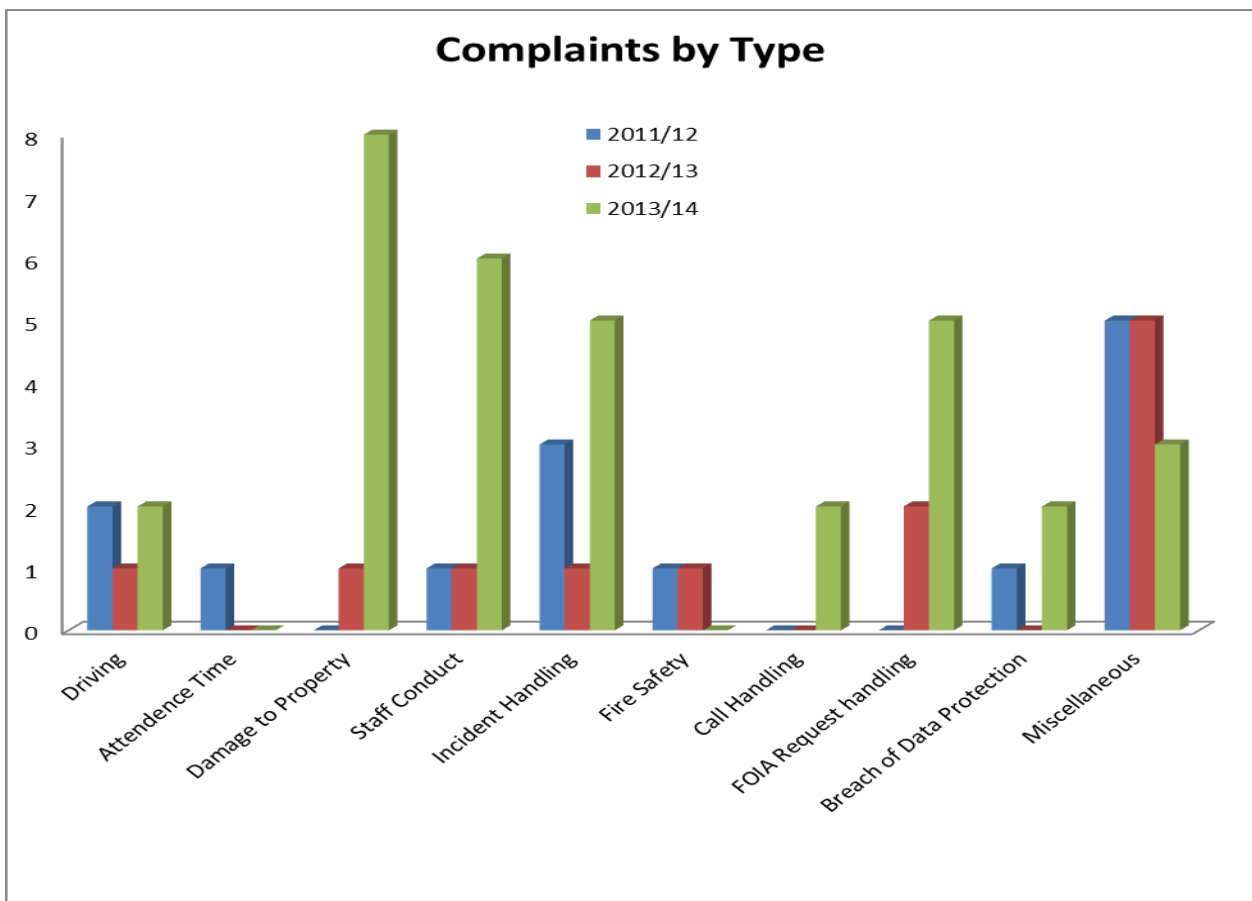
	<p>Item 7</p> <p>http://bucksfire.gov.uk/files/3514/0633/2179/OA260613.pdf</p>
APPENDICES	Appendix A – Compliments and Complaints Report.
TIME REQUIRED	10 minutes.
REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT	<p>Gerry Barry, Information Governance & Compliance Manager</p> <p>gbarry@bucksfire.gov.uk</p> <p>01296 744442 or mobile 079207 10637</p>

Appendix A Compliments & Complaints Received 2011/12 – 2013/14

1. Background & Purpose

- 1.1 This report includes three years of complaints and satisfaction survey (“After the Incident”) data for the period 2011/12 - 2013/14 to enable the committee to review the numbers and types of complaints received, emerging trends and corrective action initiatives. Many compliments are made verbally and therefore not captured or recorded.
- 1.2 As noted last year, the type of complaints received by the service is changing and becoming more varied with greater awareness of information rights legislation. From the graph below you will note that we received five complaints about the handling of Freedom of Information requests, compared to two in 2012/13. We also received two complaints about the handling of personal information – one of which was upheld and a member of staff was given additional training to ensure the mistake was not repeated. A complaint was also received about a sign for inconsiderate parking being unattractive. These signs are only put as a temporary measure and are removed after a couple of weeks. As no further complaints have been received about these signs no action has been taken.

Although the number of complaints about property damage has risen to eight in 2013/14 three of these were not upheld and only one was as a result of carelessness by a member of staff who made the necessary repairs to a resident’s wall.



2. Benchmarking

- 2.1 As in previous years different Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) record and publish reports on complaints and compliments at different times of the year and in different ways, making the data unreliable for benchmarking. It was also noted that fewer FRS were publishing statistics regarding the number of complaints received. Therefore, data from the "After the Incident Survey" has been included again this year to enable the compliments and complaints data to be seen in the context of 'user' experience both locally and nationally. The "After the Incident Survey" runs from 1 April to 31 March each year and monitors 'user' experiences of our emergency service provision – i.e. those who experience incidents in the home or in a non-domestic setting. This is compared to previous year performance (2011/12) and with other participating FRS.

Incidents in the Home

Indicator Group	2013/14			2012/13			2011/12		
	BMFKA	National	Rank	BMFKA	National	Rank	BMFKA	National	Rank
Satisfaction with initial contact	97	97	11	98	97	4	98	97	13
Satisfaction with service at scene	99	98	9	99	99	7	99	98	3
Satisfaction with overall service	98	98	12	100	98	1	99	98	3

ORS Final Benchmarking Report for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, June 2014.

- 2.2 Owing to concerns about the accuracy of the results for FRSs which achieved low numbers of responses, FRSs who achieved fewer than 50 responses for Incidents in the Home or 50 responses for Non-domestic Incidents have been allocated their individual scores but have **not** been ranked against other FRSs. For 2013/14, as for 2012/13, BMFKA did not receive the minimum 50 responses to receive a ranking for non-domestic incidents.

Non-Domestic Incidents

Indicator Group	2013/14			2012/13			2011/12		
	BMFKA	National	Rank	BMFKA	National	Rank	BMFKA	National	Rank
Satisfaction with initial contact	99	97	-	96	96	-	96	96	11
Satisfaction with service at scene	97	97	-	99	97	-	97	97	4
Satisfaction with overall service	99	97	-	96	97	-	97	97	11

ORS Final Benchmarking Report for Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, June 2014.

3. Performance

Since 2013 BMKFA has been working to identify and record anything that could be considered a concern or complaint and, as a consequence, the number of complaints has risen from ten in 2012/13 to thirty-three in 2013/14 – although fifteen of these were not upheld. During the course of operational incidents it is sometimes necessary to force an entry and, whilst people do understand this, they often raise a complaint so that they can understand the process of making an insurance claim.

4. Cost of Corrective Action

- 4.1 The cost to the Authority in investigating complaints is often significantly more than the cost of the corrective action. For example, where it is claimed that we have caused damage to a grass verge, and send a member of our property team to tidy the area and re-seed the grass, the corrective action may take an hour whereas the investigation may have taken several hours.
- 4.2 The data collection for complaints is continuously under review and, although we are unable to minimise the time needed to investigate a complaint, we do try to ensure that public money is not spent when there is no evidence of the authority being financially liable.

5. Damage to Property

In the period 2013/14 BMKFA paid £255.00 to clean carpets in two houses where it was proven that staff had tracked dirt in on their shoes. In 2012/13 there was an incident of damage to doors. There was no property damage reported in the period 2011/12.

6. Process Development

- 6.1 *Was the Complainant Satisfied?*
We continue to try to gather feedback from complainants to determine if they are satisfied with how their complaint was handled. In 2013/14 sixteen of the thirty-three complainants advised they were satisfied with the handling of their complaints (even though in six instances the complaint was not upheld) of the other seventeen only one advised they were unsatisfied with the handling of their and that they would be taking this to the Information Commissioner. However no complaints had to be resolved by the Ombudsman or the Information Commissioner.