

Customer Insight report 2016 – 2017

19th July 2017



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

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Context

Brighton & Hove City Council

Customer Promise

We want the customer to be at the heart of everything we do. We have listened to our customers and have made the following 3 commitments – our Customer Promise.

- ❖ We will make it clear how you can contact or access our services 📞
- ❖ We will be clear and treat you with respect 🤝
- ❖ We will understand and get things done 📋

The purpose of this Customer Insight report is to bring together the information collected about the customer experience of using Brighton & Hove City Council services in 2016/17.

By customer we mean, any user of council services, whether voluntary or involuntary. This includes residents and visitors to the city, businesses, students, service users and their representatives. This report presents what we currently know about our customer services. This is to ensure we better understand the needs of our customer, and to learn and grow consistently from the feedback we receive.

Intelligence from this report is feeding into the modernisation programme Digital First to improve our digital offer for customers.

Customer Insight is one element of our Performance Management Framework that sets out how the council manages performance, to achieve our purpose as set out in the Corporate Plan.

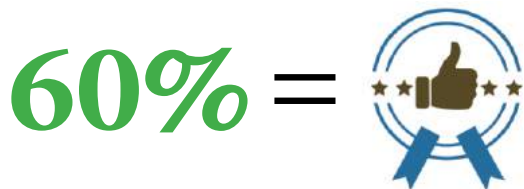
Work continues in 2017/18 to improve the consistency and quality of the data included in this report.



Results summary

Resident perception of the council

As per the 2016 City Tracker survey of 1,000 residents of Brighton & Hove, satisfaction with the city council is



This is a 1% increase from the 2015 result of 59%. The national benchmark is 68%. Our result for 2014 was 40%.

Customer feedback received



Overall, there has been a 2% decrease in complaints, from 1,588 in 2015/16 to 1,550 in 2016/17. This follows a 20% decrease between 2014/15 & 2015/16.

There has been an 18% increase, from 778 to 917 in compliments about council services since 2015/16. This follows a 20% increase between 2014/15 & 2015/16



Reasons for customer contact

Information on why customers are calling continues to be collected in 2016/17 by 5 of our most used services: Revenues, Benefits, Housing Management, Housing Needs, Cityclean & Parking Services. Planning services will begin collecting this in 2017/18.

Of the
18,330



calls received on average in a month during 2016/17:

7% were about resident parking permits (scheduled to be available online by the end of 2017)

6% were to the Environment contact centre for general parking queries (website to be updated in 2017)

5% were to Council Tax about a move or change of household (this can be done online)

4% about parking penalty charge notices (online form available)

Quality of customer service by channel



Customer survey conducted by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) has shown that our customer satisfaction is highest when using a face to face channel, and lowest for contact by email.

Customer satisfaction with our services

In line with the national benchmark figure we have set a target of **68%** for customer satisfaction.

26 key services have reported customer satisfaction data in 2016/17.

22 of 26 (85%)

services have reported having met or exceeded this target.



18 of 26 (69%) key services also

reported that **80%** of customers

found it

FAIRLY OR VERY EASY

to access the service.



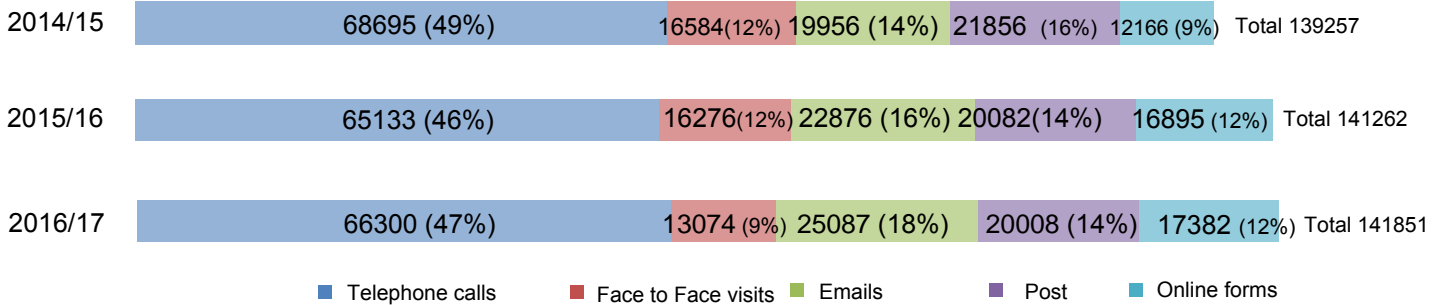
Responses to customer feedback

Complaints upheld



	Stage 2	Ombudsman
2016/17	19% 	19%
2015/16	22% 	22%

Customer contact volumes for transactional services by channel



The overall volumes of customer contact are broadly similar in 2016/17 to the volumes in 2015/16. The method of customer contact continues to move in the direction of increased digital access.

Phone

Overall, incoming calls to the organisation have reduced by 5% since 2015/16, however the average number of phone calls to 26 key services has increased by 2%. The increase is offset by the reduction in calls to the switchboard, due to the introduction of automated options, connecting the caller directly to the five most requested services

Online forms

Overall submissions of online forms have increased by 3% since 2015/16. Between 2014/15 & 2015/16 form submissions to services increased by 39%. A particular increase in 2016/17 has been seen in Planning (Development Management). However the other services delivering the top ten transactions have reported decreases since 2015/16.



REDUCED BY 5%



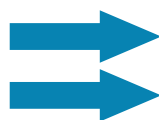
Face to Face contact

There has been a 20% reduction in footfall to services overall since 2015/16.

Of the 4 most visited transactional services:

- Benefits
- Housing Management
- Parking
- Revenues

there has been a 50% decrease in face to face contact since 2013/14 (15,820 pm to 7,616 pm).



Website

Overall visitor numbers to the council website are similar to last year, at 4,477,845 sessions. 47% of these were new visitors.

Emails

There has been a 10% increase overall in unstructured emails.



Post

Incoming post volumes remain similar to last year (>1% decrease overall). A significant decrease has been seen in Planning (Development Management (42%)), planning applications are now submitted electronically, as part of the modernisation of the service.



Summary – Key recommendations

The Customer Experience Steering Group has been established to strengthen consistency, resilience, efficiency and improvements in the way customer services are delivered across the council, in order to increase customer satisfaction. All key customer facing services are represented on this group. The group has developed the Customer Promise in consultation with customers, a Vision for 2020 (on the following pages) and an associated action plan to deliver this vision; the following recommended actions emerging from this report form part of these plans. These recommendations are made based on the comments from customers through a variety of customer feedback, including complaints, surveys, as well as the volume data supplied by services and customer journey maps.

The three priority recommendation themes:

Manage expectations

Customers expressing frustration because they don't know what is happening or how long it'll take, or being given a timeframe which isn't kept to, is a frequently recurring theme in our customer feedback.

Customer Feedback example:

"read your e-mails and don't send an automated reply telling me the issue will be looked into and i know it will not be. please contact me i saved every e-mail i sent to prove they did not bother to get back to me."

Recommended Action:

Set realistic response times on auto-replies to generic inboxes, and where appropriate, telephone messages, however long the response is likely to take, as per the Customer Promise guidance. Be clear in our communication with customers. Be clear in terms of what we can and can't offer.

Take ownership

Where there are multiple elements to an enquiry, complaint or customer need and to resolve the enquiry requires input from different teams across directorates or even handoffs between teams within the same service, the customer experience is being compromised.

Customer Feedback example:

"...I have ended up speaking to different people every time, have been told I would be called back and not, been told that a written record would be taken and it hasn't. I haven't had a clue which department has been taking responsibility for this..."

Recommended Action:

Don't 'cold-transfer' enquiries to other teams, always ensure that the customer is kept informed if you have to pass their enquiry on, or if transferring a call, ensure that you have directed the call correctly, that there is someone to answer, and that the customer's enquiry is understood by the officer taking the call on.

Clearly communicate and adequately resource your preferred channel of customer contact

Maintaining low waiting or response times whilst resourcing the newer online channels in addition to the traditional customer contact routes brings challenges, especially when resources are limited.

Customer Feedback example:

"it was great to complete an easy form online. However I have received no response months later so it really is a waste of time. When I telephone my issue is dealt with straight away. Why does the same not happen for online contact? Now I feel I need to waste my time and telephone the council, thats not very efficient for either me or the council."

Recommended Actions:

Consider how you allocate resources across different communication channels, and incentivising our preferred channels by ensuring that service is at least as good/fast, if not better/quicker through that channel, as per our Channel Shift guidance.

Ensure that the most efficient and effective way for customers to contact you is the most prominent contact detail on your webpages, template letters and is communicated to other services and advice agencies that may transfer or refer customers to your service.

Our customer promise to you

We will make it clear how you can contact or access our services

- Communicate first with you digitally where possible and appropriate, because it is often quicker, more convenient for you and cost-effective.
- Where digital access is not appropriate offer you different ways to contact us and use our services.
- Where people have a disability or impairment, we will work with you to find the best ways to communicate.

We will be clear and treat you with respect

- Increasingly provide digital services but still aim to deliver a personal service, treating you with courtesy, politeness and understanding.
- Be clear and easy to understand in all our communication with you.
- Keep your personal data secure and ensure your confidentiality.

We will understand and get things done

- Aim to answer the query at first point of contact, when this cannot be achieved we provide clear information about next steps so you know what to expect.
- Take care to fully understand and respond appropriately to your needs.
- Keep you informed with up to date information and explain what we have done
- Make sure our officers have the skills and tools to deliver the service you need
- Work together across the council to provide a service that minimises your efforts

You can help us to keep our promise by

- Treating us politely and with respect
- Letting us know if you have any specific needs
- Giving us the information we need to deal with your enquiry
- Telling us if you are happy or unhappy with our service
- Participating when we seek feedback so we can learn and improve

Please tell us how we are doing

- We welcome all feedback including when things don't go right. Feedback helps us to learn from what we are doing well and also our mistakes. We are committed to using this information to improve our services.
- Please tell us how satisfied you are with our service, [this short survey should take you approximately 2 minutes](#)
- If you would like to provide detailed compliment or complaint please [contact customer feedback team](#)

Monitoring our performance against this promise

- We check our performance through monitoring:
 - Customer satisfaction and ease of access
 - Number of compliments and complaints received
 - Evidence of how our customers contact us
 - Survey of residents of Brighton & Hove and service users
- The results will be published through our [Customer Insight Report](#) annually.

Different ways to contact us

Website



We will:

- Aim to have the Council website available for 24 hours a day all year round
- Continually improve the ability to interact with us digitally

Written communication



We will:

- Ensure all service emails are set up with 'automatic reply' with a clear indication of what will happen next

Telephones



We will:

- Aim to keep average waiting times under 10 minutes when high demand is anticipated we will give a clear indication of the expected wait and
- Make clear the range of ways of contacting us
- Update voicemails and telephone messages regularly to hold accurate information

Face to face



We will:

- Make sure our Customer service buildings are fully accessible
- Aim to greet you on average within 5 minutes of arrival and to see you within 20 minutes
- Make clear the range of ways of contacting us

Social media



We will:

- Be clear how frequently we would respond to any queries received
- Be proactive in sharing relevant information and keep this up to date

Customer Experience Steering Group- Vision 2020

Efficiency

- The majority of customers access our website where they can easily find the services appropriate for self-serve
- Services are proactive in encouraging customers to adopt new ways of engaging with them which are more cost effective and which are more satisfactory for the customer
- Services regularly review all their processes relating to customer journey, to remove all non-value added steps
- Customer makes minimum contact necessary to resolve their query
- The council hold one single up to date customer profile which can be accessed by relevant teams
- When resolving customer dissatisfaction, officers are skilled in reaching outcomes the customer can accept and ensuring agreed actions are carried out

Consistency

- The Customer Promise is regularly reviewed to reflect customer needs
- All services are being delivered in accordance with the Customer Promise
- Our customers are fully aware of our Customer Promise and satisfied we are delivering to the agreed standards
- Services fully and proactively analyse potential impacts and consult with all key stakeholders before making changes to their delivery
- All front line facing services work together via Customer Experience Steering Group, contributing to form recommendations and make sure these are embedded in their own service

Improvements

- Services are fully committed to reviewing and improving the customer experience as a continual process
- Services regularly gather feedback from their customers, to ensure they are delivering the service as promised
- Services identify change capacity and embedding change is their focus
- Services gather sufficient data to fully understand the customer experience and use this to identify services which are important and areas for improvement
- All front line facing services work together via Customer Experience Steering Group, contributing to form recommendations and make sure these are embedded in their own service
- Services have a range of well established methods to provide customers from all segments with up to date information about the way services are changing and about how to access those services

Resilience

- Services proactively manage their resources to reflect the channel of demand
- Services are cross working to manage peak demands maintaining customer satisfaction levels for the whole organisation
- Services and officers drive the culture of continuous improvement
- Officers can offer signposting and support regardless of department
- Services collaborate with other public services, the community and voluntary sector to find common and jointly owned solutions

How satisfied are our external customers with the service we provide?

The Local Government Association's benchmark figure for resident satisfaction in October 2016 is 68%

26 key services have reported customer satisfaction data for 2016/17

Services reporting having met or exceeded this benchmark in 2016/17

85%

We also ask our customers about the ease of accessing our services, 26 key services reported this data in 2016/17.

There is no benchmark available for this. We have set an target at 80% of customers finding it **'VERY or FAIRLY EASY'**

69% of key services reported having met or exceeded this target

Surveys conducted by services

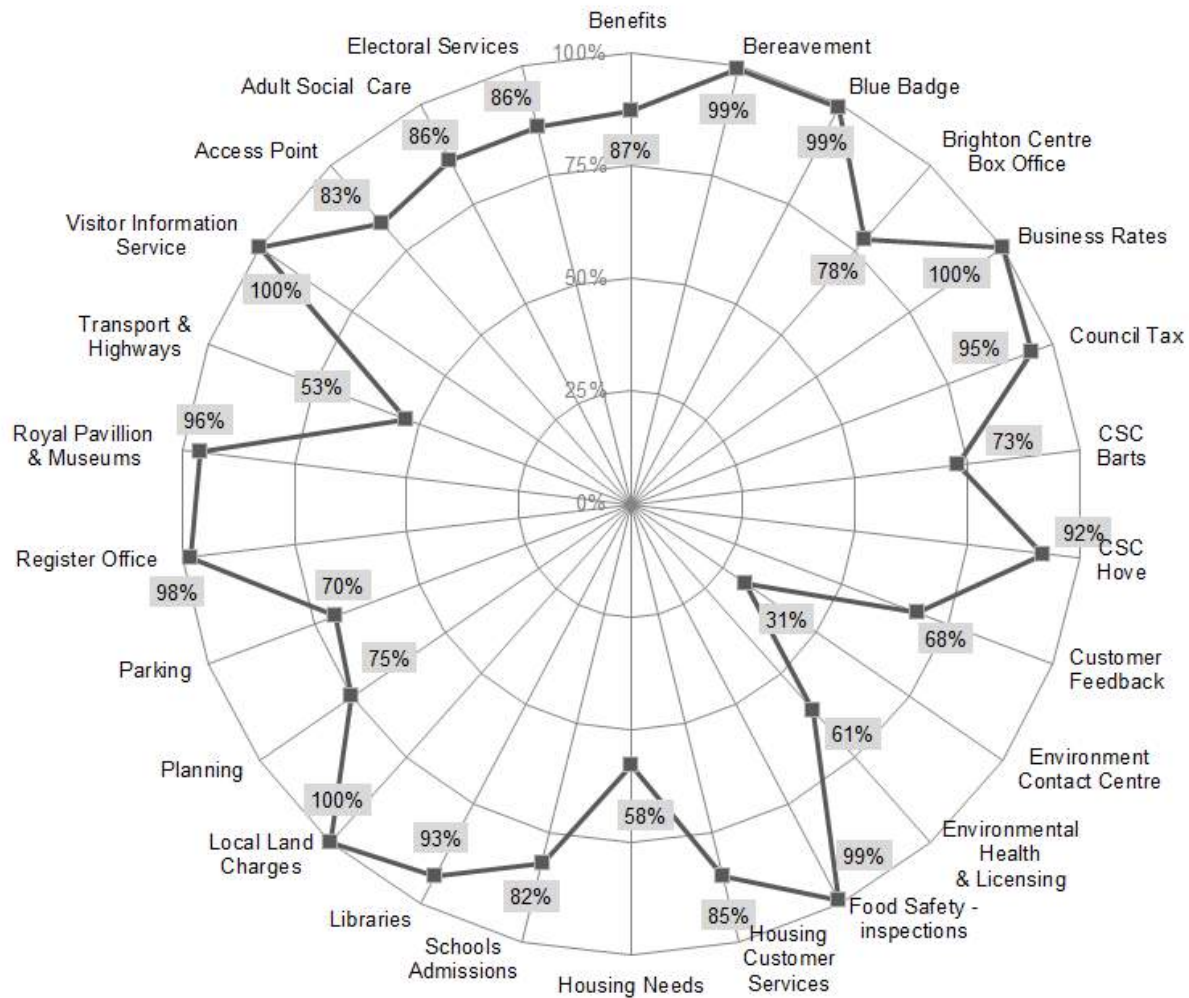
How was the standard of customer service received?

Service users were asked the following question:

(1) How was the standard of customer service you received?

- Responses included: Very good, fairly good, neither good nor poor, fairly poor, very poor

The below chart shows the percentage of 'very good & fairly good' responses



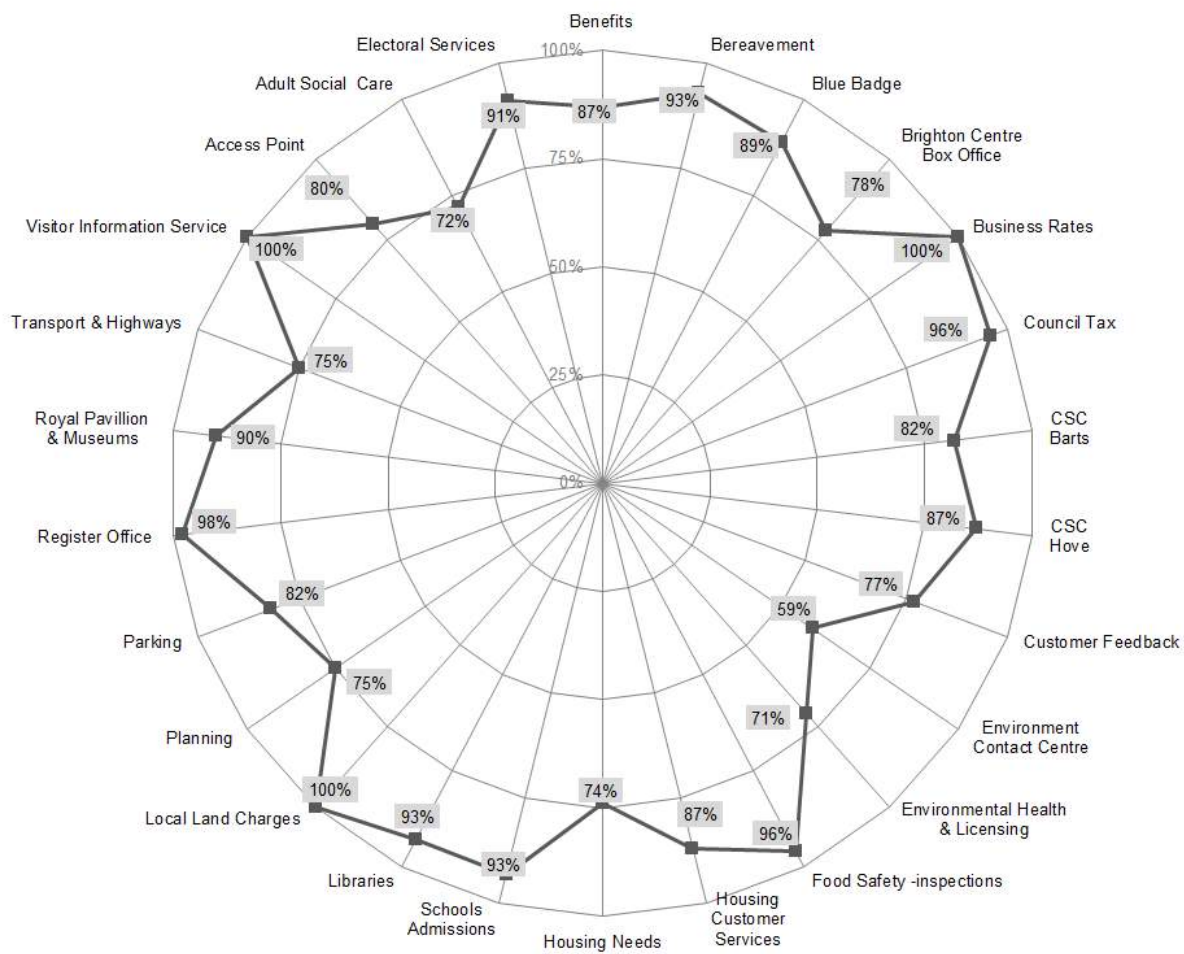
Services whose customer satisfaction was below the LGA resident satisfaction figure:
 Environment Contact Centre
 Environmental Health & Licencing
 Housing Needs
 Transport & Highways.

How easy or difficult was it to use a service?

Service users were asked the following question:

- (1) How easy or difficult was it for you to use our service?
 - Responses included: Very easy, fairly easy, neither easy nor difficult, fairly difficult, very difficult

The below chart shows the percentage of 'very easy & fairly easy' responses



Services whose results were below our internal target of 80%:

- Adult Social Care
- Brighton Centre Box Office
- Customer Feedback team
- Environment Contact Centre
- Environmental Health & Licencing
- Housing Needs
- Transport & Highways

Notes about surveying

This year, the above charts show all positive responses to the two standard questions ('very and fairly good' and 'very and fairly easy'), bringing the reporting in line with other surveys, such as City Tracker and the LGA national resident survey. For this reason, the results are not directly comparable with the similarly formatted charts from last year's report.

Due to the variety of response rates and survey methodologies used, it isn't possible to calculate a confidence interval for these results. Some services invite customers to complete surveys via an email, others over the phone or in libraries, receptions and customer service centres, some use a combination of these methods. Some results have been taken from surveys undertaken by national bodies, such as the National Transport & Highways Network where comparable questions are asked.

Work continues in 2017/18 to ensure all customer facing services use these standard questions when surveying customers, where appropriate and that services use a prescribed methodology in order to increase confidence in the validity of the results.

Customer comments

Customers of transactional services completing the satisfaction survey are invited to make comments to give details of their customer experience / suggestions as to how the standard of service they received could have been improved and how it could have been easier for them to access our services.

Not all services use the online survey, and some teams received significantly higher response rates through this method than others, so the comments may not be considered as representative of the overall customer experience.

To enable some basic analysis of the free text comments submitted, the comments have been themed and rephrased. All of the verbatim customer comments have been sent to services for them to identify areas of good practice, or where there is room for improvement in their service delivery.

The charts on the following pages show a themed summary of the free text comments made, separated into those which expressed dissatisfaction and those which expressed satisfaction.

134 comments were made which expressed dissatisfaction about their customer experience and 38 comments were made which expressed satisfaction with the way their contact was dealt with.

How satisfied are our internal customers with the service we provide?

Summary of internal customer satisfaction survey results 2016/17

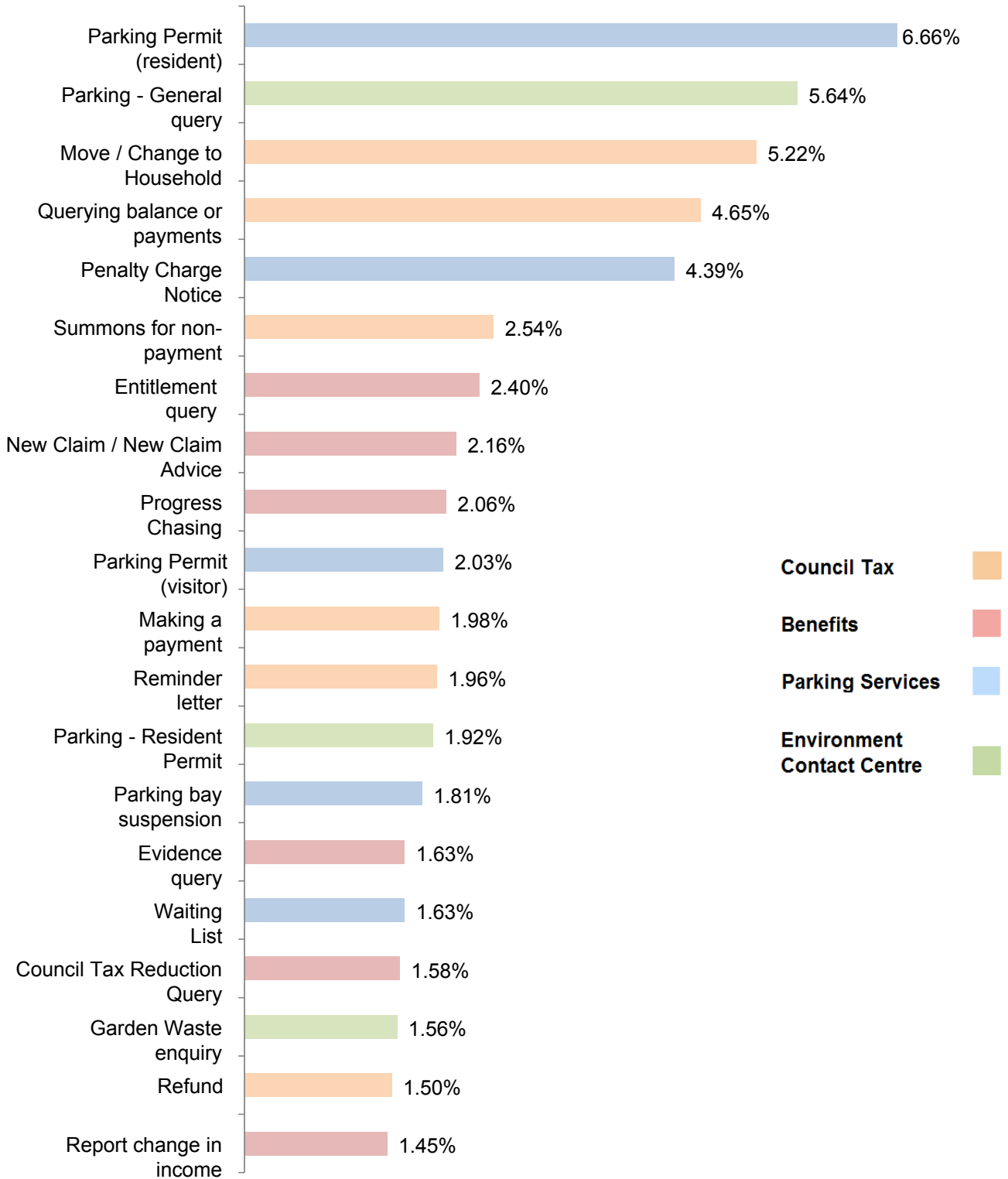
- Across BHCC, the proportion of staff responding that are satisfied (very good or fairly good) with the customer service received in the last 12 months is 82%.
- The proportion of respondents finding support services very easy or fairly easy to contact in the last 12 months was also 82%.

	% of respondents rating the	
	Standard of customer service 'Very good' or 'Fairly good'	Ease of contact 'Very easy' or 'Fairly easy'
Economy, Environment & Culture	82%	81%
Families, Children & Learning	80%	82%
Finance & Resources	79%	82%
Health & Adult Social Care	83%	81%
Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing	86%	82%
Strategy, Governance & Law	81%	84%

Service	Customer Satisfaction		Ease of contact	
	2015/16	2016/17	2015/16	2016/17
Communications	-	85%	-	76%
Customer Feedback	87%	93%	88%	93%
Democratic & Civic services	-	93%	-	87%
Finance	82%	87%	76%	88%
Health & Safety	92%	87%	86%	90%
Human Resources	57%	69%	51%	71%
ICT	70%	75%	67%	72%
Internal Audit	82%	88%	75%	92%
Legal services	-	86%	-	83%
Organisational & Workforce Development	79%	88%	78%	86%
Performance, Improvement & Programmes	85%	89%	79%	92%
Procurement	86%	80%	82%	85%
Property & Design	90%	76%	86%	76%

What are the reasons for customers contacting us?

Of the 18,330 calls received on average per month in 2016/17, 7% were about resident parking permits, 6% were make a general enquiry about Parking facilities, 5% were to query the balance or payment schedule for Council Tax, and 4% about Parking Penalty Charge Notices.



The top twenty recorded reasons for customer contact in any one month (average values) - as a percentage of average call volumes against which specific reasons were recorded, only the top twenty reasons are displayed in this chart.

Currently six services who deliver most of the top twenty highest volume transactions (Revenues, Benefits, Parking, Housing Needs, Housing Management and Cityclean) are recording this information, the average rate of recording is around 50%. As codes are changed periodically by services to gain intelligence on particular transactions or service areas, it isn't possible to represent total volumes for the full year.

With the addition of Parking Services' data this year, the chart showing the twenty highest volume transactions no longer features Housing Management or Housing Needs, however the information below includes all teams recording the reasons for customer contact.

The rate of recording varies between services, so isn't a complete picture of the organisation's telephone contact, but gives a broad overview of why customers are contacting us. These figures are representative of an average month's contact in 2016/17, of an average monthly call volume of 18,330 calls taken by the six services recording this data.

Key findings

- As the Environment Contact Hub, Cityclean also take calls on behalf of the Parking service – specifically around permits for visitors and residents. 29% of the calls to Cityclean were with regard to parking. This has reduced from over 40% last year. A new income stream for Cityclean - Garden Waste collection - now features in the top twenty reasons for customer contact, reflecting the customer interest in this service.
- Council Tax's highest volume enquiries are for reporting a change of address, querying a bill or payment schedule and enquiries about court summonses for non-payment of council tax. This is similar to last year, however work is in progress to allow customers to check their own bills online, and have introduced e-billing for the first time in 2016/17, which should result in fewer calls because the paper bill can't be located or to check when the next payment is due, as customers will be able to retain this information electronically
- Housing Benefits main reasons for contact are for advice on submitting a new claim, queries about potential or existing entitlement to benefits and from customers chasing the progress of their application. Progress chasing, considered to be failure demand by the service, has fallen by a third since last year (from 15% to 10% of all Benefit calls).
- Housing Management's highest volume enquiries relate to car parks & garages, Homemove and housing repairs, with a reduction in calls about tenancy issues compared to last year (13% - 10%).
- Housing Needs high volume contact reason is for Homemove (the Joint Housing Register), with a particular increase in requests for review and queries about removal from the Joint Housing Register, due to the changes to the allocations policy at the end of 2016. Housing Needs also have a high volume of calls from customers who actually wanted a different housing team or service.
- More than 50% of Parking Services' customer contact is about parking permits (residents and visitors), the planned move to an online permit system with dual virtual permits in the coming year should have a significant impact on these call volumes.

Next steps

Improving customer satisfaction

As the way in which our customers contact us changes (increased take up on online and email services, reductions in post, footfall and phone calls) we should adapt the way we offer our services in order to maintain customer satisfaction.

These observations are made based on the comments from customers through a variety of customer feedback, including complaints, surveys, as well as the volume data supplied by services and customer journey maps, a method of tracking individual customer experiences retrospectively to gain insight into our processes from the customer's position, and to find opportunities for improvement.

These recommended actions may also contribute towards meeting one of the council's key objectives for 2017 – 2020. **“Getting the basics right...”**

Managing expectations

Customers expressing frustration because they don't know what is happening or how long it'll take, or being given a timeframe which isn't stuck to, is a frequently recurring theme in our customer feedback.

- ❖ As per the Customer Promise guidance, teams need to ensure that their auto reply to emails from generic inboxes give realistic timeframes for response, even if this is longer than ideal, the response should also provide details of preferred methods of contact, and emergency contacts where applicable.
- ❖ Communicate as often as possible (at a frequency commensurate to the nature of the query or as often as has been agreed with the customer) with the customer if their enquiry will take a while to resolve or requires input from someone else, even if there isn't any action for the customer to take, or a specific update to give.

Taking ownership

Where there are multiple elements to an enquiry, complaint or customer need and to resolve the enquiry requires input from different teams across directorates or even handoffs between teams within the same service, the customer experience can be compromised.

- ❖ When forwarding an email to another team for action, let customer know the action you have taken to ensure they don't think we are just ignoring their contact. Ensure that you advise the team that you are forwarding to anything that has been discussed with the customer in terms of expectations, as well as briefly describing why you are forwarding the email.

- ❖ When taking a phone call that has come through to the wrong department, or the customer needs to speak to another service as well, don't 'cold-transfer' customers to other officers or team – ensure that there is someone there to answer the call, and that they understand the customer's query before hanging up, so the customer doesn't have to repeat themselves multiple times or get bounced around.

Clearly communicating and adequately resourcing our preferred channel of customer contact

Maintaining low waiting or response times whilst resourcing the newer online channels in addition to the traditional customer contact routes brings challenges, especially when resources are limited.

- ❖ Ensuring that the most efficient and effective way for customers to contact you is the most prominent contact detail on your webpages, template letters and is communicated to other services and advice agencies who may transfer or refer customers to your service, will help to channel customer demand in a more focused way.
- ❖ Email volumes are increasing, yet research conducted by the Institute of Customer Services (ICS) suggests that our customers are least satisfied when they communicate with us by this method. This is backed up by the comments received on our own surveys. Often emails are handled as a more administrative task, or something to be done between phone calls, or 'when we have time', yet this is often the channel with the highest contact volumes and the one to which customers naturally have an expectation of a swift response.
- ❖ Services should consider how they allocate resources, and incentivising their preferred channels (by ensuring that service is at least as good/fast, if not better/quicker through that channel), otherwise customers will become frustrated and contact us through multiple channels, placing further demand on the service unnecessarily and inevitably reducing customer satisfaction as we don't 'get it right first time'.

Improving customer service delivery

- ❖ Embedding our customer promise to meet the measurable standards for customer service delivery.
- ❖ Driving forward improvements through the Customer Experience Steering group and the transition table action plan.
- ❖ Taking part in the annual Institute of Customer Services survey, in order to improve understanding of our customer service performance against other Local Government agencies and against the commercial sector, including benchmarking and channel by channel satisfaction questions.
- ❖ Promoting the Customer Service Excellence Quality Mark and standards from other professional bodies such as APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) as externally recognised standards of performance in customer service delivery.

- ❖ Supporting services in ensuring that they maximise the investment in their online services, to advise on changing working practices, channel shift strategy and change management to actively encourage customers to use online services.
- ❖ Working with the Institute of Customer Service to improve the 2017/18 report.

Improving data quality

- Continuing to improve our understanding of the telephone reporting system to ensure higher quality and greater consistency in our telephone data, using the Avaya Customer Management System.
- Assisting services in identifying a statistically valid number of survey respondents and consistent methodologies to enable more robust, detailed analysis and confidence in using the data for performance and equalities monitoring.
- Working with the relevant internal teams and external suppliers to improve quality of and ease of access to, data on online form submissions.
- Work with Digital First to ensure automated, specific reporting is available in any new development.
- Including more teams in this report in future years, to gain a fuller picture of the organisation's customer contact.

This and previous year's reports are published on our website: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/customerinsightreport

For any queries, suggestions or further information, please contact: Victoria.Paling@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Victoria Paling
Customer Insight Manager
Performance, Improvements & Programmes

Appendix A: What do residents think of the city council?

58%

of residents are fairly or very satisfied with the way the council runs things, down from 61% in 2015.

Nationally, in the Local Government Association (LGA) Resident Satisfaction survey of October 2016, this figure stood at

68%

Areas in which we perform well, based on national benchmarking figures

People agreeing they can influence decisions affecting their local area

47%

People agreeing that it is important that they can influence decisions in their local area

79%

Used a library in the last 12 months

43%

Areas for development, based on national benchmarking figures

Agree the council provides value for money

39%

Satisfied with services for older people

32%

Satisfied with waste collection

64%

Surveying residents of the city

The City Tracker survey is an annual survey of 1000 residents which collects the views of residents on council and partner services, satisfaction with the city as a place to live, as well as propensity for social action. The latest survey was conducted between 19th September and the 7th November 2016.

Brighton & Hove Connected commissioned Infocorp Ltd to carry out its 2016 annual survey of city-wide residents. The survey covers the adult population aged 18+, usually resident in Brighton & Hove.

The objective of the City Tracker Survey is to find out what residents think of Brighton & Hove as a place to live. This includes tracking key performance indicator (KPI) monitoring of essential city services.

Some of the questions included in the 2016 survey can be compared with data from research carried out by national bodies and central government departments, which gives perspective on how Brighton & Hove compares with the rest of the country.

The comparison surveys are:

Local Government Association national benchmarks for resident satisfaction from June 2016 (**LGA** comparison)

Cabinet Office Community Life Survey 2015-16 (**CLS** comparison)

Department for Culture, Media & Sport Taking Part Survey June 2016 (**TPS** comparison)

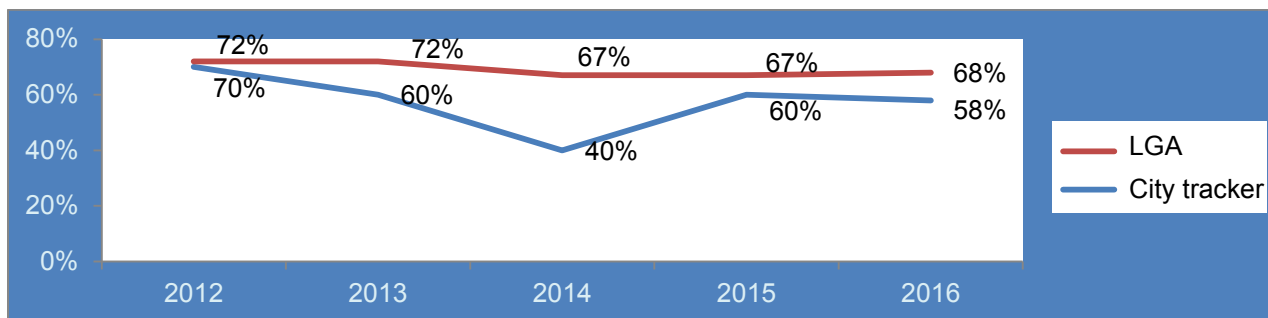
2016 results are also compared with previous waves of the City Tracker Survey undertaken at the same time of year.

About the data:

Whilst postcode data is collected from respondents, the sample size at the ward level is too small to allow meaningful or robust analysis. We are, however, able to draw out some broader geographical information, where there are significant variations in results, around the wider postcode areas of BN1, BN2, BN3 & BN41.

Resident satisfaction with the City Council

In total, 58% of residents are *very or fairly satisfied* with Brighton & Hove City Council, slightly below the 61% figure from the 2015 survey:

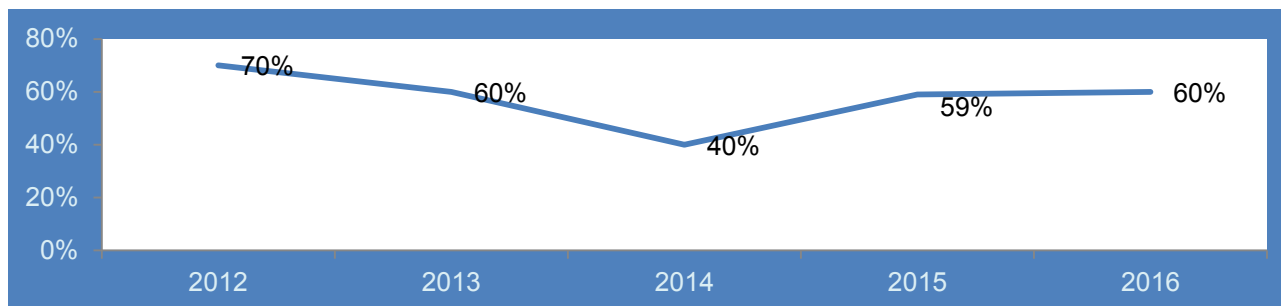


Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Residents with a disability (20%) are more likely to be *very satisfied* with the Council than those without a disability (11%).

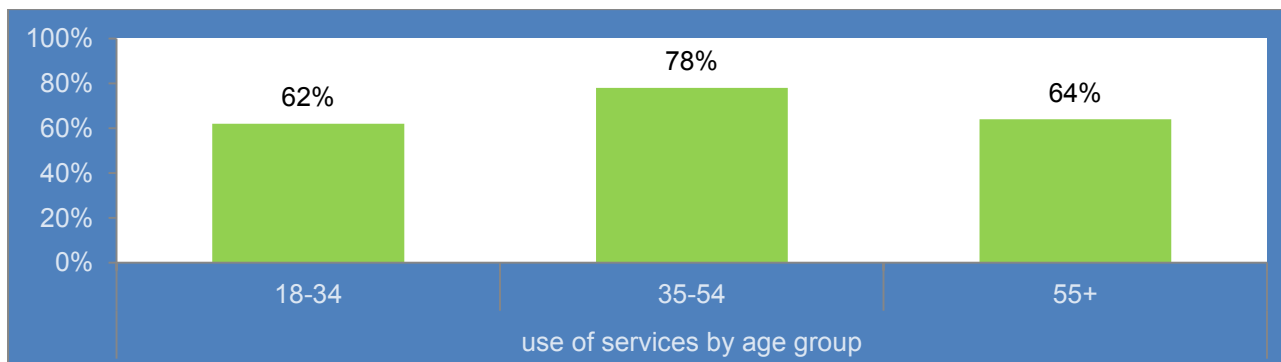
Service users 'very or fairly satisfied'

Satisfaction levels with the City Council are slightly higher when based on users only (60%) compared with residents as a whole (58%)



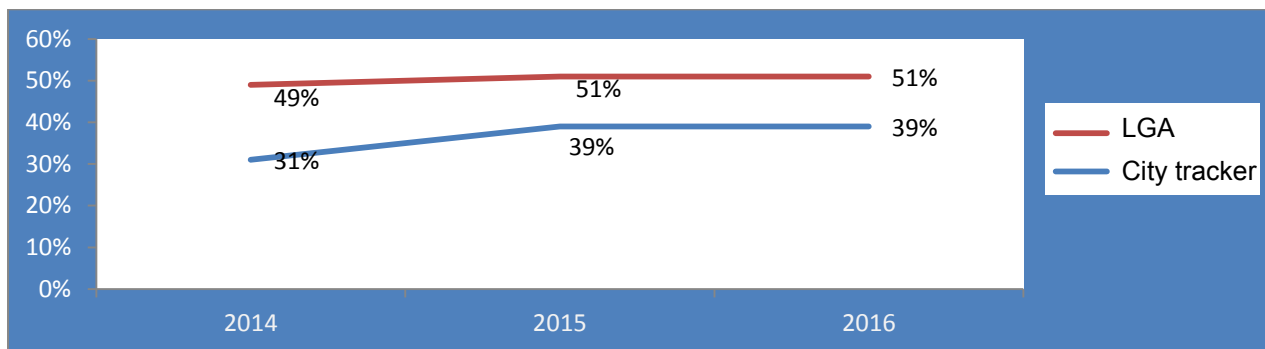
Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Usage of Brighton & Hove City Council is most widespread in the 35-54 age bracket (78%).



Perceived value for money

Four in ten (39%) residents agree that Brighton & Hove City Council provides value for money. This is the same as in 2015 (39%).

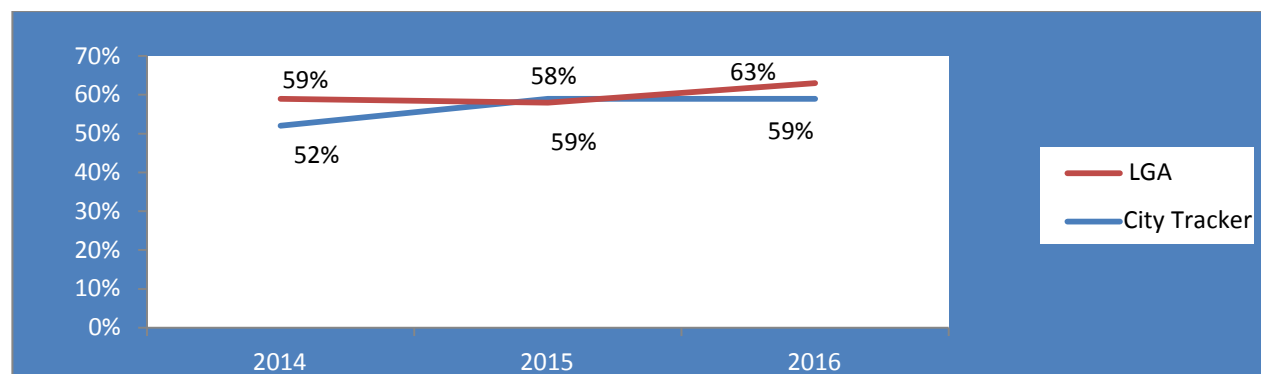


Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Residents with BN3 postcodes are more likely to agree (44%) than those in BN2 (35%).

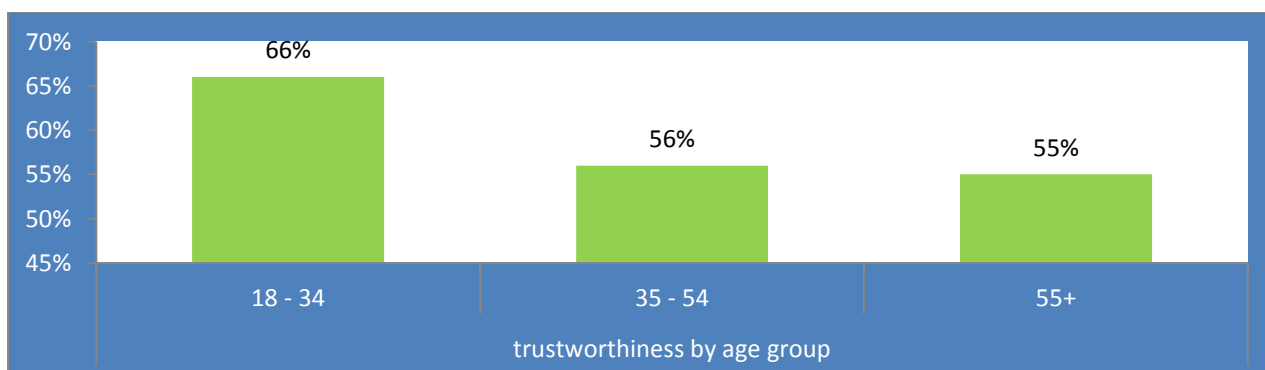
Trustworthiness

The same as in 2015, six in ten residents (59%) trust the City Council *a great deal or a fair amount*



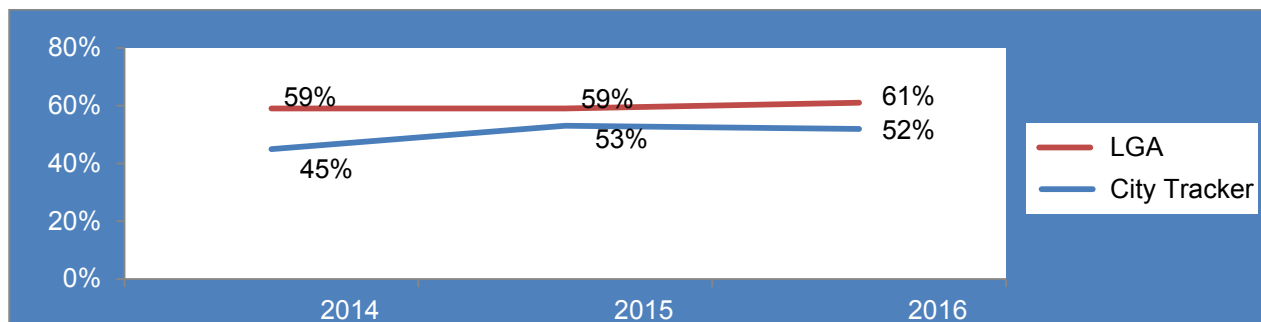
Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Younger residents are more likely to trust the Council, with 66% of 18-34s saying they do so, compared with 56% of 35-54s and 55% of those aged 55+



Acting on resident concerns

Most Brighton & Hove residents (52%) think the Council acts on their concerns either *a great deal* or *a fair amount*.

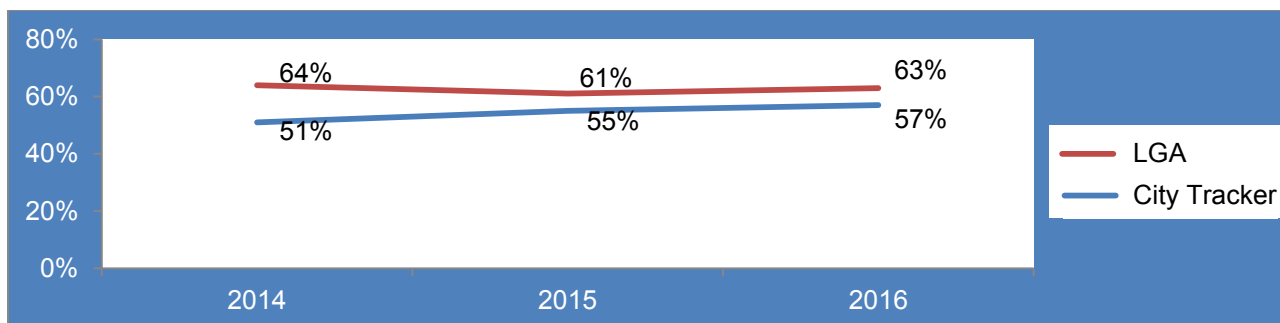


Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Residents in BN3 (58%) are more likely to feel their concerns are actioned than those in BN2 (50%) or BN41 (37%)

Feeling informed

In total, 57% of local residents feel *well informed* by the Council, including 9% who feel *very well informed*.



Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Residents with a disability feel less well informed (47%) than those without a disability (58%)
Those living in BN3 (64%) are more likely to feel well informed than those in BN2 (52%) or BN41 (46%).

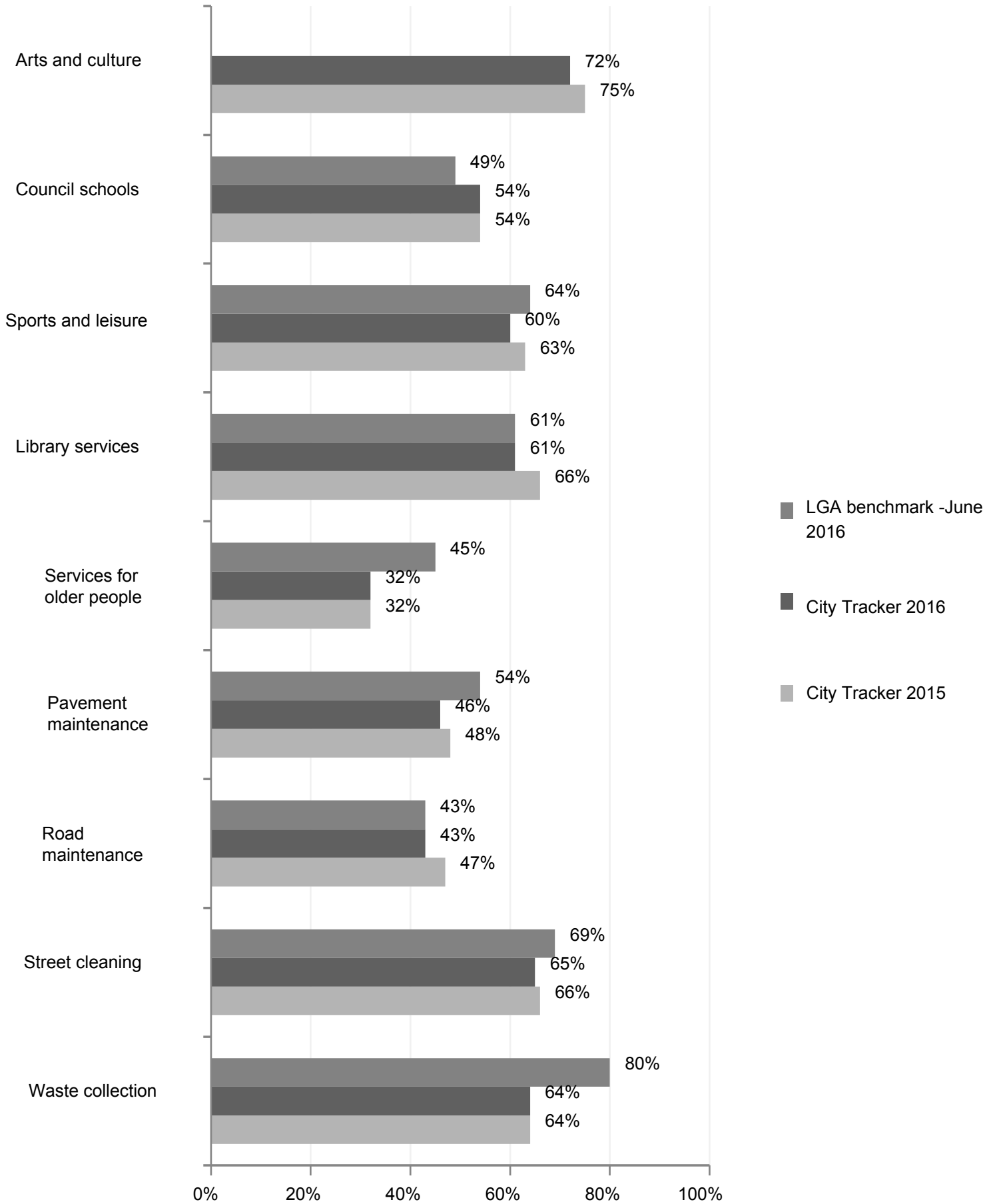
Satisfaction with the street in which you live

Three in five residents (59%) are *satisfied* with the way the City Council looks after their street, 28% are *dissatisfied*.

Is this the same for everyone in Brighton & Hove?

Black & Minority Ethnic residents report higher satisfaction (67%) than White British residents (57%). Residents living in BN3 report the highest satisfaction (66%) of the four postcode localities, while the lowest is in BN41 (43% satisfied).

Satisfaction with local services



How do we compare nationally?

2016 City Tracker: Comparison to the most recent national comparators (as at November

2016) The comparison surveys are:

- Local Government Association national benchmarks for resident satisfaction from June 2016
- Cabinet Office Community Life Survey 2015-16
- Department for Culture, Media & Sport Taking Part Survey 2015-16

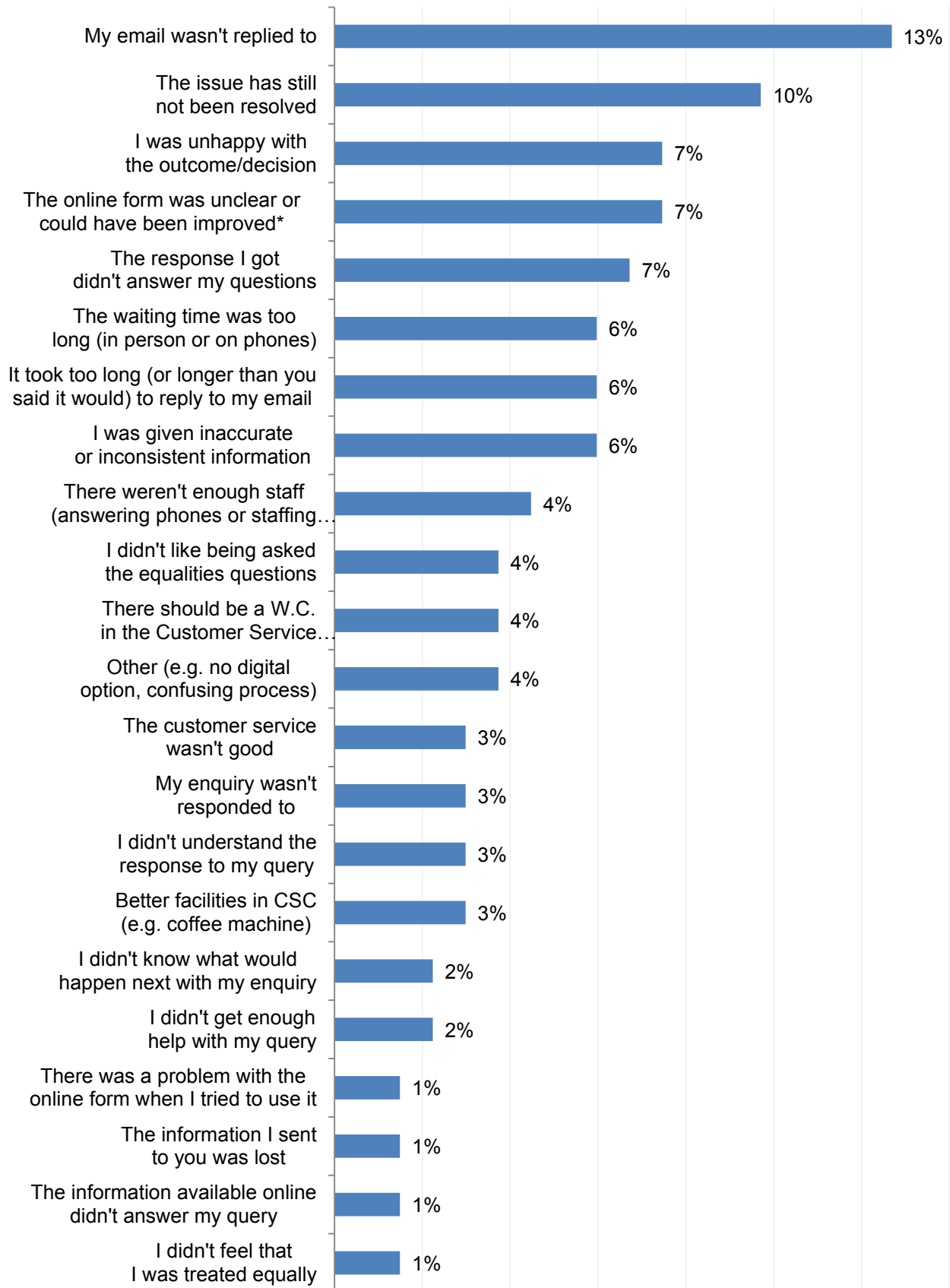
Performing better than nationally	City Tracker 2016 (%)	National comparator		City Tracker 2015	
		Results (%)	Compared to City Tracker 2016	Result (%)	Compared to City Tracker 2016
People agreeing they can influence decisions affecting their local area	47	36	11	51	-4
People agreeing that it is important that they can influence decision in their local area	79	68	11	83	-4
Used a library in the last 12 months	43	33	10	49	-6
Local activism (belong to group that make decision that affect their local area)	18	10	8	15	+3
Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live	89	82	7	89	0

Performing at or near national level	City Tracker 2016 (%)	National comparator		City Tracker 2015	
		Results (%)	Compared to City Tracker 2016	Result (%)	Compared to City Tracker 2016
Attended a museum or gallery in the last 12 months	55	52	3	61	-6
Agree people pulling together to improve their neighbourhood	70	68	2	72	-2
Satisfied with road maintenance	43	43	0	46	-3
Agree that people from different backgrounds get on well together	89	89	0	91	-2
Satisfied with Library services	61	61	0	66	-5
Feeling safe in your local area after dark	79	79	0	77	+2
Feel strongly they belonging to their neighbourhood	71	71	0	70	+1

Trust in their local council	59	63	-4	59	0
Satisfied with sports & leisure services	60	64	-4	63	-3
Formal volunteering in the last 12 months	37	41	-4	39	-2
Satisfied with street cleaning	65	69	-4	66	-1

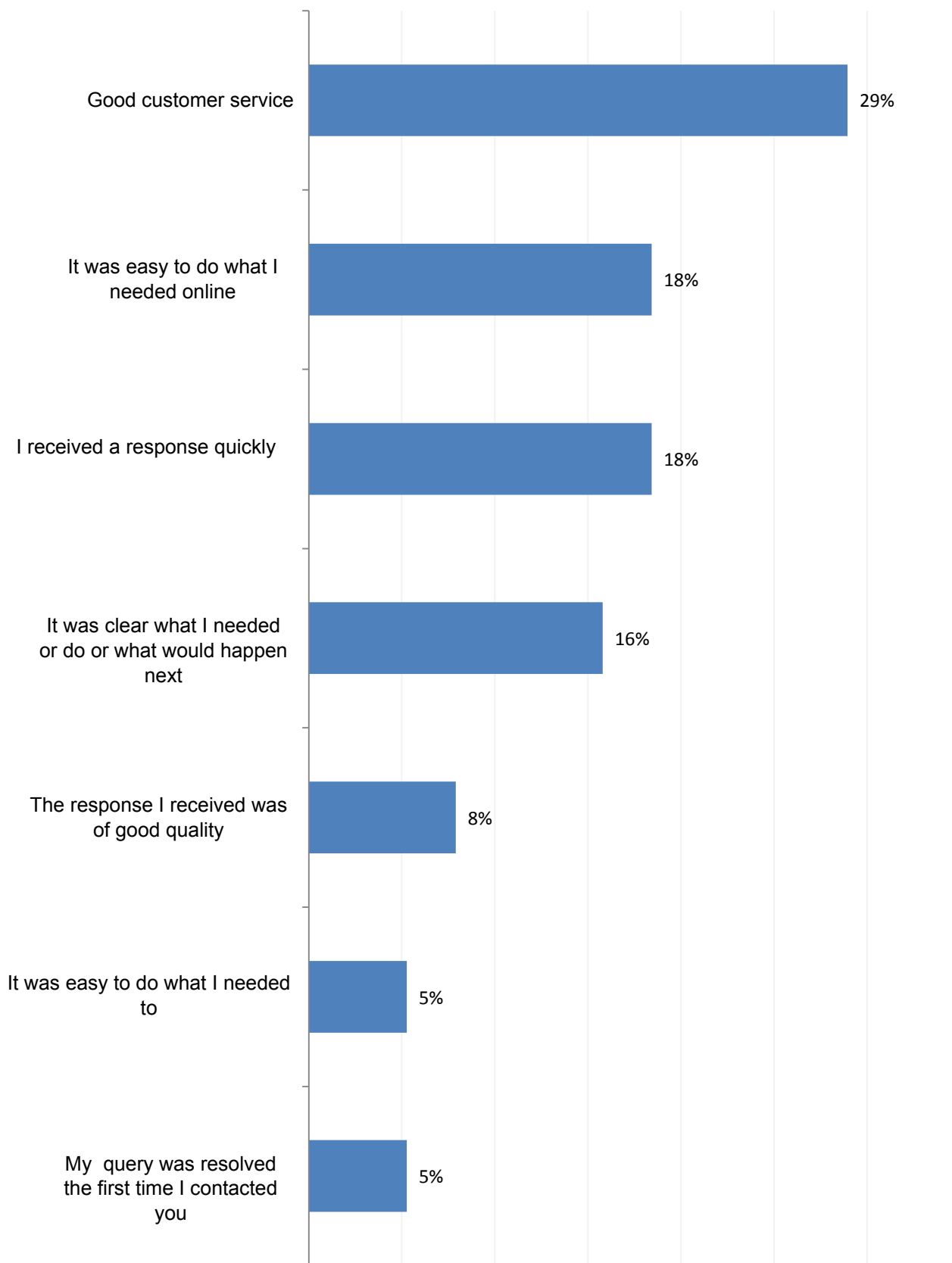
Performing below the national level	City Tracker 2016 (%)	Results (%)	National comparator Compared to City Tracker 2016	City Tracker 2015	
				Result (%)	Compared to City Tracker 2016
Well informed about council services and benefits	57	63	-6	55	+2
Satisfied with pavement maintenance	46	54	-8	48	-2
Satisfied with services for children and young people	40	49	-9	47	-7
The council acting on the concern of local residents	52	61	-9	53	-1
Agree the council provides value for money	39	51	-12	39	0
Satisfied with services for older people	32	45	-13	32	0
Satisfied with waste collection	64	80	-16	64	0

Customer comments expressing dissatisfaction gathered from surveys conducted by services



**It should be noted that not all online forms are created or hosted by BHCC, comments that relate to an externally hosted online form will be shared with those providers, as we don't always have the access to make the improvements that we or customers would like.*

Customer comments expressing satisfaction



Appendix B: Other ways of capturing customer feedback

Integrated Team for Families (Families, Children & Learning directorate)

The Integrated Team for Families (ITF) work with families who are prioritised for help due to having multiple support needs, in areas such as school attendance, anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, health issues.

When an ITF intervention ends, families are invited to complete a feedback questionnaire, the feedback request focusses on the outcome of the interventions, measured against the team's pre-set service standards.

95%

Of respondents gave the TOP SCORE (3/3) when asked how SATISFIED they were with the WORK of their FAMILY COACH



Parenting Team survey

80% =



The Parenting Team received positive feedback from up to 80% of families across a range of areas of evaluation

Childcare Sufficiency

81.6% VERY or **FAIRLY** satisfied

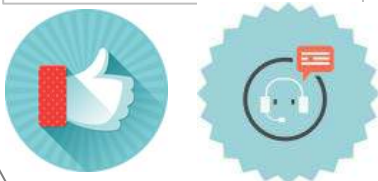
with their childcare arrangements overall.

Foster Care team

the Foster Care team recently surveyed people who had dropped out of the process of becoming a foster carer, to find out whether there was anything about the process that could be improved to increase applicant retention.

To identify specific areas for improvement, the survey focussed on how satisfied the person was with each stage of the process from initial enquiry onwards.

94% of respondents who enquired by telephone said that the person they spoke to was **helpful**



71% thought that the quality of information that they were provided with was 'VERY GOOD' or 'GOOD'



90% of respondents rated the quality of advice received as 'VERY GOOD, GOOD or ADEQUATE'

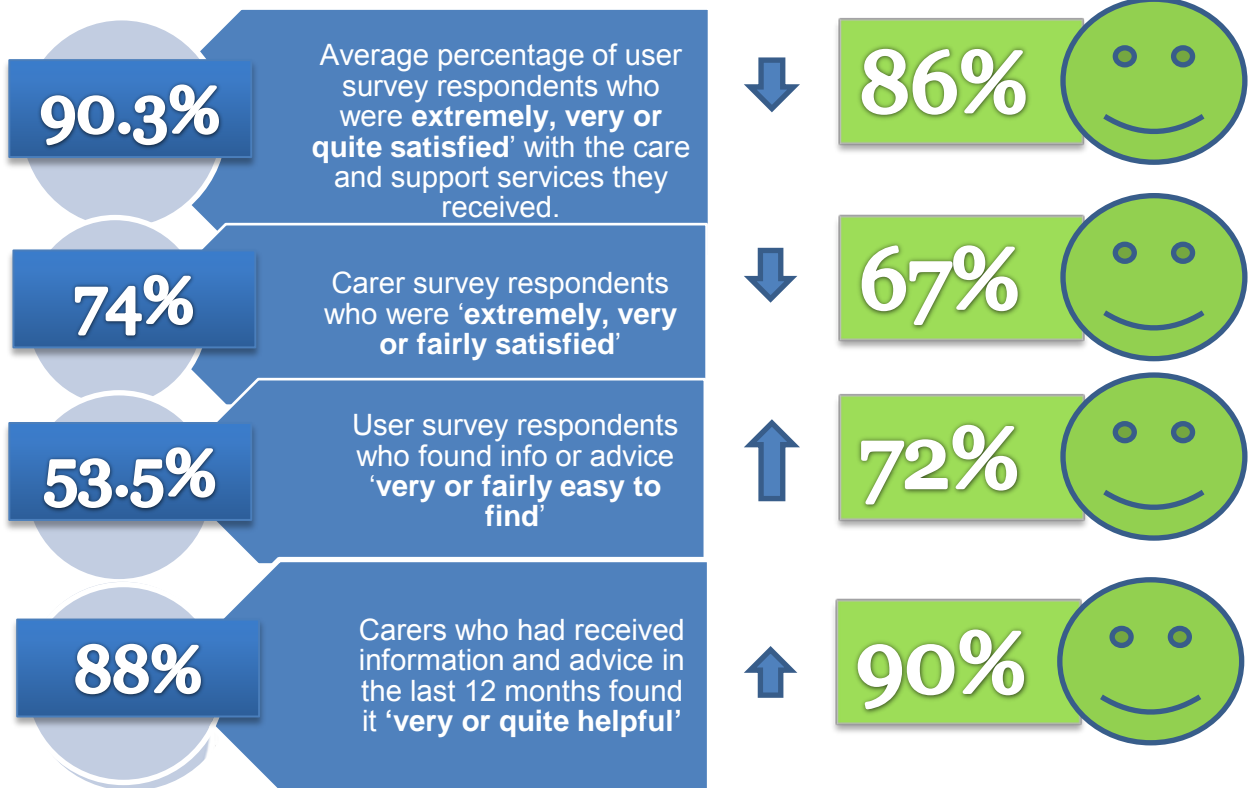


Adult Social Care (ASC) Users and Carers survey

On an annual basis, Adult Social Care (ASC) invite users of both residential and community services to give feedback on their experience of ASC services; the surveys are also sent out in Easy-read format to ensure accessibility for all service users. NHS Digital collate all council's results in order to offer benchmarking, the latest available national figures are for 2015/16. NHS Digital conducts the adult carer survey on a biennial basis, the last available national data is from 2014/15.

Most recent national average benchmark figure

Brighton & Hove for 2016/17



In addition to the larger more formal surveys conducted with service users and carers, ASC also have a quick questionnaire system for receiving customer feedback through all ASC teams including Access Point (the team who act as the 'front door' for ASC services).

Access Point

98% of respondents agreed that staff were approachable and friendly.

86% of respondents were satisfied with the service that they received.

Assessment services

99% of respondents agreed that staff were approachable and friendly.

99% of respondents were satisfied with the service that they received.

Housing Management tenant and resident satisfaction

Brighton & Hove City Council carries out a survey of tenants and residents (STAR) to check satisfaction levels with the housing service every two years.

The 2016 survey was carried out between June and July 2016. Questionnaires were sent to a randomly selected sample of 3,000 tenants and 829 responses were received

National Benchmark	2014	2016	Satisfaction
82%	78%	81%	satisfaction overall
82%	80%	79%	quality of home
79%	84%	86%	value for money of rent
69%	71%	74%	value for money of service charge
56%	64%	70%	listens & acts on views
78%	76%	76%	being kept informed
n/a	81%	85%	standard of customer service
n/a	84%	86%	ease of accessing services
76%	n/a	77%	repairs & maintenance overall
80%	76%	81%	last completed repair
80%	84%	80%	neighbourhood as a place to live

Revenues & Benefits Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Award (Cabinet Office)

What is the CSE award?

Customer Service Excellence was developed to offer public services a practical tool for driving customer-focused change within their organisation. The foundation of this tool is the Customer Service Excellence standard which tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.



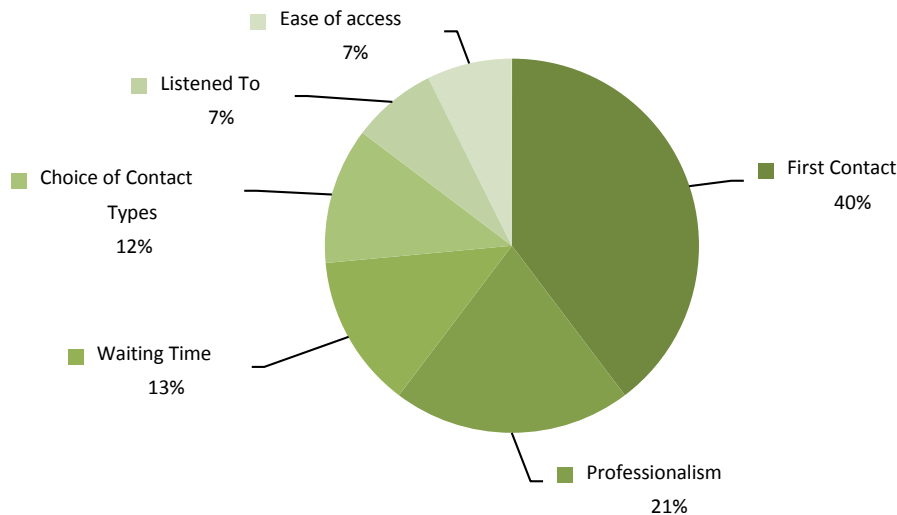
Revenues & Benefits have been awarded full formal accreditation of the CSE award in 2016, for the 7th consecutive year. Previous to 2009, Revenues and Benefits were two separate services who had also both received accreditation.

Developing our customer promise

We've updated our customer promise to reflect changes to our services and to the way we interact with our customers. By improving consistency in the way we deliver services to our customers and getting the basics right, we can improve customer satisfaction with council services (including our internal customers).

The promise has been updated and developed by the Customer Experience Steering Group in consultation with our customers, the Institute of Customer Service and the Corporate Modernisation Delivery Board.

Our first step in updating the promise was to speak to some customers to find out what was most important to them.



(Survey of face to face customers at Customer Service Centres in July 2016)

Nearly 40% of those surveyed felt that it was most important for their enquiry to be resolved at the first point of contact, whereas less than 15% felt that the time they had to wait to have their enquiry dealt with was the most important thing.

Further supporting the results of this research, as members of The Institute of Customer Services (ICS), we invited a random selection of our customers from a range of services to take part in an ICS survey.

One of the survey areas which we found most useful in updating our customer promise was around the quality of the contact made with the organisation:

“Getting it right first time makes a significant difference to customer satisfaction.

The average satisfaction of customers whose experience was right first time was 82.6, compared to 52.1 when it was not right first time.

But only 68% of Public Services (Local) sector customers say their most recent interaction was right the first time, compared to the UK average of 75.1%” – Michael Elders (ICS)

For BHCC 42.6% of customers surveyed said that their experience of our services was right first time.

Appendix C: Survey conducted by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS)

ICS have identified through their user research across private and public sectors, the qualities that are most important in customer service delivery.

Brighton & Hove City Council as members of ICS took the opportunity for them to conduct a survey of our customers to see how our customer service compares to other organisations against these priorities.

The three most important things to customer, based on the ICS research are:

- 1) Competence of staff (in person)
- 2) Staff doing what they say (in complaints)
- 3) Competence of staff (on the phone)

The results from the survey conducted with BHCC customers are comparable with other local councils who have conducted ICS surveys (scores are produced as a figure out of 100, rather than a percentage)

	Local council average:	BHCC result:
Competence of staff (in person)	70	73
Staff doing what they say (in complaints)	40	34
Competence of staff (on the phone)	65	61

Survey conducted by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS)

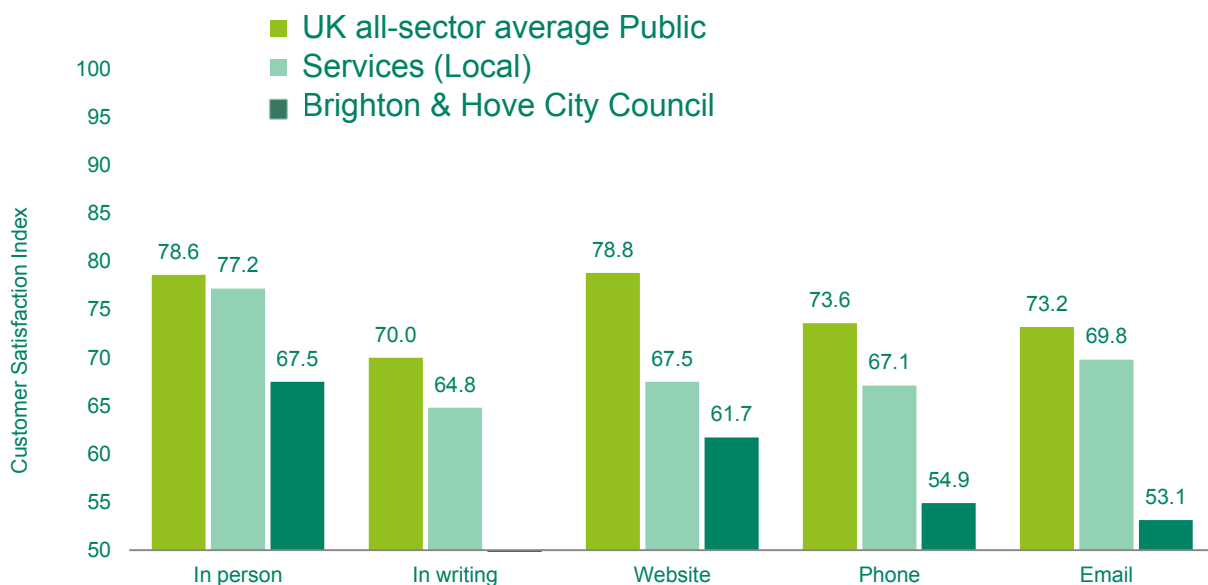
As members of the Institute of Customer Service, we have the opportunity for them to conduct surveys on our behalf, the results of which are then comparable with their nationwide customer service satisfaction surveys.

The Institute works with a vast range of businesses both private and public sector, across the country and frequently calculates average rates of customer satisfaction which organisations can then benchmark their own ICS survey results against.

The range of questions asked by their survey covers all sectors, including retailers, energy companies and national public services, so not all are relevant to councils, but results are broken down by sector for more relevant benchmarking.

More detailed results from this survey are contained in other sections within this report (Complaints handling, customer priorities). This is the first year that we have participated in the ICS survey, so will form part of the baseline data against which we will track the success of improvements in service delivery / impact of changes to service delivery. The breakdown of how many responses were received is on the following page.

Summary of results by contact channel



Very few responses were received from customers who had contacted the council in writing, so no score is available for this channel.

(The output of these surveys is a Customer Satisfaction Index score (CSI), rather than a percentage score such as those used by bodies such as the Local Government Association (LGA) in their bi-annual Resident survey.)

To create UKCSI, The Institute of Customer Service runs an online survey of consumers twice a year. Respondents are representative of the UK adult population by region, age and gender.

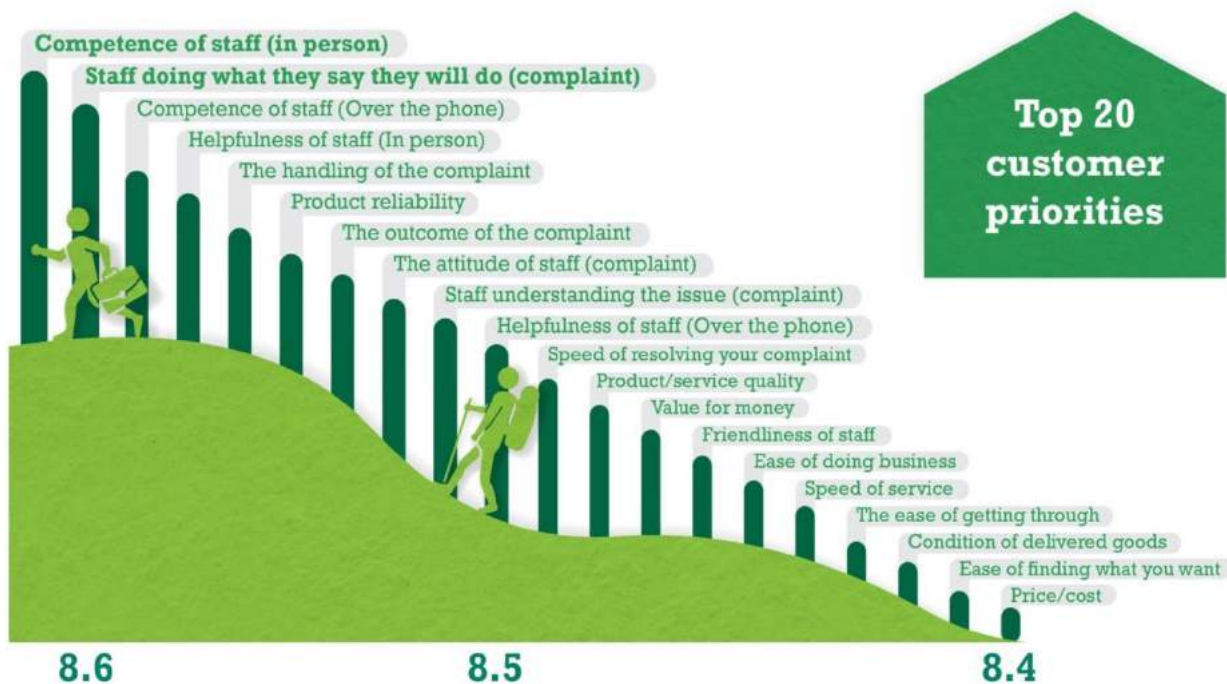
Respondents are asked to rate their experience of individual organisations they have dealt with in the previous three months, using a scale of 1 – 10, on a series of metrics covering professionalism, quality and efficiency, ease of doing business, timeliness, problem solving and complaint handling as well as attitudes towards trust and reputation. The metrics reflect the priorities customers have identified as the most important attributes of customer experience according to The Institute of Customer Service's research. Overall scores for each sector are the mean averages of all responses for that sector. The UKCSI score for each organisation is the average of all of its customers' satisfaction scores. These scores are multiplied by ten so that the index scores are expressed as a number out of 100.

Breakdown of responses by channel

Brighton & Hove City Council Business Benchmarking number of responses	Base	%
In person (e.g. visited a store/branch)	65	15.6%
In writing (letter)	7	1.7%
On their website	99	23.7%
Over the phone (e.g. called a contact centre)	115	27.6%
Email	129	30.9%
Text	0	0.0%
Web chat	0	0.0%
App	0	0.0%
Social media	2	0.5%
Grand Total	417	100.0%

What are customer priorities for good customer service?

The institute of Customer Service through extensive research across private and public sectors have identified the current customer priorities in service delivery. Not all are relevant for councils, however the top five priorities relate to staff qualities and the handling of complaints and enquiries which are relevant to all sectors who serve customer needs.



The customer priorities are based on research undertaken by the Institute of customer service, respondents are asked to score the importance of each aspect of customer service out of ten, this chart represents the 20 highest scores overall.

Appendix D: How do our customers contact us?



The average number of phone calls to our services continues to reduce. In the last year, there has been a 5% reduction in incoming phone calls.



Of the highest volume transactional services (including Benefits, Development Control, Housing Management, Parking and Revenues) there has been a 20% reduction in face to face contact from 2015/16.



www.brighton-hove.gov.uk had 4,477,845 visits in 2016/17, with the most popular pages being Car Park information, Contact the council and Jobs.



Most services continue to report small decreases in post received, the most significant reductions have been recorded in Development Control (42% since 2015/16) and Housing Management (38% since 2015/16).



Since 2015/16 the submission of online forms has increased by 3% overall. Other than Planning (Development Management), all services delivering the top ten transactions have had a decrease in submissions.



As of April 2017, we have over 50,000 followers on Twitter (@BrightonHoveCC), 6,548 likes on Facebook, 469 subscribers and 307,465 views on YouTube

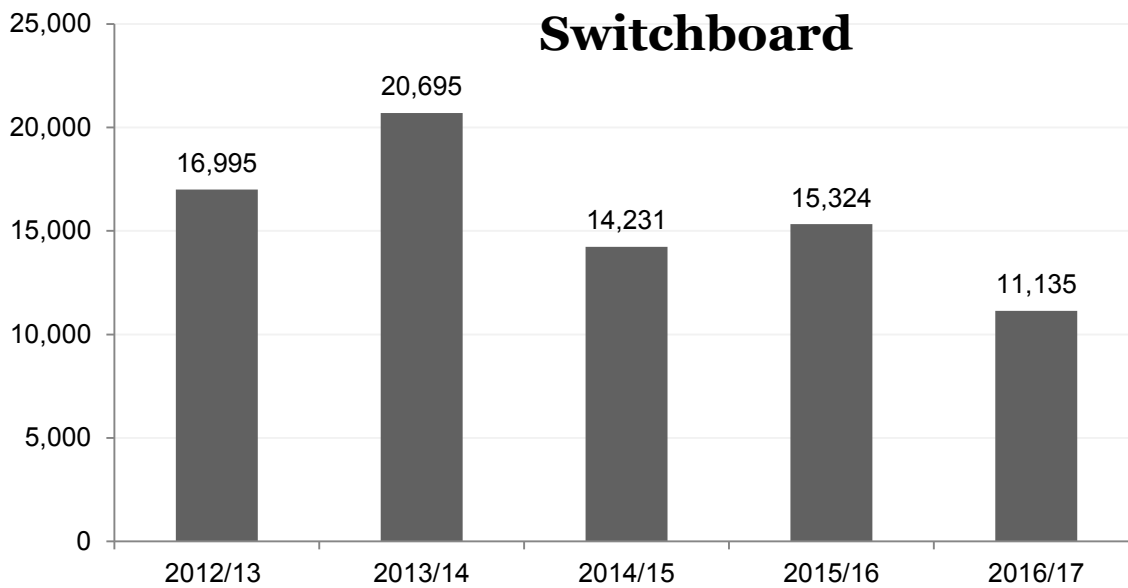
What methods do our customers use to get in touch?

We currently monitor a range of different methods of customer contact across our transactional services. These include by phone, online, in person, email, social media and post.

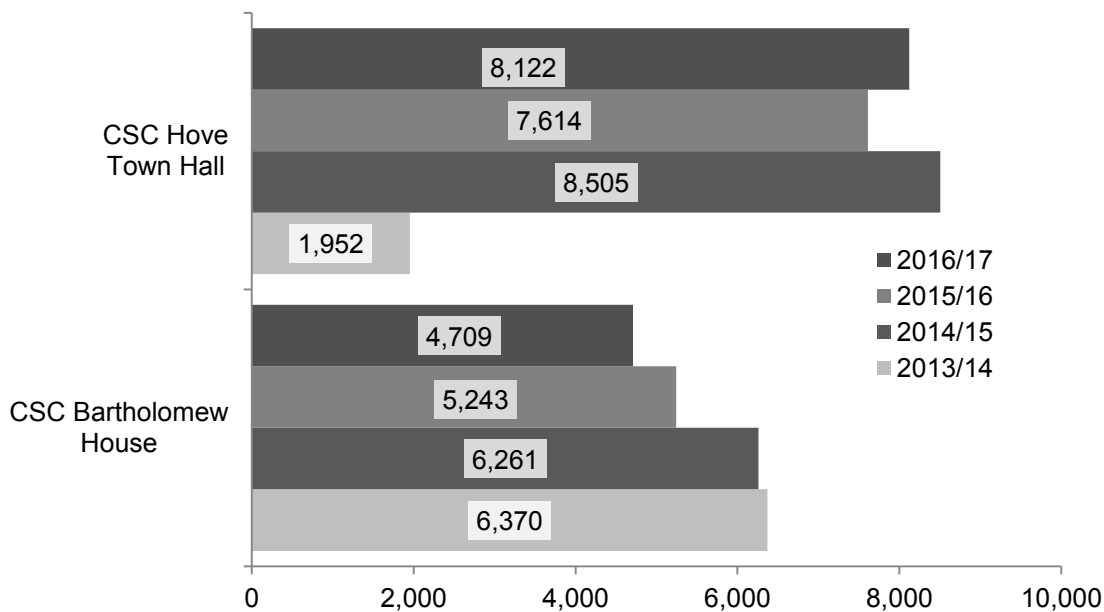
All counts detailed are the average number of contacts per month.

Switchboard, receptions & customer service centres (CSC)

- 2% decrease overall in footfall at Civic receptions and Customer Service Centres since 2015/16. The most significant decrease is for the Brighton Customer Service Centre (10%).
- 46% decrease in phone calls to Switchboard since 2013/14. 27% decrease since 2015/16. This is due in part to the introduction of automated options, where callers can select a service themselves, rather than switchboard connecting their call.

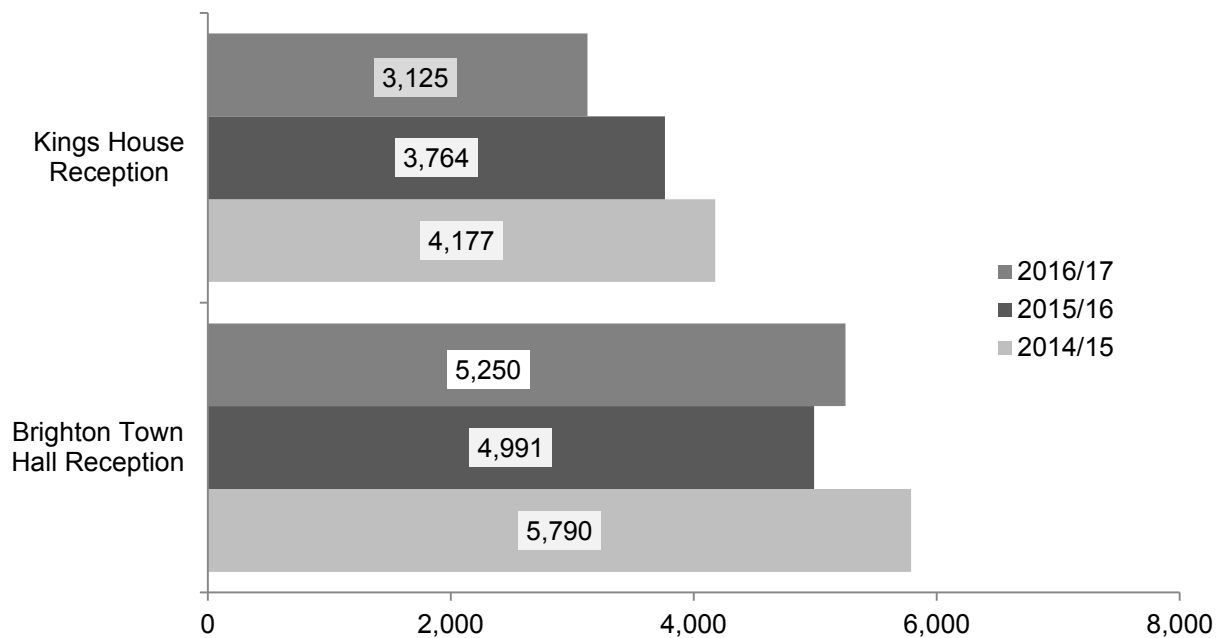


Customer Service Centre (CSC) & civic reception visitors

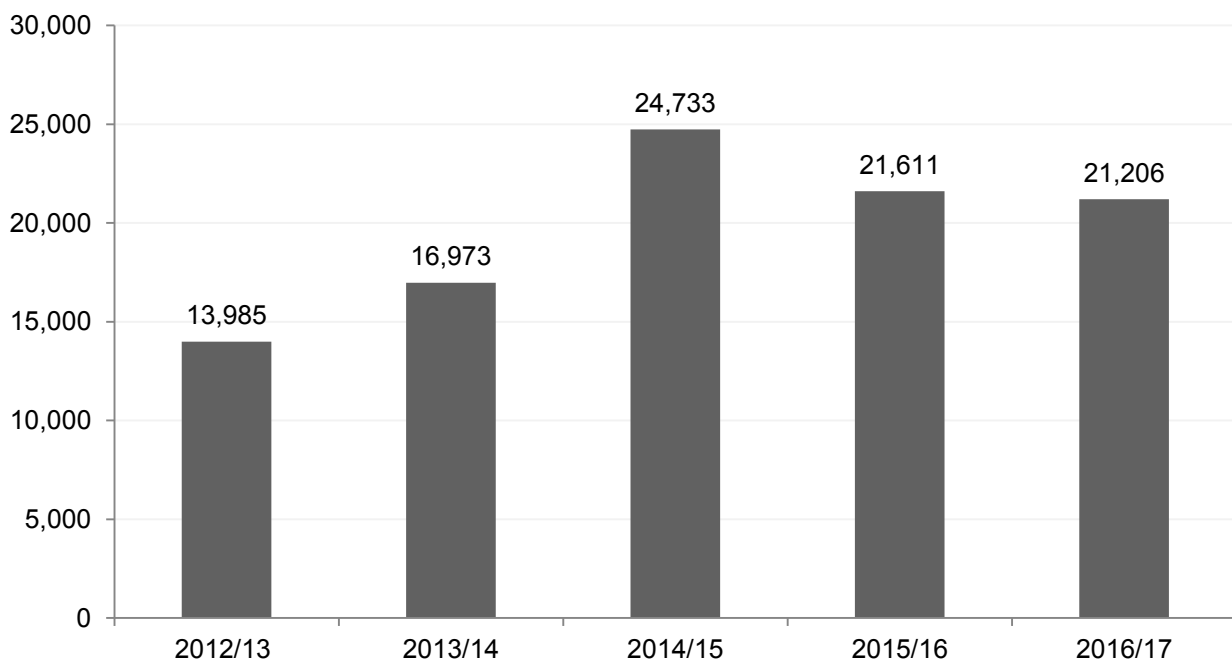


Civic receptions

Kings House reception closed in November 2016, so the figures used are average values. Hove Town Hall Civic Reception are now recording visitor numbers for training and meetings, but due to the proximity to the Hove CSC, not all enquiries are recorded to avoid duplication.



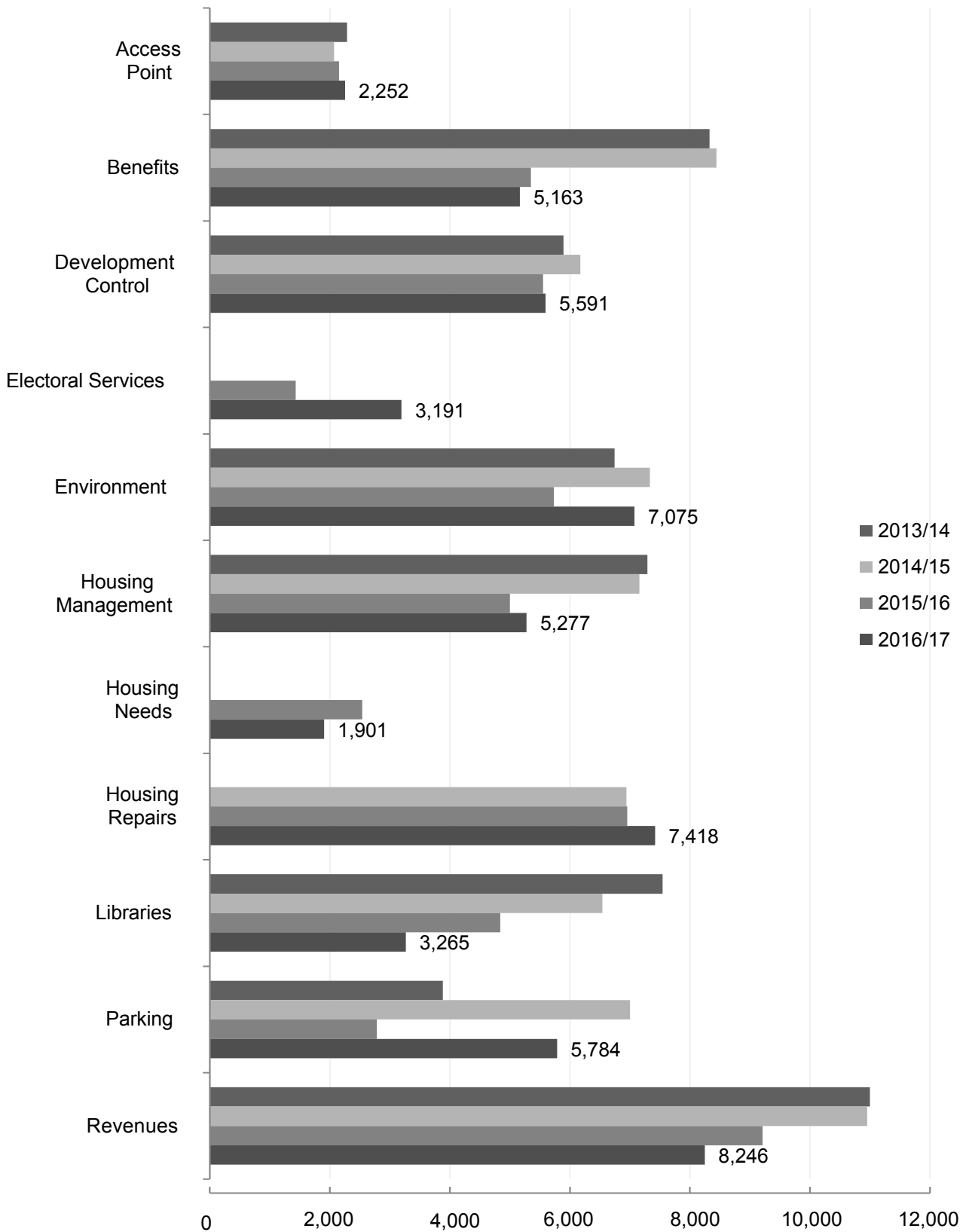
Civic receptions & Customer Service Centres



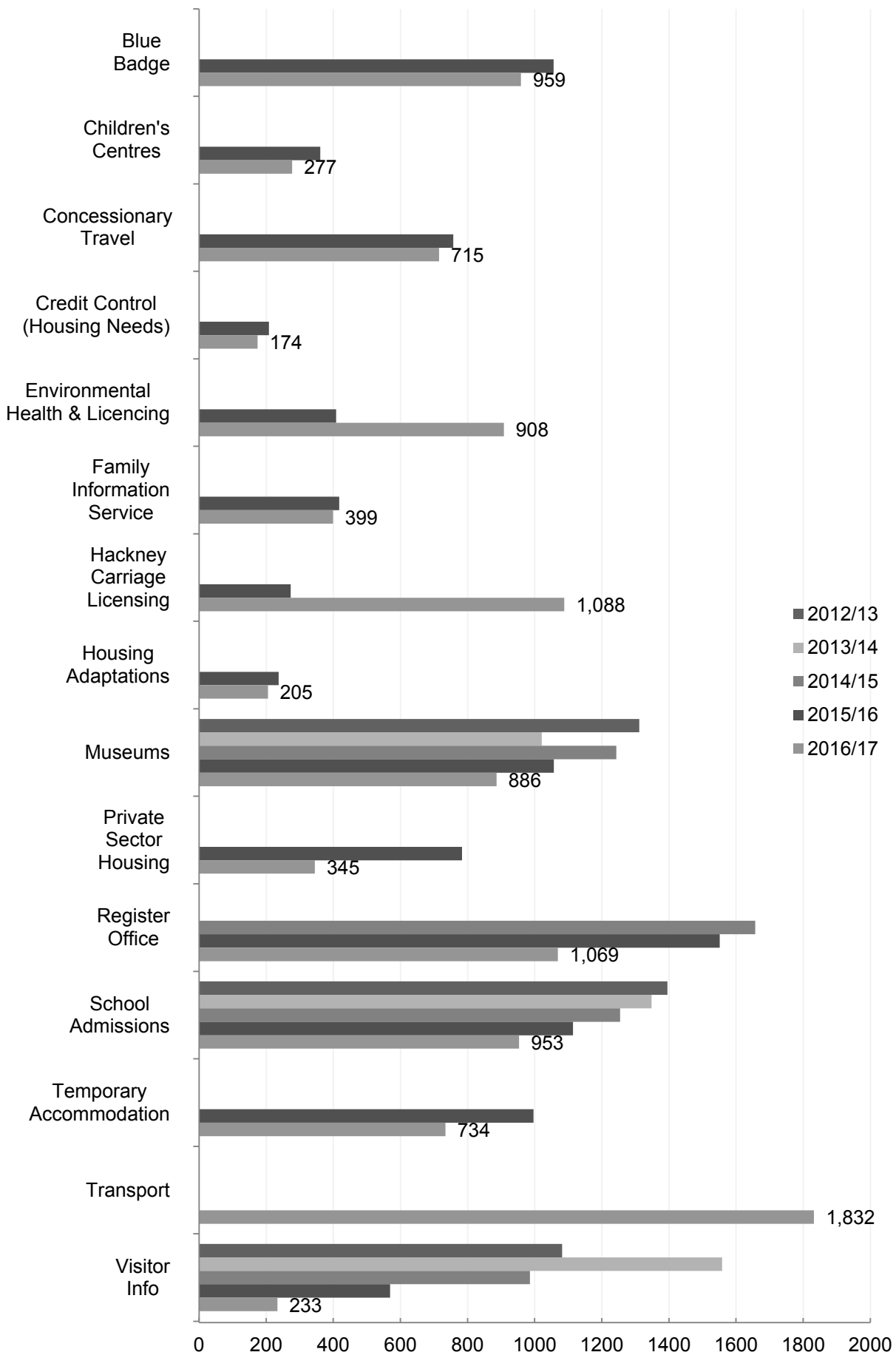
Telephone

Telephone call volumes in 2016/17 have reduced by 5% overall since 2015/16, however some services have reported a significant increase in call volumes.

Services with the highest call volumes



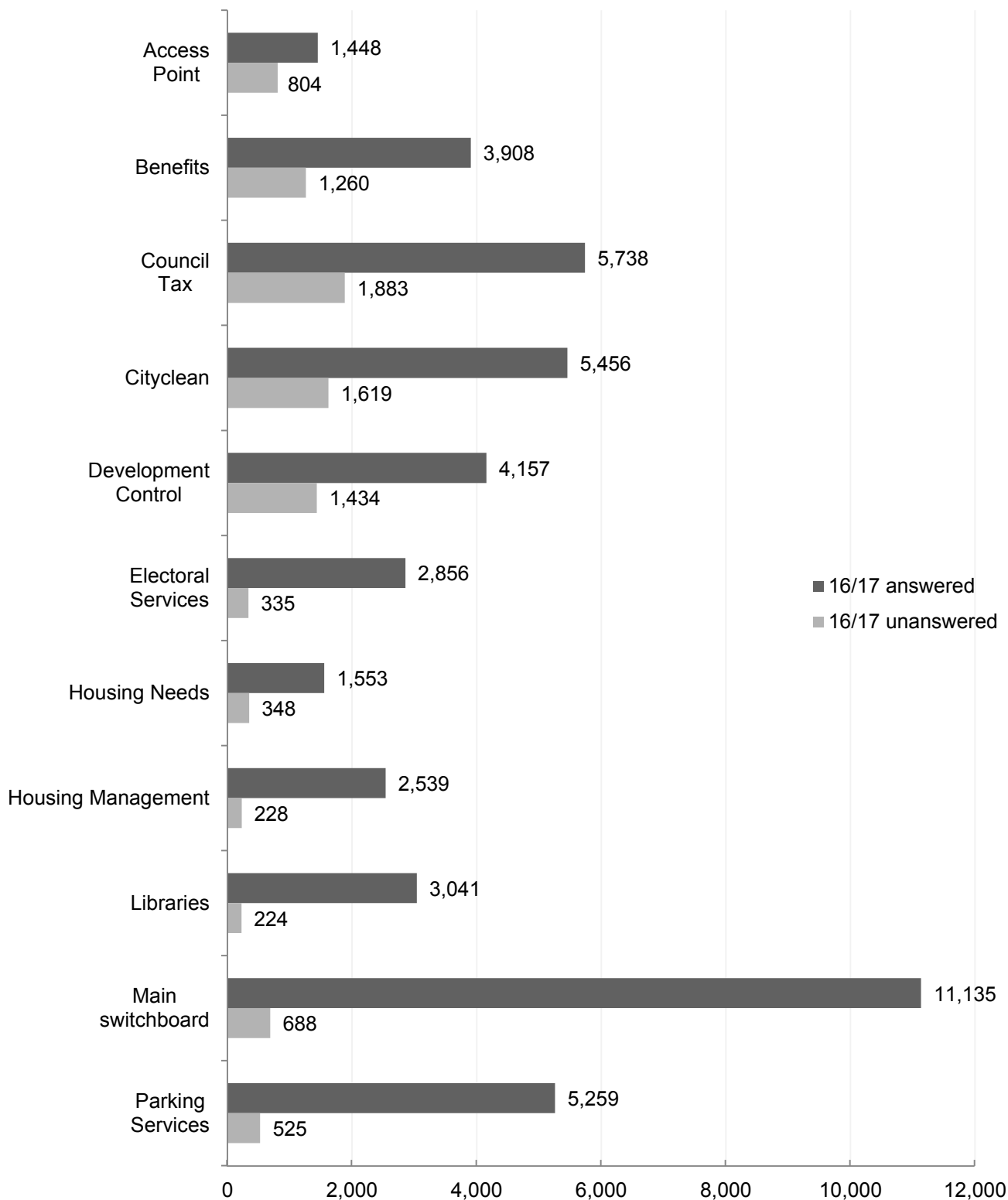
Services with lower call volumes



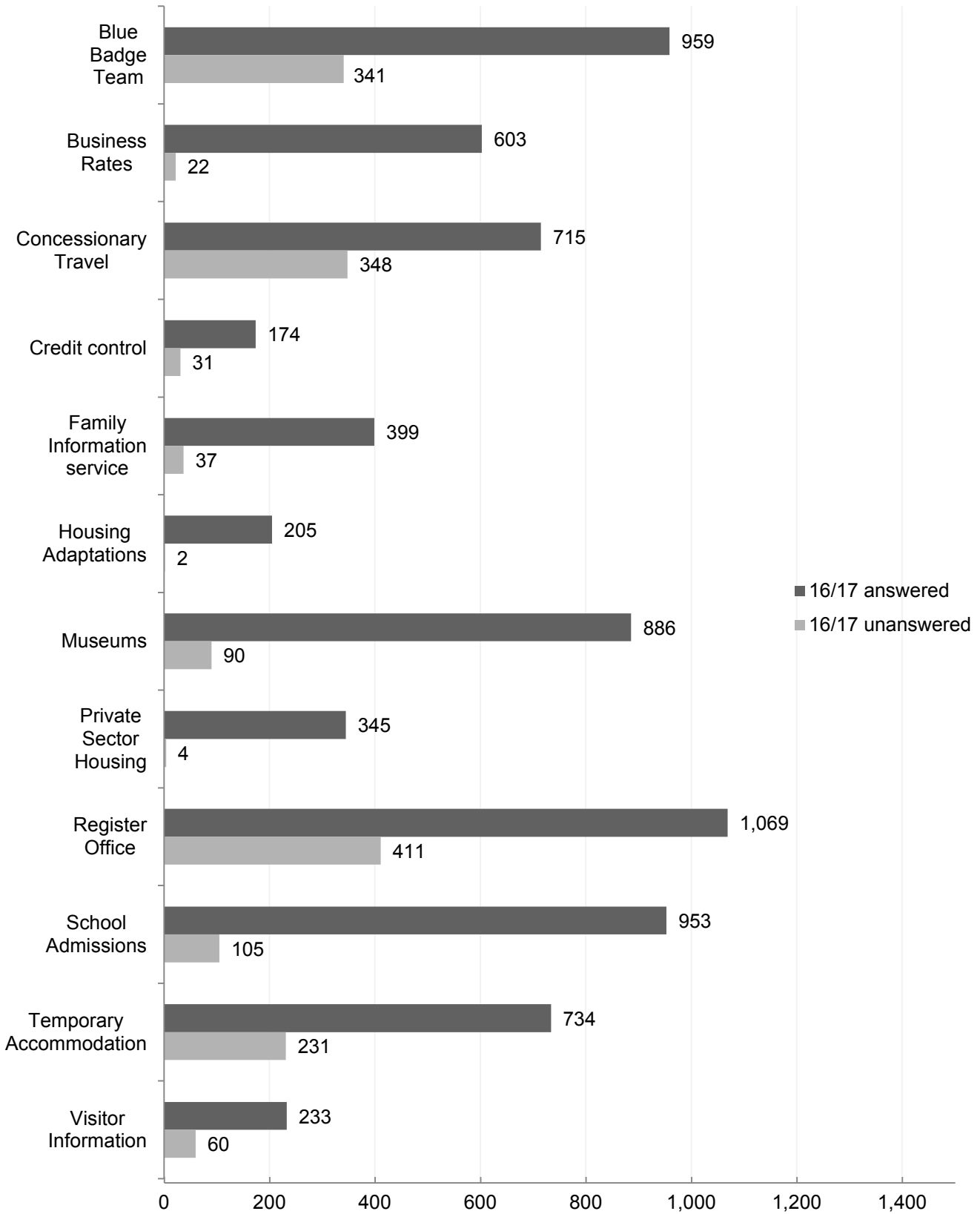
Calls answered & unanswered

The overall percentage of unanswered or abandoned calls has increased since 2015/16 amongst services reporting this data by 7%, now at an average of 20% of calls, however it should be noted that in some cases, this is part of the service's channel shift strategy – whilst customers are in a phone queue, they will hear a recorded message directing them to online services, therefore they may abandon their call before getting through to an advisor.

Services with high call volumes



Services with lower call volumes

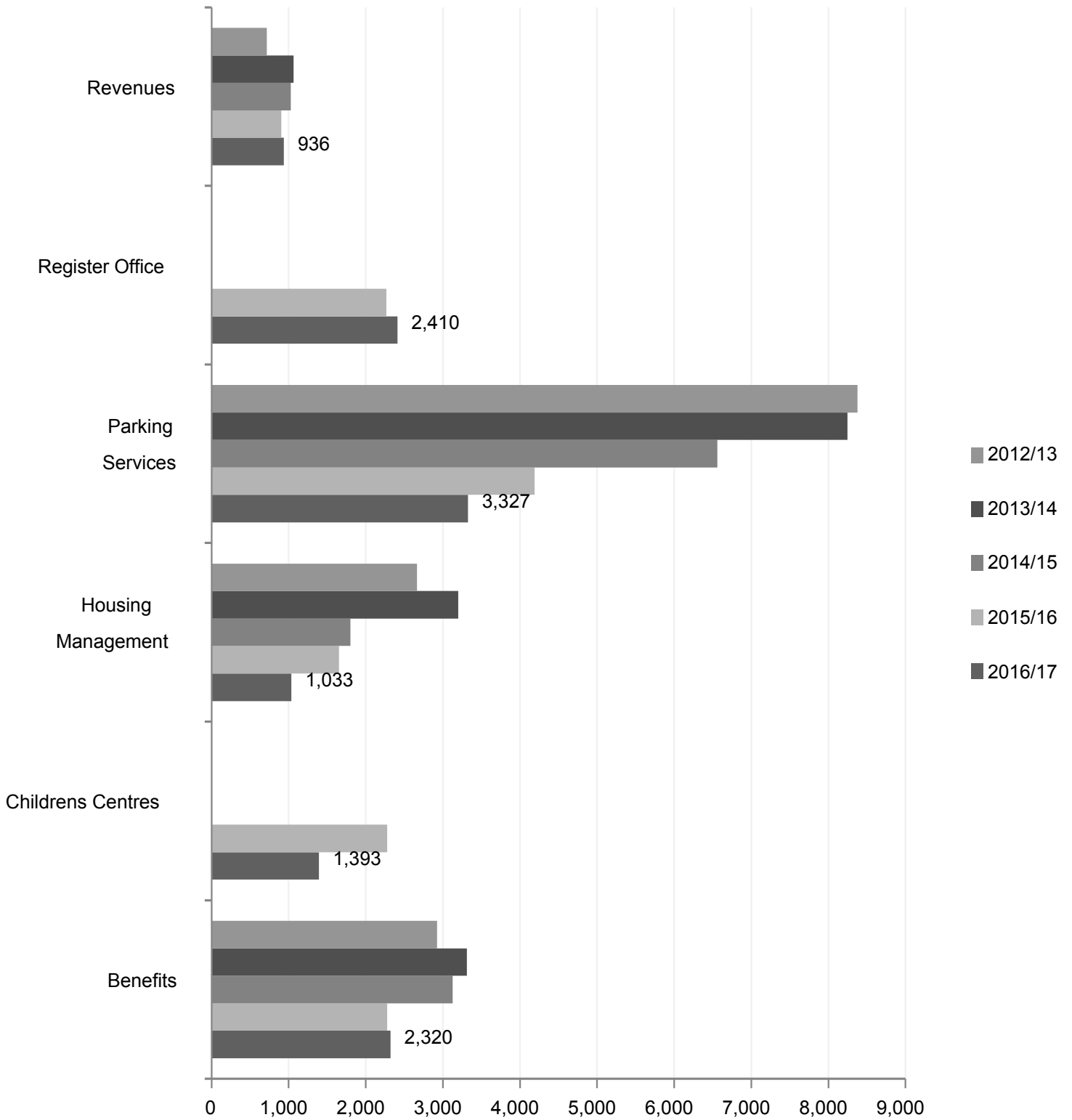


Note: Not all services are able to report unanswered calls as their lines are not yet on the system that can provide this information.

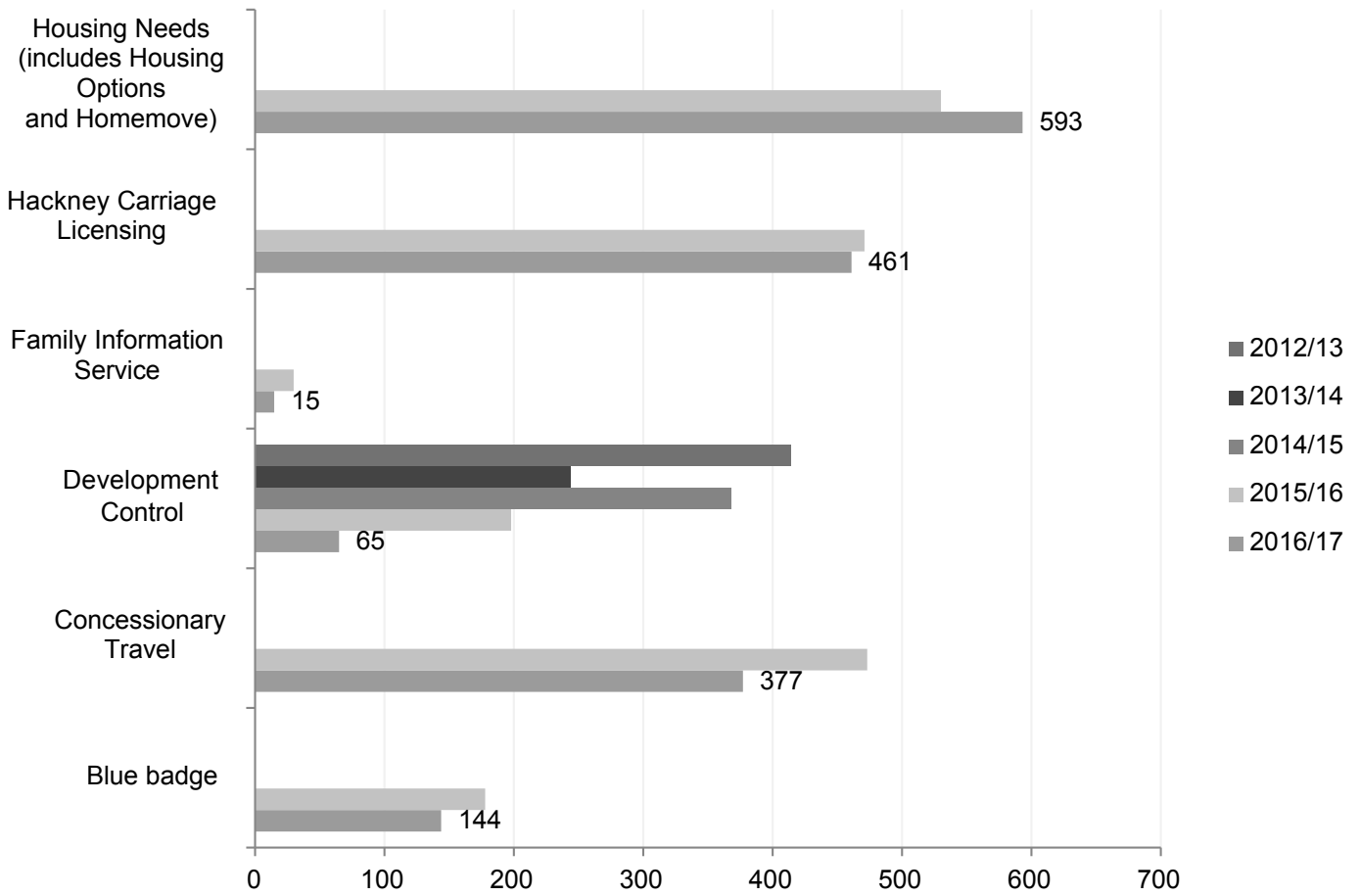
Visitors

Overall numbers of face to face visitors have reduced by 20%; the most significant reductions have been reported in Parking and Housing Management, a combined decrease of 34% since 2015/16.

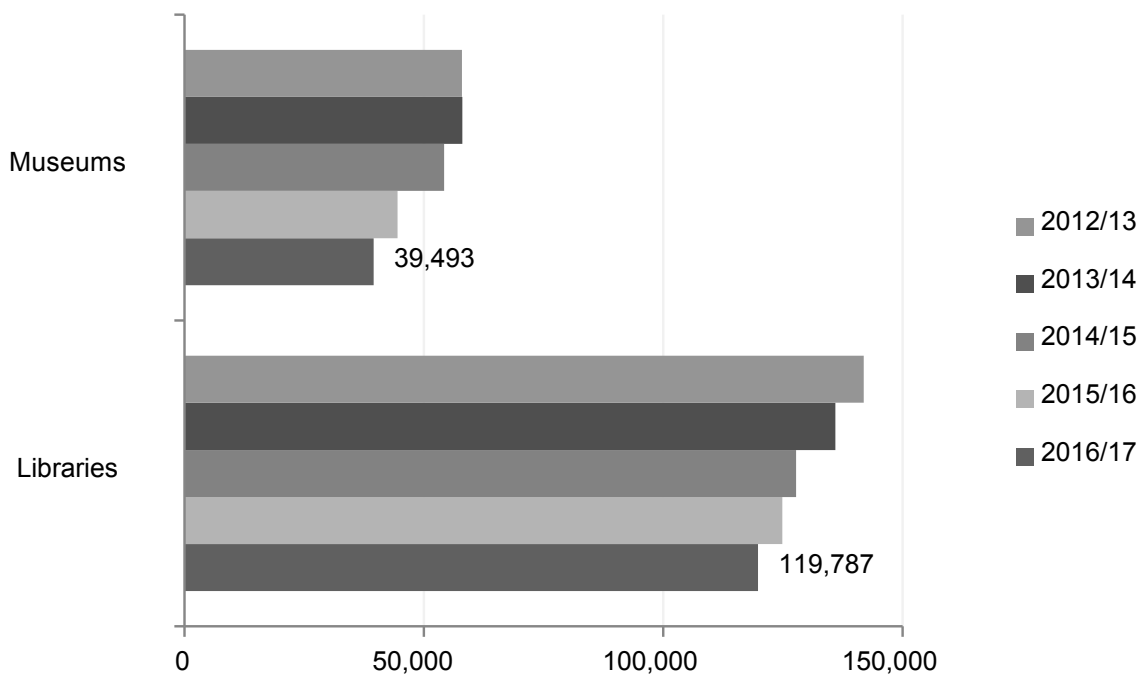
Footfall at higher volume services



Footfall at lower volume services



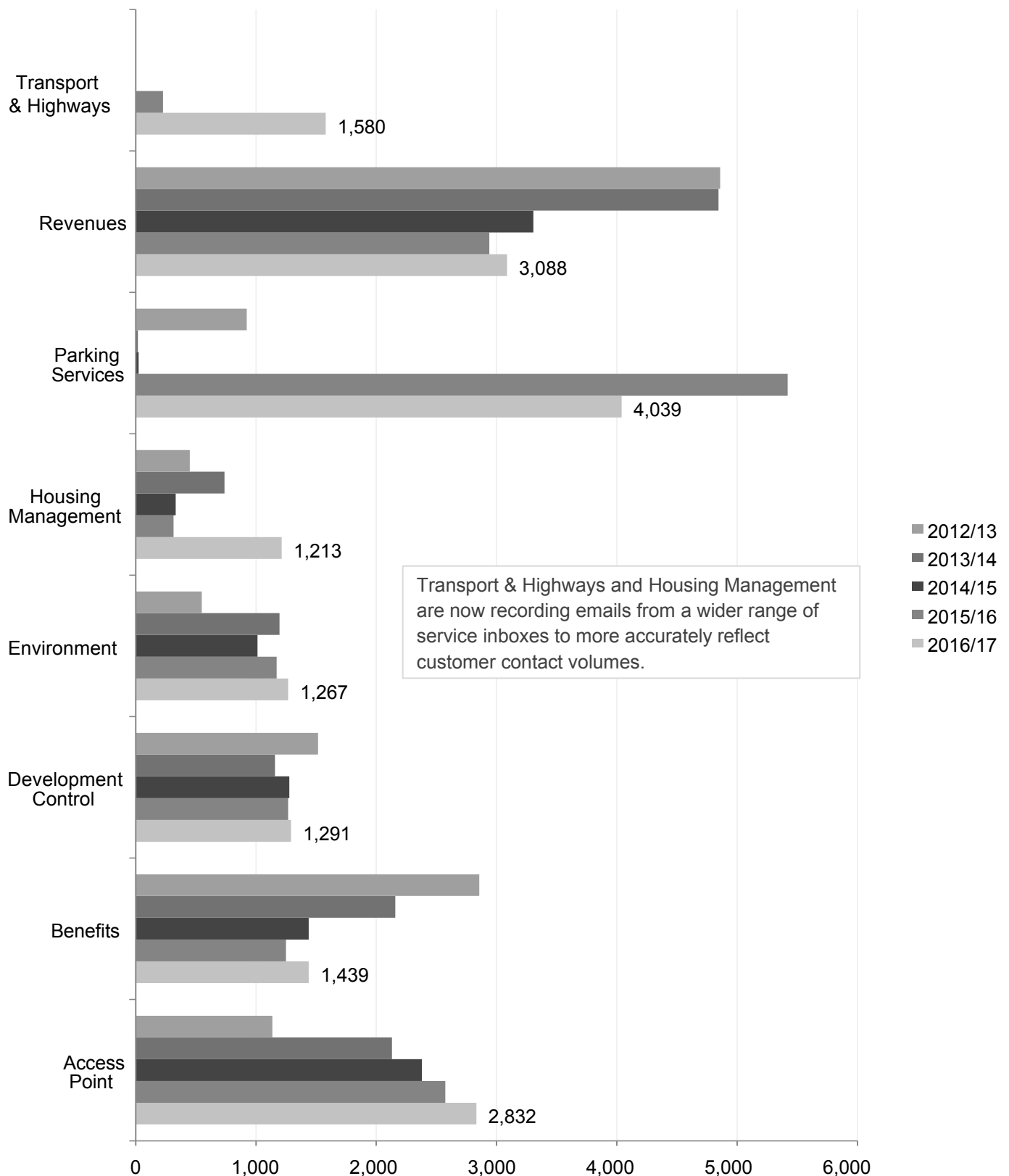
Footfall at not exclusively transactional services



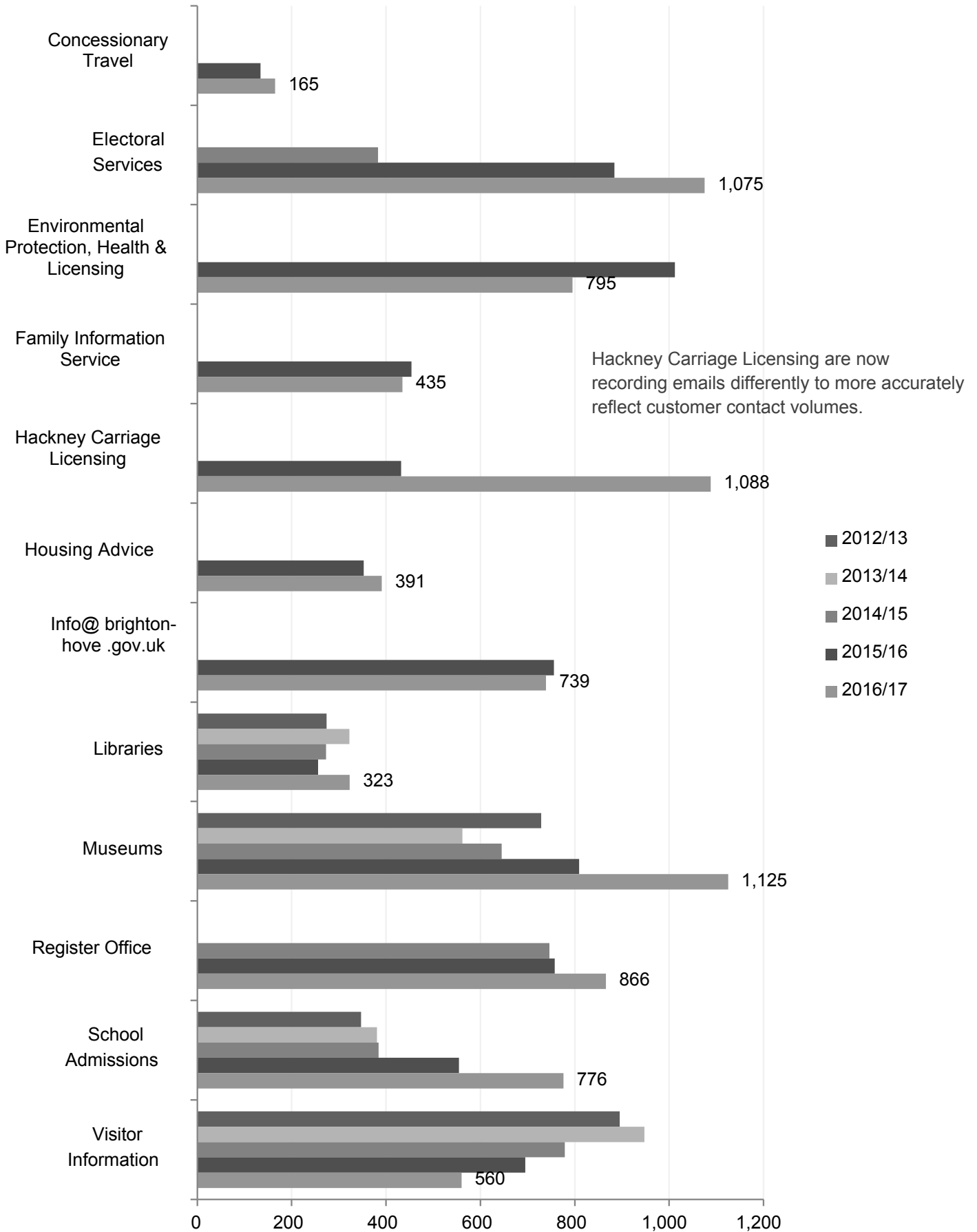
Emails

The majority of services have reported an increase in email contact since 2015/16, an average of 5%. The highest increases have been seen within the Benefits service (15%) and Access Point (10%). Parking Services have seen a 25% decrease since 2015/16, in part due to Penalty Charge Notices now being dealt with via an online form.

Services with high volumes of email correspondence

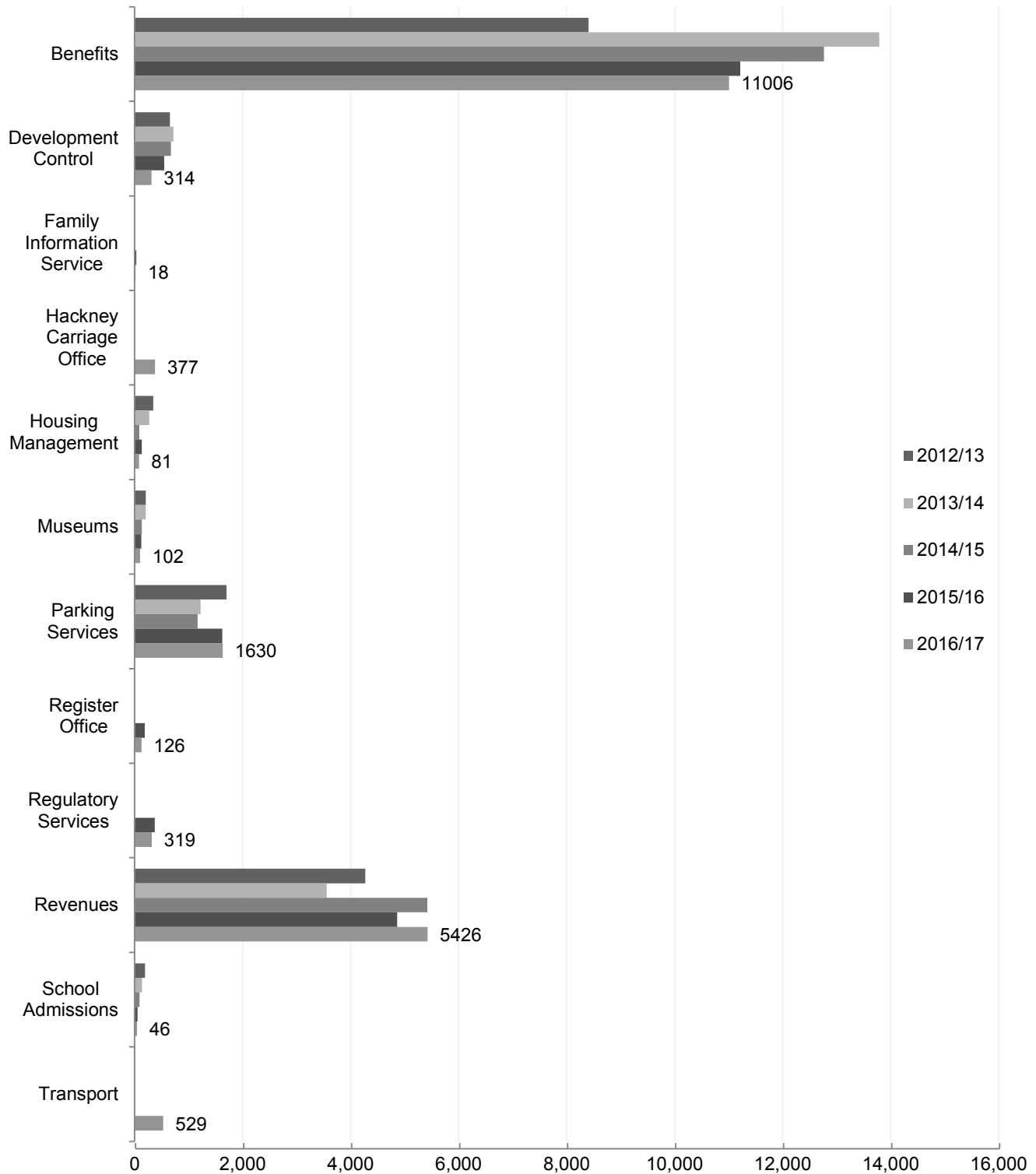


Services with lower email volumes



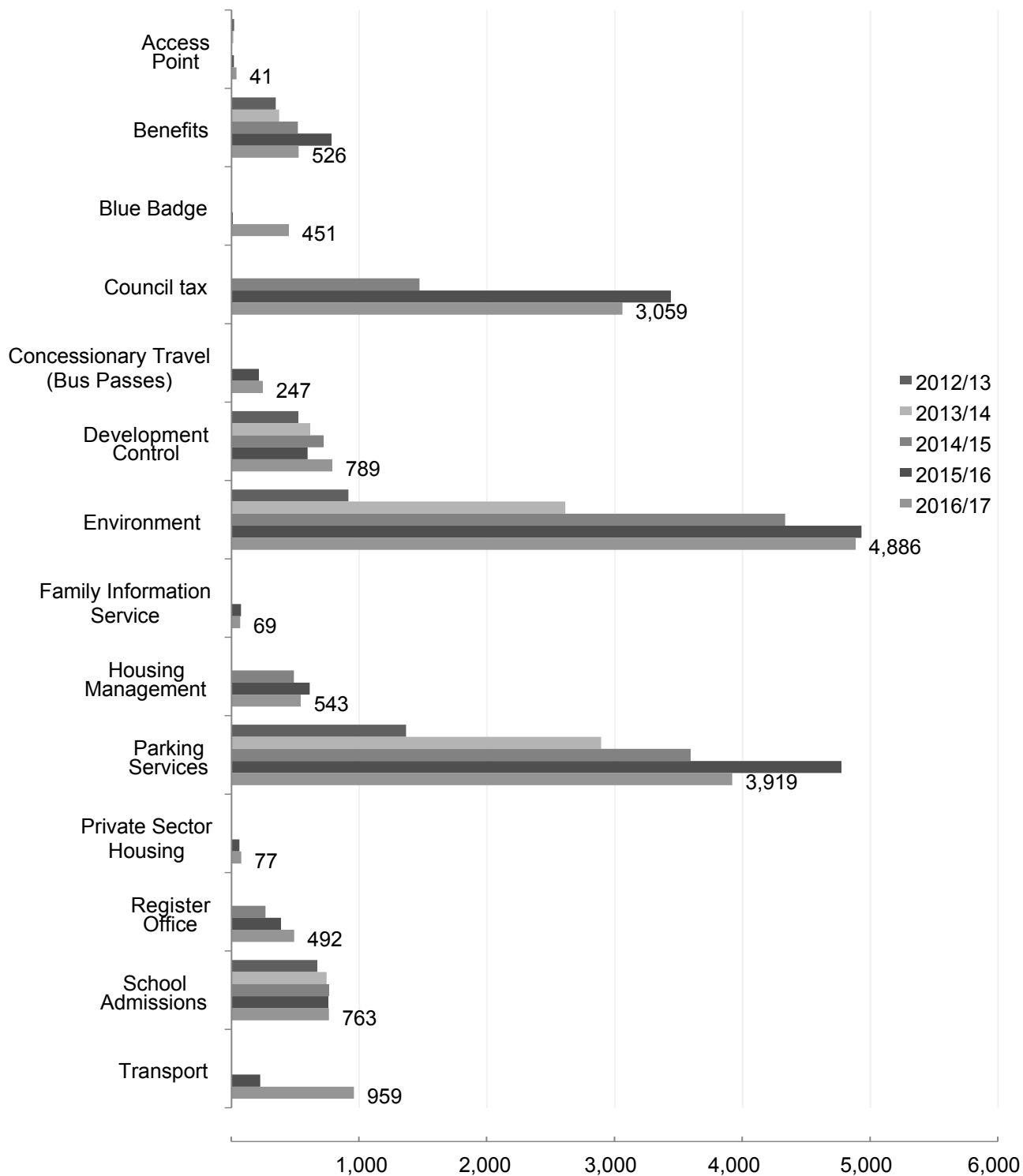
Contacts by post

Most services continue to report small decreases in post received, the most significant reductions have been recorded in Development Control (42% since 2015/16) and Housing Management (38% since 2015/16).



Online transactions

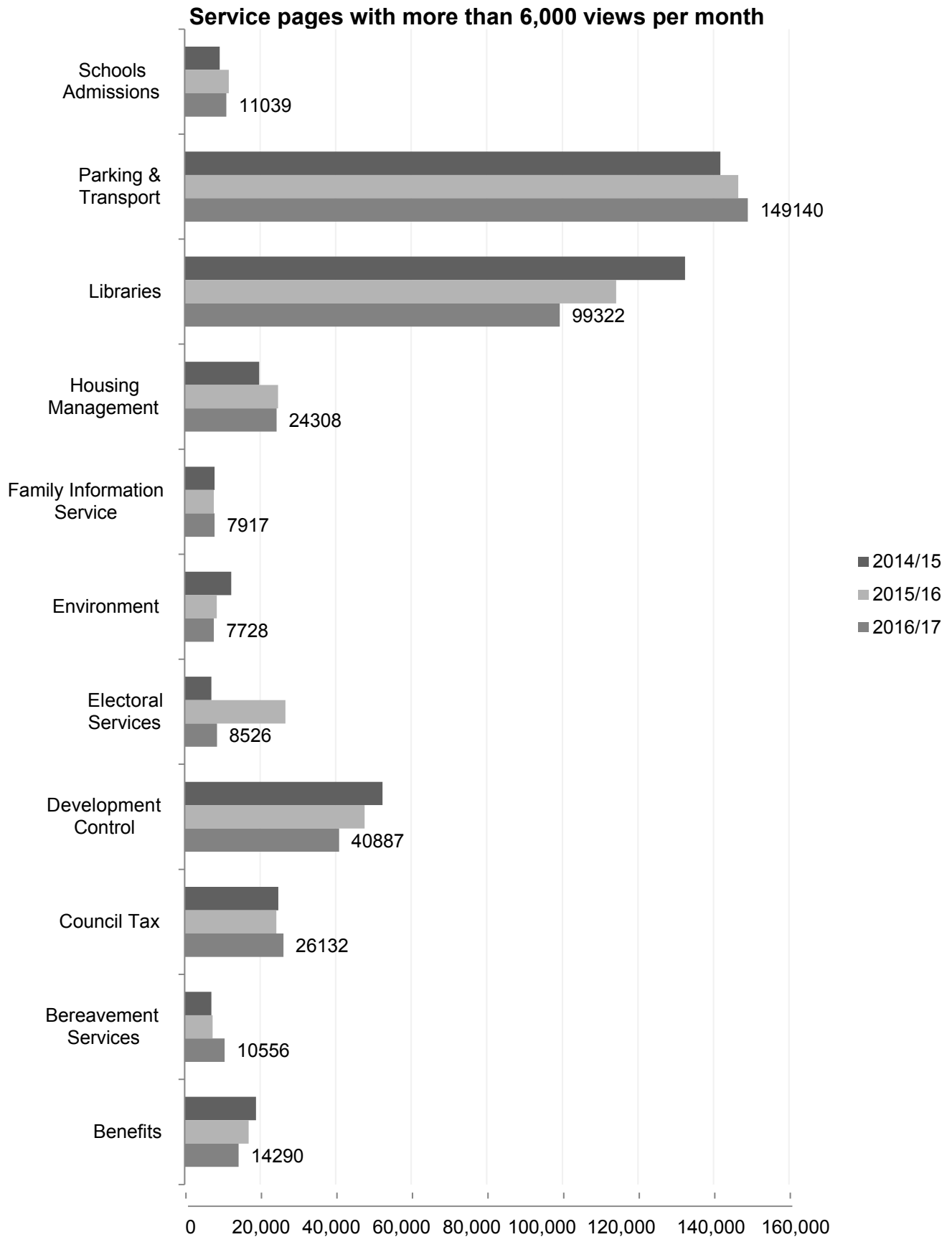
Since 2015/16 the submission of online forms has increased by 3% overall, with particular increases in Development Management. The other services delivering the top ten highest volume transactions have all reported decreases since 2015/16.



Note: Online forms are currently hosted on two different versions of the Achieve platform, this may mean that there are discrepancies in the figures available. Previous year's figures have also been revised for greater accuracy.

Web page views

Overall visitor numbers to the council website have remained static since 2015/16, however the distribution of the visits between service pages has changed. Development Control have had one of the most significant changes in visitor activity, a 14% decrease since 2015/16.



Summary of online activity

This section presents data and information relating to Brighton & Hove City Council's online presence in 2016/17.

Website usage

- www.brighton-hove.gov.uk had 4,477,845 sessions (1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017)
- This is up from 4,477,746 sessions last year (1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016)
- We had 53.2% returning visitors and 46.8% new visitors

What our website visitors are most interested in

- Car parks
- Contact the council
- Jobs
- Parking
- Planning
- Parking permits
- School holiday & term dates
- Recycling centres
- Council Tax
- Libraries

How people find the website

- Organic search (mainly Google) 67% ↓ down 4% from last year
- Direct (bookmarked or typed in URL) 24.5% ↑ up 10.5% from last year
- Referral (links from other websites) 6.5% ↓ down 6.5% from last year
- Social sharing 2% → same as last year

What devices people use to access the website

- Desktop 46% ↓ down 5% from last year
- Mobile 41.5% ↑ up 7.5% from last year
- Tablet 12.5% ↓ down 2.5% from last year

Social media

As of April 2017, we have:

- 50,685 followers on Twitter (main account @BrightonHoveCC)
- 6,548 likes on Facebook
- 469 subscribers and 307,465 views on YouTube

Comments from services

This section outlines information provided by the services who deliver the top twenty highest volume transactions, regarding the customer service they provide.

Housing Customer Services

This year the team has continued to improve the customer service it provides to residents of council housing directly and by supporting other teams both in their day to day work and in campaigns to ensure residents receive information on welfare reform changes.

The team's commitment to customer service and ongoing improvement is reflected in the March 2017 satisfaction survey where 85% of customers rated the service as 'very good & fairly good'. This is up 5% from the previous year.

In October 2016 Housing Management services were reorganised. Four area based teams of Housing Officers replaced the citywide Neighbourhood and Tenancy Enforcement Teams. This was intended to make services simpler for customers. Access to the new teams is through Housing Customer Services, with this team now doing more to resolve complaints at the first point of contact.

Since the new structure has been in place, there has been a drop in complaints to the housing management teams. This may be due to the decision to keep more cases within Housing Customer Services to try and find answers and resolve issues so customers do not have to wait for referral to another team, and the 'casework' model and focus on performance of Housing Officer work with regards to quality and communications.

For the first time this year we have been able to access monitoring data directly from the data base that the team uses to record customer contact. In 2016/17 the team dealt with nearly 43,000 different types of customer contact. In the second half of the year when the new structure was in place there were 1366 cases where ongoing contact was needed with residents. Of these cases 67% were dealt with in the team and 33% referred onto the Housing Officer teams.

Particular mention must be made of the following achievement this year:

The team has achieved a record of 100% success in 'gas access' cases. These are the safety inspections that the council as a landlord is legally required to carry out each year to inspect gas installations in tenants' homes. Housing Customer Service gets involved when the gas contractor is unable to make contact with tenants to arrange access. While getting access to every property is an achievement, and ensures the council is compliant with the safety legislation, there is also another customer service angle to this work. Often tenants who refuse access are our most vulnerable. By working with them to get into their homes the Housing Customer Service team has uncovered some quite desperate situations where they have been able to intervene and put tenants in touch with the support they need.

Transferring the process for council residents applying for alterations from paper to online. Nearly 150 applications are made each year for alterations and require input from different housing teams. On line applications shorten the process, give each team the information it needs to make a decision and provides a quicker response for residents.

As part of its commitment to improving its service for all residents, the whole team has undertaken deaf awareness and autism training.

In the coming year the team will continue to modernise services and work to deliver the customer promise when providing services directly and when supporting the work of other teams.

Parking Services

Blue Badge applications.

Last year the Blue Badge team processed over 5000 Blue Badge applications of which 4469 were approved and 445 refused. We are continuing to expand our award winning Blue badge misuse campaign 'operation bluebird' and have recently appointed a second Blue Badge Investigator last year and we retained more than 250 blue badge that were being used incorrectly. We have streamlined the renewal process making it simpler for those eligible to renew their badge by using information already held by the Council to verify eligibility.

Concessionary Travel.

From April 2017 the administration of Concessionary Travel moved to Parking Services in Hove Town Hall. There are over 43,000 bus passes on issue within the City this consists of 5,500 Disabled passes and 37,500 Older persons passes. In the coming year we will be concentrating on continuing to develop processes that make it as easy as possible for eligible people to apply for their bus pass whilst ensuring that adequate checks are made to combat applications from those not eligible for free bus travel.

Resident Permits / Visitor permits.

The forthcoming PayByPhone online permit system which will be launching later in the Summer will allow customers to purchase resident and visitor parking permits online, removing the need for the anyone purchasing these permits types to come into the customer service centre. The system includes an online verification service which replaces the requirement to present hard-copies of id documents at the customer service centre. Visitor permits will also eventually become virtual, eliminating the need for physical paper stock and allowing immediate activation online or via phoning the parking team. Customers coming into the customer service centre to purchase resident and visitor permits after the new system launches will be directed to the computer workstations to set up online accounts themselves. Customers coming into the customer service centre to pay penalty charge notices should also be directed to the workstations to pay these online, further reducing the pressure on the counter staff and encouraging self-service.

Business and traders permits will also be moved over to the PayByPhone permit platform as a phase two launch later in 2017/early 2018.

Permit centre / Penalty Charge Notice appeals.

The introduction of the rebadged permit centre since June 2016 has resulted in a reduction of foot fall due to rise in people paying and appealing Penalty Charge Notices (PCN's) online through the new Self-Serve system and a reduction for the need for face to face contact. We also currently have more staff processing online resident and visitor permits with a quicker turnaround which helps promote the online option and further reducing foot fall in the centre.

The Hove Town Hall address has been removed from the paper PCN and has been replaced by a website address. Our website has been edited to make sure the public are going online to resolve any enquiries, removing Hove Town Hall details. Meet and greeters have been briefed to encourage the use of online or drop box services.

Development Management (Planning applications)

The whole planning application is now available online via our Planning Register. This has led to a significant decrease in customers visiting the customer service centre to view the paper file.

The number of contacts by post has decreased since the introduction of further online forms which has increased the number of online transactions, a trend expected to continue as we undertake further work on the modernisation of the service.

Revenues & Benefits

Continued additions and improvements to our digital service have helped customers access services more easily, and a continual focus on our core customer service activities has resulted in continued good performance, evidenced by our full re-accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence award.

We have continued to expand and improve on our comprehensive induction process for new staff across Revenues and Benefits, ensuring consistency of customer service and embeds our customer focused ethos throughout the customer experience.

Appendix E: How do we use customer complaints and compliments to improve services?

There has been a 2% decrease in complaints compared to last year and this follows a 19% decrease compared to 2014/15.

Meanwhile, there has been a 18% increase in reported compliments this year, this follows increases of 20% and 13% in preceding years.

The most frequent issues of complaint in 2016/17:

Council housing - responsive repairs
Refuse collection
Parking management

The most frequent reasons for compliments in 2016/17:

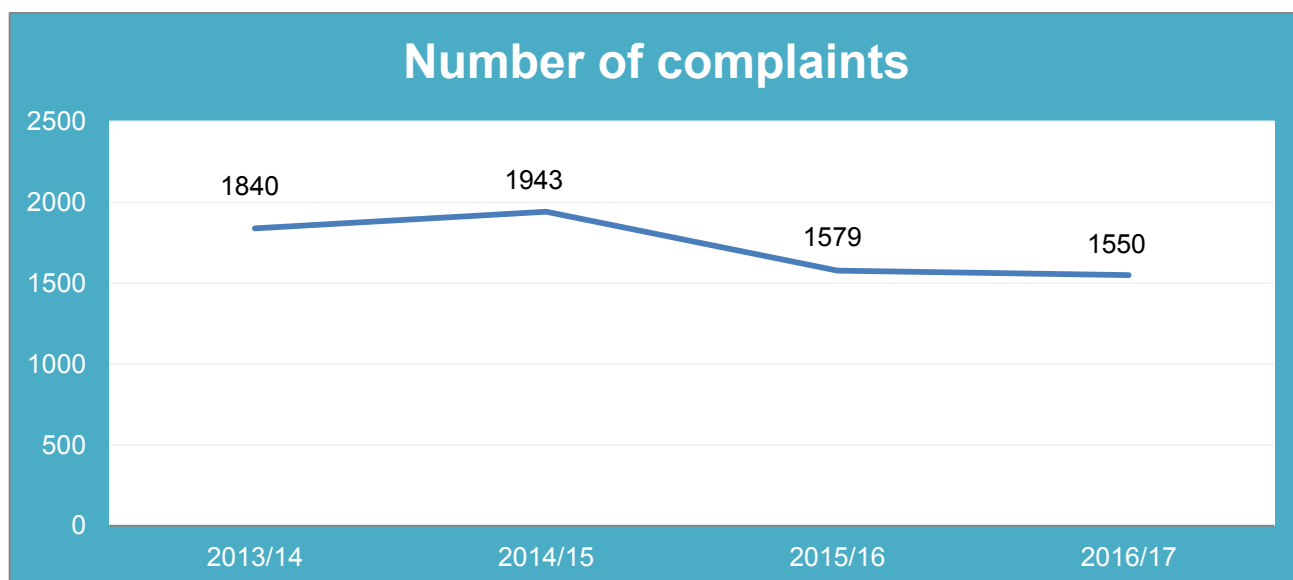
Good process
Customer focus
Personal qualities of staff

What feedback have we received?

Stage 1 Complaints

The number of stage 1 complaints about council services received in 2016/17 has reduced very slightly compared to 2015/16, by 20.2% compared to 2014/15 and 15.7% compared to 2013/14. Results for the last four years are:

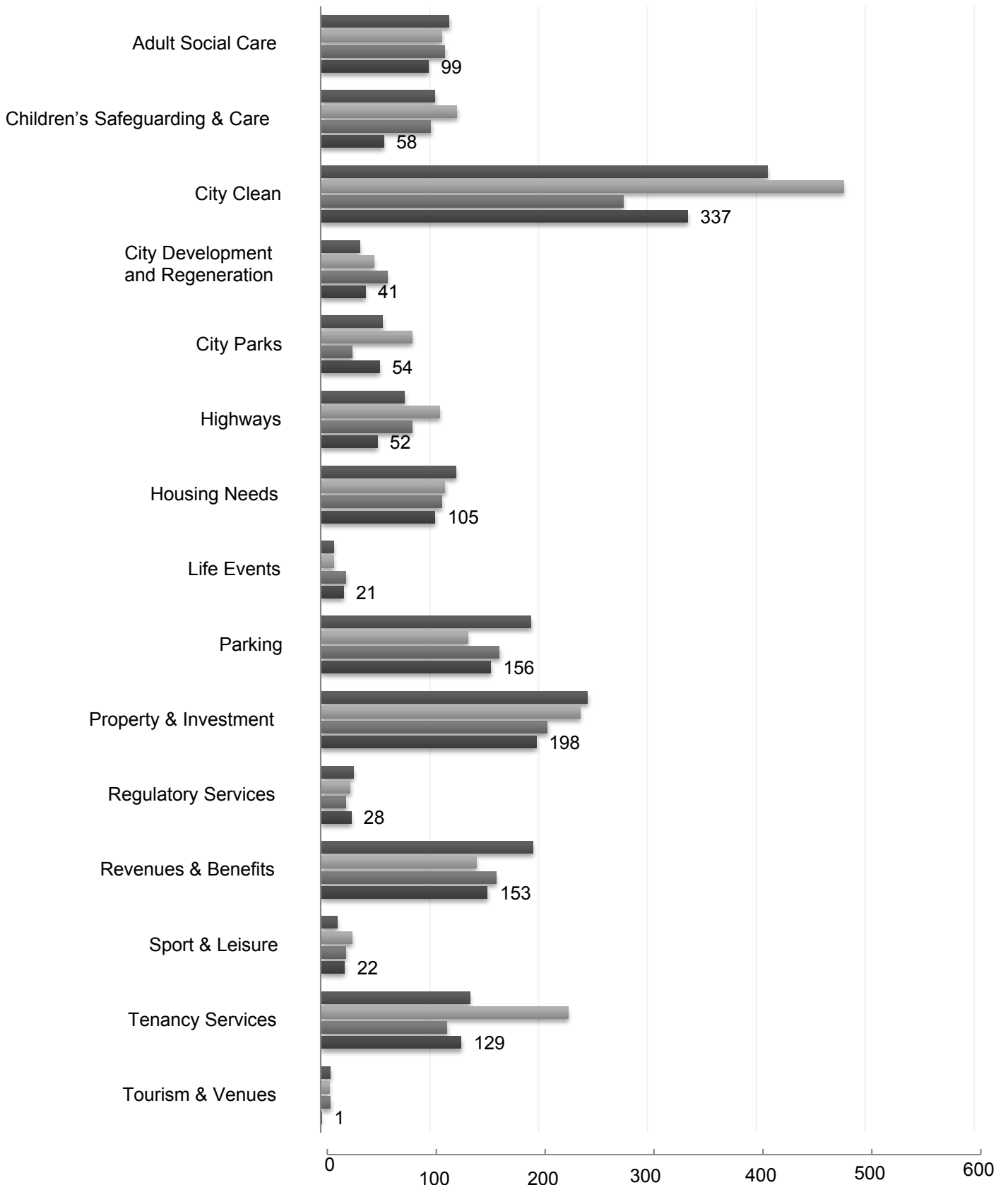
Year	Number of complaints	Change on previous year
2016/17	1550	29 decrease -2%
2015/16	1579	364 decrease -19%
2014/15	1943	103 increase +6%
2013/14	1840	210 increase +13%



See the next page for a year on year look at complaint numbers by service area. The chart below shows how complaint levels have changed for those services.

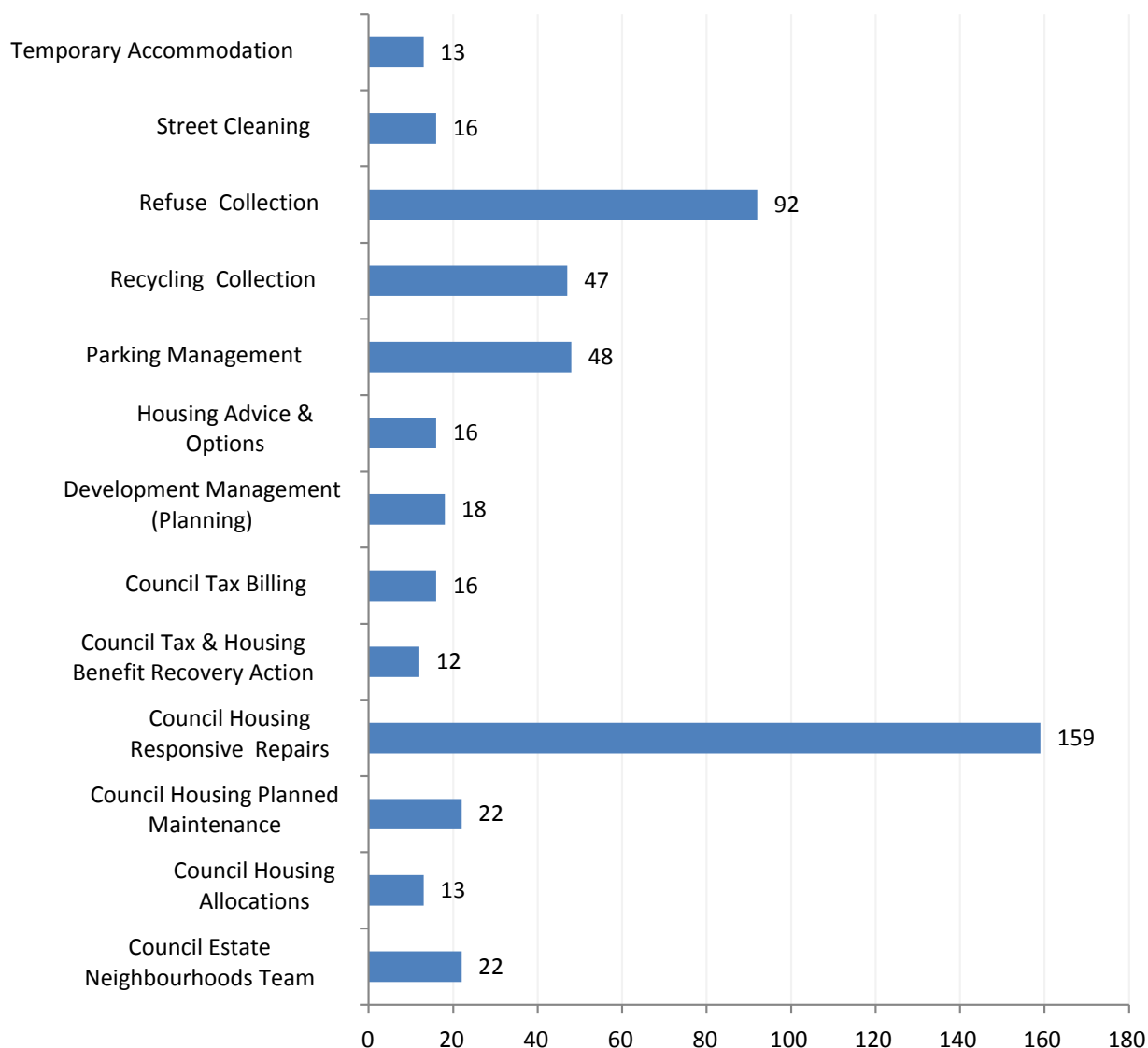
Complaints Received

■ 13/14 ■ 14/15 ■ 15/16 ■ 16/17



Issues of Complaints – what are people unhappy about?

Most frequently occurring issues of complaint in 2016/17



Stage 1 Complaints Upheld

In three of the last four years 2 in 5 complaints received were upheld by the Service Manager. The council aims to resolve customer dissatisfaction before it becomes a formal complaint. When we find that we have made a mistake the very least we will do is apologise and give an explanation for what went wrong. We will then look to see if there are changes we can make to the way things are done so the complaint is less likely to re-occur. For example, this can be providing additional training or changing our practices and procedures.

Year	Number of Stage 1 complaints	Upheld or Partially Upheld complaints	Percentage Upheld or Partially Upheld
2016/17	1550	603	38.9%
2015/16	1579	480	30.4%
2014/15	1943	776	39.9%
2013/14	1840	716	38.9%

Stage 2 Complaints

If a person is unhappy with the response they have received to their initial complaint they can ask for an investigation by a Customer Feedback Manager; this Manager will review the previous correspondence, check that practices and procedures have been properly followed and that the previous decision reached is fair and reasonable. They will reach a conclusion on what should happen next and what will be a suitable remedy to resolve the complaint if it is upheld.

How many complaints are taken to stage 2 and how many are upheld?

We call the percentage of complaints that are referred to Stage 2 the escalation rate. We want to keep that percentage as low as possible because our intention is that all customer complaints should be resolved by services as quickly as possible.

Year	Number of Stage 2 complaints (A)	Escalation rate (Stage 2 / Stage1) (B)	Upheld or Partially Upheld Stage 2 complaints (C)	Percentage Upheld or Partially Upheld (C/A)
2016/17	175	11.3%	34	19.4%
2015/16	158	10%	34	21.5%
2014/15	219	11.3%	50	22.8%
2013/14	156	8.5%	35	22.4%

Over the last four years approximately one in five complaints at Stage 2 are upheld. Another way of looking at this is to say the Customer Feedback Manager generally agrees with the decision of the Service Manager in 4 out of five cases.

Ombudsman Complaints

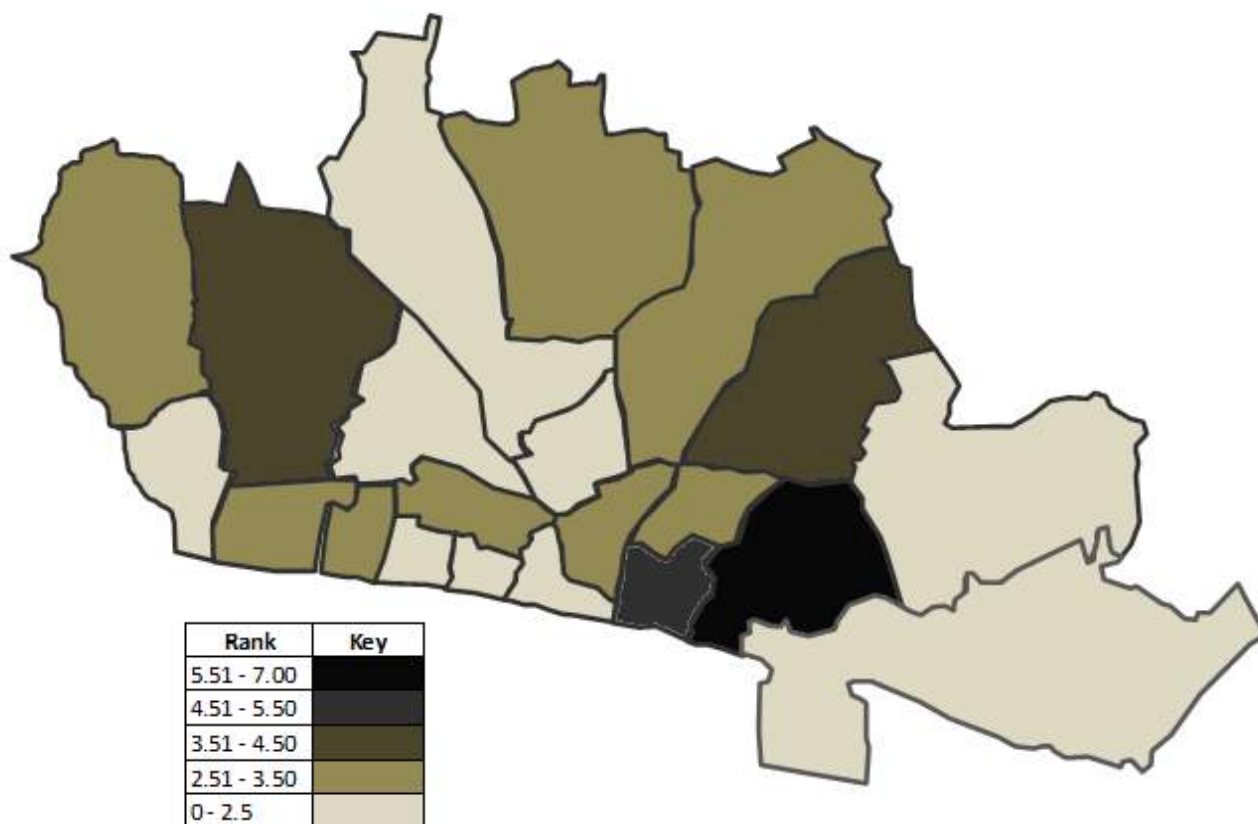
A person may approach the Ombudsman at any time but usually they will not investigate a complaint until the council's process has been concluded.

Year	Number of Ombudsman complaints	Upheld complaints	Percentage Upheld
2016/17	80	15	19%
2015/16	82	18	22%
2014/15	79	19	24%
2013/14	64	19	30%

Increasing numbers of people are approaching the Ombudsman because they are unhappy with the service they have received from the council and they disagree with the outcome of the council's investigation into their complaints. However, the percentage of complaints upheld by the ombudsman has steadily reduced. In 2016/17 the Ombudsman upheld 1 in 5 complaints. We are trying to further reduce this by ensuring we carry out fair and reasonable investigation and put matters right as soon as we are able.

Where do we receive complaints from?

The map and table below shows the number of complaints across the city's main areas (wards) per 1,000 head of the population. We have also shown the actual number of complaints in each ward.



Ward	Complaints per 1000 head of population	Totals	Top three issues of complaint
Brunswick and Adelaide	1.76	18	Parking Permits (5) Council Tax billing and recovery (3) Missed recycling or refuse collection (3)
Central Hove	2.32	22	Housing responsive repairs (6) Refuse and recycling (3) Sports facilities - quality of service (2)
East Brighton	6.08	86	Housing responsive repairs (30) Refuse & recycling (7) Housing low level antisocial behaviour (4)
Goldsmid	2.51	40	Housing repair planned & responsive (10) Refuse and recycling (8) Housing - Neighbourhood team (4)
Hangleton and Knoll	3.53	52	Housing responsive repairs (12) Refuse & recycling - missed collections (7) Adult Social Care (3)
Hanover and Elm Grove	2.59	43	Housing responsive repairs (13) Refuse & recycling (11) Council Tax recovery (2)

Hollingdean and Stanmer	3.49	57	Housing responsive repairs (11) Refuse (6) Parking management (4)
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	3.77	67	Housing responsive repairs (29) Refuse and recycling (10) Families, Children and Learning (3)
North Portslade	3.20	32	Refuse - missed collections (6) Recovery action (3) Adult Social Care - disagree with decision (2)
Patcham	2.69	39	Recycling & Refuse (10) Housing responsive repairs (7) Adult Social Care (3)
Preston Park	2.43	37	Refuse & recycling (10) Parking Management (6) Housing responsive repairs (4)
Queens Park	5.20	79	Housing responsive repairs (18) Revenues & Benefits (6) Housing Options (4)
Regency	2.15	22	Housing repairs (3) Revenues & Benefits (5) Housing advice & assessment (2)
Rottingdean Coastal	1.72	24	Refuse & recycling (6) Parking management (5) Development management (3)
St Peters and North Laine	2.71	52	Housing responsive repairs (4) Housing customer service (2) Special Educational Needs service (2)
South Portslade	2.20	21	Refuse & recycling (13) Parking management (5) Council Tax billing and recovery (4)
Stanford	1.31	14	Parking management (3) Refuse & recycling (3) Adult Social Care (3)
Westbourne	2.86	29	Refuse & recycling (7) Arboriculture/ Allotments (4) Development Management (2)
Wish	2.55	25	Refuse & recycling - failure to provide bins (6) Revenues - billing / recovery (4) Seniors Housing (2)
Withdean	2.18	32	Refuse & recycling (10) Families, Children & Learning (4) Street cleaning not done (2)
Woodingdean	1.94	19	Housing responsive repairs (4) Refuse & recycling (3) Recovery action (3)

How is feedback from complaints being used?

Customer Feedback Managers produce quarterly reports for each service and these are combined into reports for the Executive Leadership Team Performance Board and are published bi-annually. These reports contain a summary of the actions being taken by services to improve their performance. Examples of such improvements are given in the section below *“What have services been doing to reduce their complaints?”*

The council is a member of the Institute of Customer Services who have identified that customer satisfaction is influenced by the way complaints are responded to and of particular importance is the need to provide timely responses as in the Customer Priority chart on page 20.

Responding to customer complaints

Throughout 2016/17 the Customer Feedback Team have sent weekly lists of complaints to all members of the Corporate Management Team. The list shows cases which are overdue a response and those which are reaching the deadline for a response.

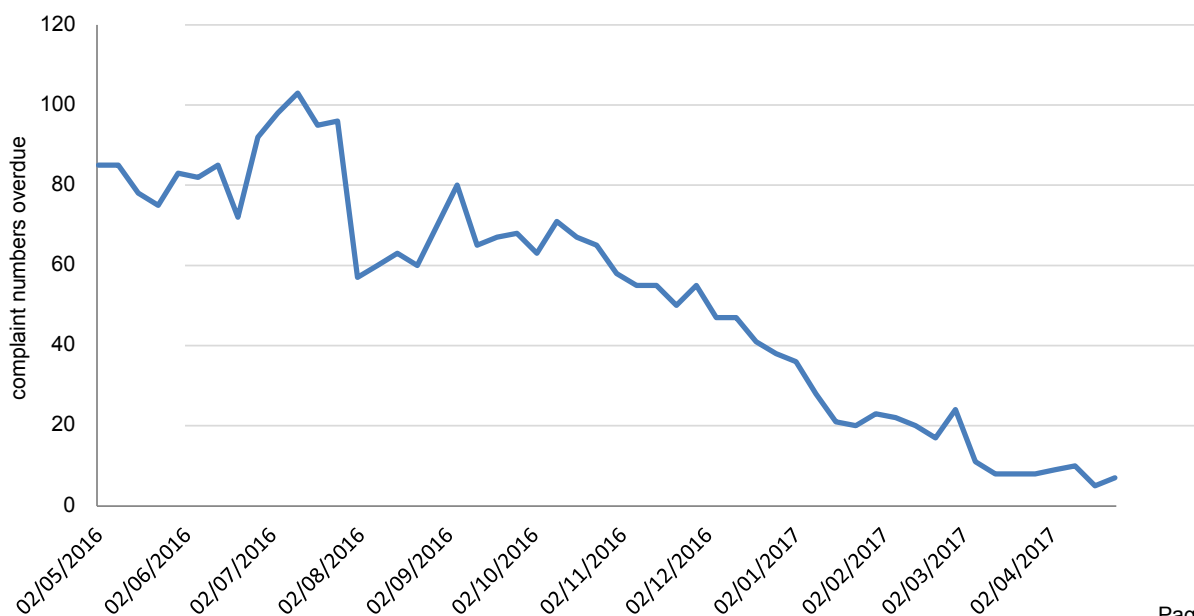
The effect of this coupled with the liaison work by Customer Feedback Managers has been to improve the response times for complaints and to reduce the number of complaints that are overdue; the council aims to respond to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days.

The following table shows how response times have improved and the chart which follows shows that of the live complaints fewer than 10 cases in each week are taking longer than 10 working days:

2016/17	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Replied within 10 working days	60%	58%	73%	82%
Replied within 20 working days	80%	79%	92%	96%

Total complaints overdue each week

The following chart illustrates how the number of response overdue each week has progressively reduced throughout the year:



What have services been doing to reduce their complaints?

Children's Safeguarding & Care

- The service has introduced a radical new model of Relationship Based Practice. The impact this is currently having include a reduction in the number of children on child protection plans and looked after, a reduction in the number of complaints, and better outcomes for children towards our goal of the right child in the right place at the right time. We are currently launching renewed focus on including fathers in social work at all stages from assessment onwards, to consider the protective role fathers may have and their significance in the lives of children.

Highways

- The focus on first point of contact resolution, meeting with residents on site to discuss concerns is working really well. The team are continuing to do this as it is having such a positive effect on complaint numbers but also customer satisfaction and reduction in the amount of time staff have to spend emailing people.
- The service has been reviewing their web pages and ways that customers (both public and commercial) can contact them. These will be streamlined to make monitoring of incoming reports and enquiries more efficient and effective and most important it will make it much easier for customers to contact the right team.
- There will be some 24/7 cover of the phone lines which will provide a better service for commercial customers e.g. utilities companies, or anyone who needs to take action which will disrupt the highway and has to give the council urgent notification of this.
- A new Licensing online system for skips and scaffolding is now live and working well.

Tenancy Services

- Tenancy Services have recently been restructured and are now delivering their services in a different way. Rather than refer cases on to other teams more customer enquiries are kept within the Housing Customer Services team where case officers will find answers to questions raised and resolve issues. This reduces the time taken to resolve issues and the matter raised is likely to be dealt with at first point of contact.

City Parks

- Work has been done with councillors on grass cutting schedules, so that residents can be better informed about what the council can realistically provide and communities are and given some choice on whether they prefer more frequent grass cutting or less frequent cuts but with a follow up clear up.

City Clean

- During evenings the Street Cleaning Team now routinely collect missed refuse collections reported in the day. This is reducing the number of complaints about missed collections.

Property & Investment

- P&I are introducing a new repairs priority for work that is going to take longer than 20 working days. The service will ensure that the resident is told how long a job is likely to take so they can be better informed.

Examples of complaints we have received:

I would like to make a complaint about the waste of money the council has used in sending me ten letters to my address . I like to add the letters all said the same thing and were delivered on the same day . This was in regard to a planning application.

I have tried to contact the named officer today but having tried numerous times the phone is constantly engaged. I even called at 19.45pm this evening again with the phone engaged. I have also tried to e-mail my local councillors this evening but again when using the link to their e-mail address an error code appears on both saying " Something went Wrong " error code Ox8007000d .

For over 1 month my road has been pitch black with no street lights working., I have complained numerous times to no avail, every time being told 'this is the first we've heard of this' . I have also complained in writing. I have hit a lamp post with my car as it's pitch black and have tripped on the hazardous paving slabs 3 times now, once falling and hurting myself. This is absolutely ridiculous and I would like a refund for my council tax which I have always paid in good faith - this month I have not received the services which I am paying for

Please could you arrange to have the bike I reported as abandoned removed? It is not a big thing to ask. But your officers seem unable to get their act together to enable this simple task. If you cannot do it because you also have a string of excuses (christmas holidays and parties, lack of staff, everyone on sick leave, wrong day of the week, or month) let me know. I just want to know that the rusting pile is going to be removed.

We have just found out that there is no working cafe or water at Peter Pan playground and also no water at the level. The main attraction for the Peter Pan playground for the children is the water. The weather is now good and there is no water. Why was this not organised much earlier in preparation for the good weather? It is such a disappointment for the children.

Compliments

Compliments about council services recorded in 2015/16 has increased by more than 20% compared to 2014/15 and 35% compared to 2013/14. Results for the last three years are:

Year	Number of Compliments	Change on previous year
2016/17	917	137 ↑ increase
2015/16	780	132 ↑ increase
2014/15	648	74 ↑ increase
2013/14	574	n/a

We record compliments received from members of the public and from professionals. By professionals we mean people working in other agencies or partner organisations and we also record compliments from colleagues working in different departments who can be considered to be internal customers.

When recording compliments we categorise them using the following descriptions for compliments:

Customer Focus:

Going the extra mile, attentive to detail, focussed on person, delighting the customer

Good Processes:

Efficient, prompt, thorough, collaborative within and across teams, resolution focussed, open and transparent

Personal Qualities:

Empathetic, kind, warm, helpful, respectful, understanding a person's situation

Quality of Input:

Knowledgeable, informative, professional, creative,

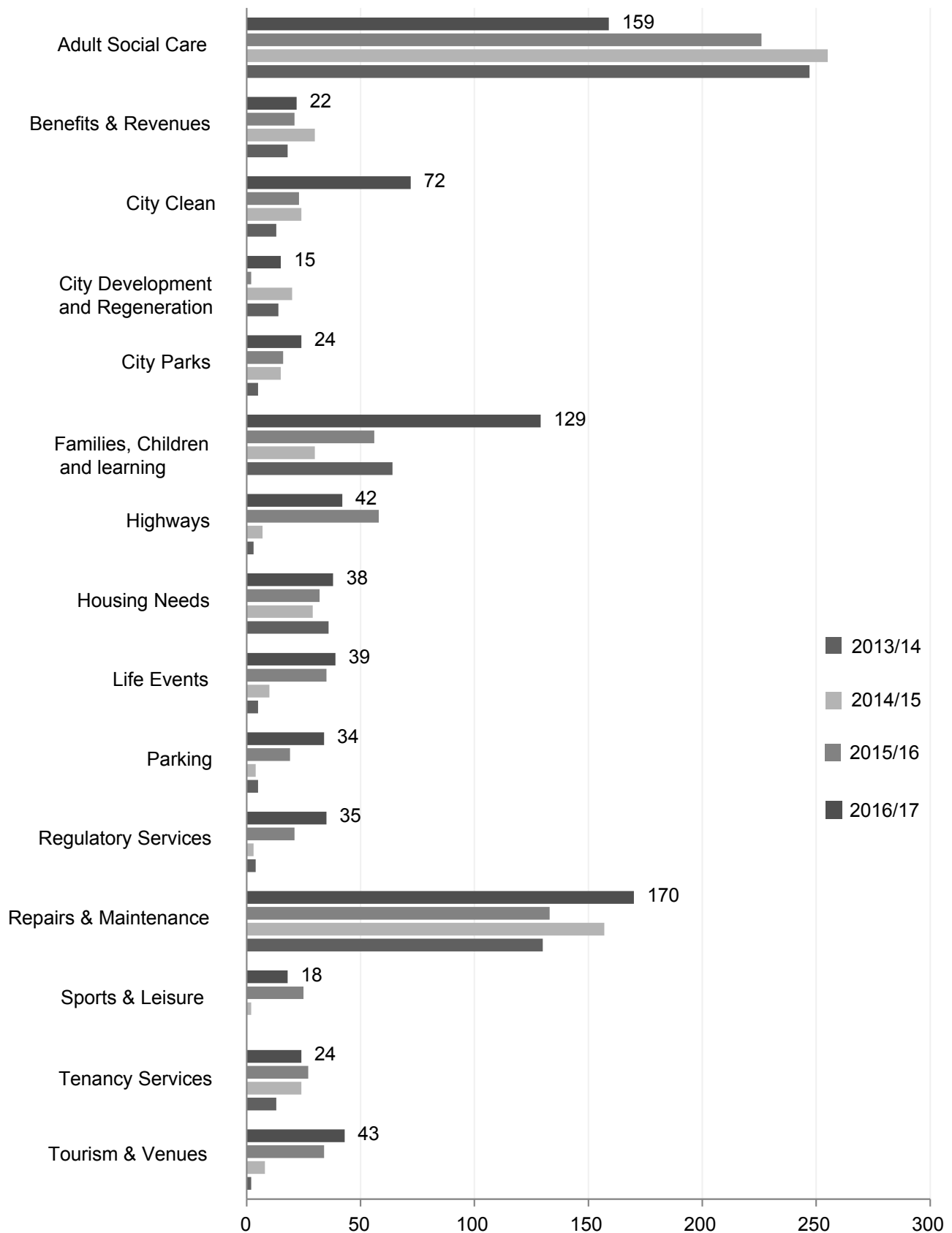
Quality of Outcome:

Skilled written or practical work, pleased with outcome or decision

917 Compliments	Members of the public 823 Compliments	Good Process	303
		Customer Focused	301
		Personal Qualities	101
		Quality of Outcome	66
		Quality of Input	52
	External professionals and internal customers 94 Compliments	Quality of Input	32
		Customer Focused	29
		Good Process	14
		Personal Qualities	11
		Quality of Outcome	8

Compliments by service

This table shows how the compliments received have changed over time for different services.



Examples of compliments we have received:

I just wanted to say a big Thank You to three of your guys doing the refuse collection who worked on Monday morning in Laburnum Avenue, Hove. My mother in law received a call from one of them advising that her friend had fallen over and had requested they called her. We rushed round to Laburnum Avenue to see her laying on the wet floor from where it was raining. One of the lovely men who work for you had already covered her with his jumper to keep her as warm as possible, they then proceeded to call an ambulance for her and wait until it arrived where at that point they helped her up (as the only person in the ambulance was the driver who was unable to do this on their own) and helped her into the ambulance.

I feel awful for not knowing their names but I hope you will be able to locate them from the details I have given you and give them a big thank you from me.

I'm gonna really miss you Xxxxxx you're not just my social worker your my best friend. Well to me you are. You have been there when I've gone through hell. You've helped me mature into the understanding young adult I am today. I know I've never been easy to probably work with but you never gave up on me and I can't thank you enough for everything. I'm gonna really miss you. I don't want you to go..... it's not fair. But I can't pick what I want in life or who to stay but I just can't believe I got ta say goodbye. So yeah sorry for being sappy and thank you for being like a mum. Take care pal.

Xxxx came to visit me due to being hit by the benefit cap. I was absolutely distraught as suffering with my health & finances including rent arrears where a possession order was hanging over me, this had made my day to day life very stressful. I have four young children and had left an abusive relationship two years ago. Things were getting on top of me. They listened to my circumstances without judgement, even saw me cry!

I cannot thank her enough for referring me to MAP for financial support, this is now underway. Also talking about my health trouble and she suggested other options I had no idea how to go about. Xxxx has made mine & my children's Christmas come early by applying for grants and a discretionary payment in regards to my rent which was successful. I didn't even know about the grant let alone expect the debt to be wiped! You have no idea how eternally grateful I am! I couldn't express to Xxxx enough what her support has done for me, I can now continue with my treatment for my health without the worry I would end up evicted. I hope she gets recognised for what an amazing job she has done. Thanks to this wonderful lady, I am now finally seeing a way out of this mess I got into.

I just wanted to say, how incredibly grateful I am to you for arranging the day for us and at such a reasonable price! We had such a wonderful day walking around and talking to the staff who are FULL of enthusiasm and knowledge. The tea room is lovely as well, where we spent a good hour nattering away... Perfect for starting the foundations of friendships and open conversations. Please pass on my most sincere thanks to all involved in making our get together, as really special one!