

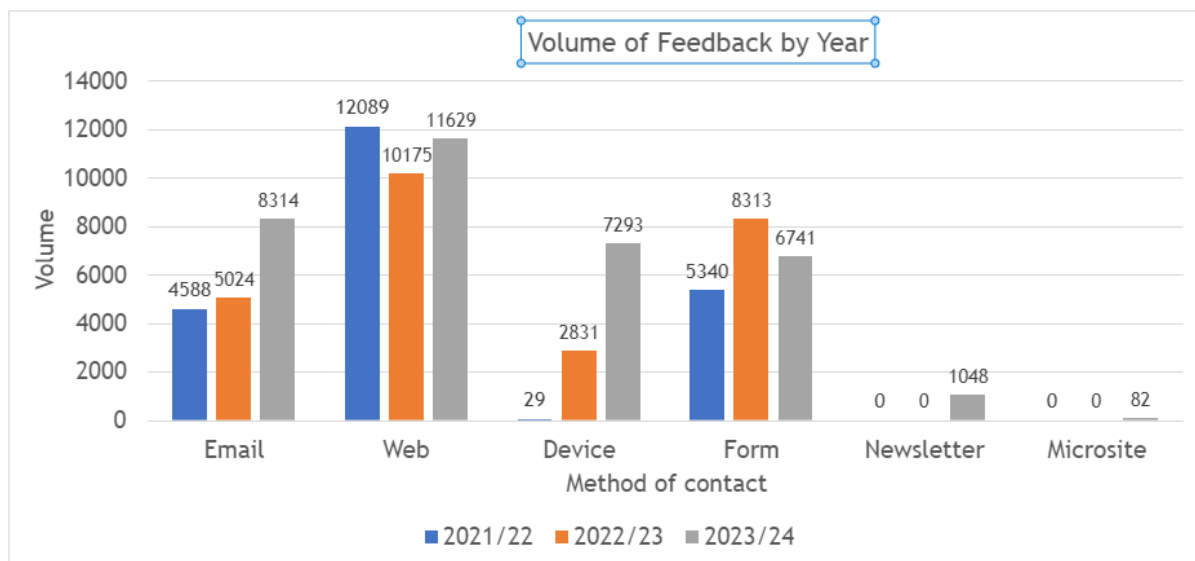
1.0 Customer Feedback in 2023/24

1.1 In 2023/24 we have continued to collect feedback from customers using our ESCC website and online forms, customers receiving email correspondence from some teams and those accessing services in-person. We have also begun collecting feedback from customers receiving newsletters from library and Adult Social Care (ASC) services and from Children’s Services (CSD) microsites which have been transferred in-house. The collection of feedback assists in monitoring customer satisfaction across the Council and provides valuable insight to inform service improvements. This has previously included providing more opportunity to self-serve, increasing accessibility, improving information on our website and reviewing the content of email responses.

1.2 Headlines for customer feedback in 2023/24:

- We received over 35,000 ratings across all feedback surveys, which is an increase of around 9,000 responses (26,000 in 2022/23).
- We received 8,552 verbatim comments from customers during the year which is an increase of 2,681. This amounts to around a quarter of customers leaving comments and provides valuable qualitative feedback which we can gain further insight from.
- Almost 50% of the comments we received were from customers who had a poor experience.
- Overall customer satisfaction for 2023/24 was 73% positive which is a decrease in satisfaction of 5% compared to the previous year.
- Customer satisfaction has decreased across all methods of feedback in comparison with the previous year. Emails decreased by 12%, website by 2%, forms by 9% and in-person by 1%.
- The pilots of both newsletter surveys and microsite surveys have been successful and recorded 96% and 55% satisfaction respectively.
- Feedback surveys remain well used with most methods of contact maintaining a high response rate or seeing an increase, suggesting they are easy to use and effective in obtaining a high level of quality feedback.

Graph 1 - Volume of customer feedback and comments, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24

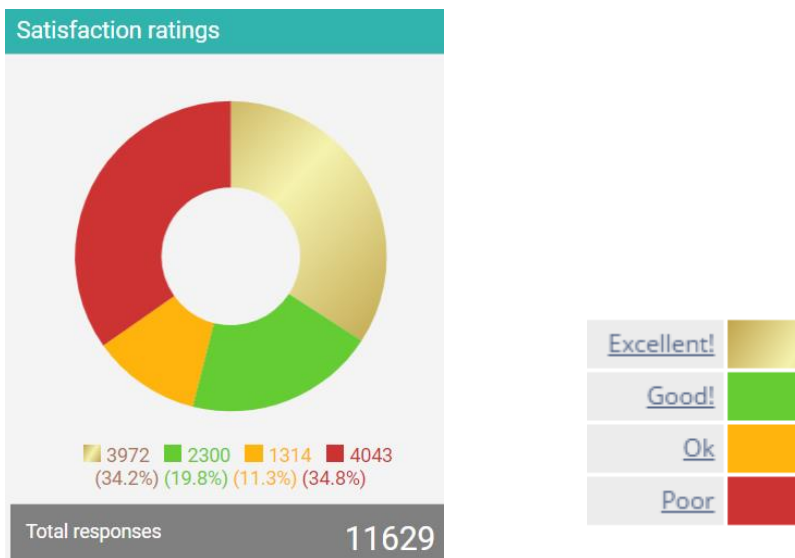


2.0 Website feedback 2023/24

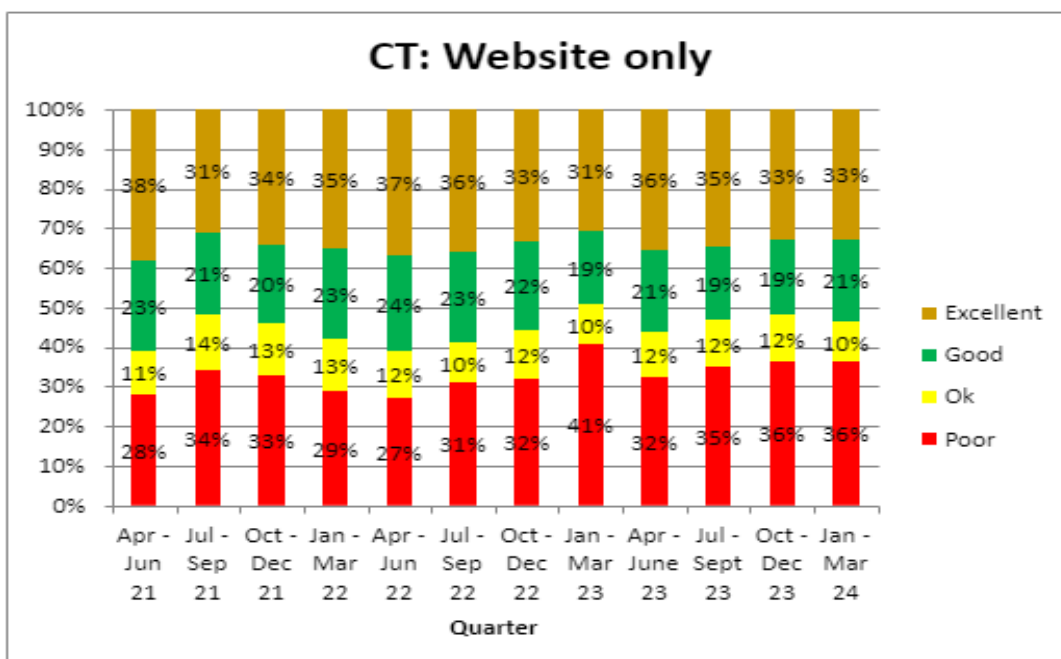
2.1 Key takeaways:

- Feedback surveys are available on around a quarter of our website content. This has not increased since last year despite the addition of surveys to some pages. The percentage has remained static due to the change in number of pages of content.
- The volume of website feedback has increased this year and is nearing pandemic levels when there was an increase in self-service. The volume of feedback on our website is the highest of the methods of contact.
- Of the 25% of corporate website webpages which have feedback surveys, 17% are on CET content, 3% on ASC content and 5% on CSD content.
- Overall satisfaction with the website for the year has decreased to 65% (<2% from last year). The results indicate that residents are using self-service resources, and the surveys continue to highlight in real time what isn't working so we can react quickly to our customers' feedback.

Graph 2 - Customer satisfaction ratings: Website, 2023/24



Graph 3 - Website satisfaction ratings: three-year comparison, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24



2.2 Services continue to analyse where their web content can be improved in response to feedback and have responded to feedback through:

- Improving the wording of content where this has been flagged as unclear on multiple occasions.
- Using feedback as a monitoring tool for trialling changes to content.
- Adding task pages to areas of the website which represent 'tasks', e.g. submitting a complaint, to improve accessibility.
- Removal of old 'report a problem' pages which were consistently receiving poor feedback. These have been redirected to relevant pages.
- Upgrading NSL Apply in Parking Services (in effect from 8 April 2024) to improve accessibility when applying for permits.

2.3 Trials for collecting feedback at the start of customer journeys were unable to begin. This would have been through surveys on web contact forms, however these were removed from the website and replaced with mailto links following mitigations in response to a security incident. The intention was to gauge customers satisfaction at different stages of their experience, rather than only following a response outcome they may disagree with. This is due to dissatisfaction being affected by services where we have to provide decisions based on policy, particularly enforcement decisions.

2.4 The number of PDF documents on the website are increasing which represents an issue to accessibility and reduces our ability to collect feedback on policy guidance documents, etc. The web team and web managers within services are continuing to encourage the use of html pages as an alternative.

2.5 Ongoing developments include:

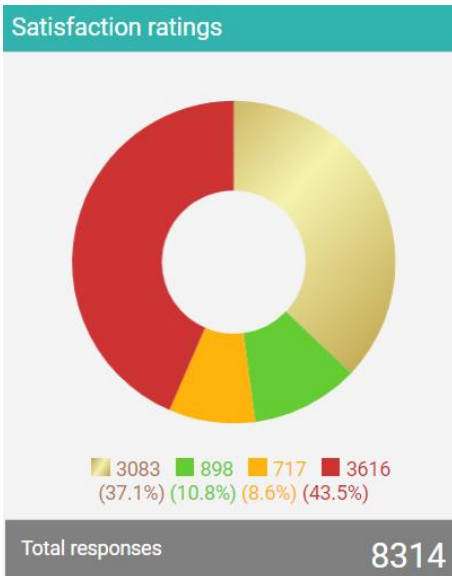
- Digital Services' Microsites Project and Governance Group has brought three sites in-house and continue to offer guidance on creating microsites and meeting microsite standards to ensure the necessary considerations for budget, governance, security, accessibility and content to ensure a positive customer experience. Microsites which aren't transferred are being reviewed to ensure privacy and accessibility criteria are met.
- Procurement of a new mapping system by Parking Services to replace PDF maps with interactive ones, in response to feedback that maps need updating and improving.

3.0 Email feedback 2023/24

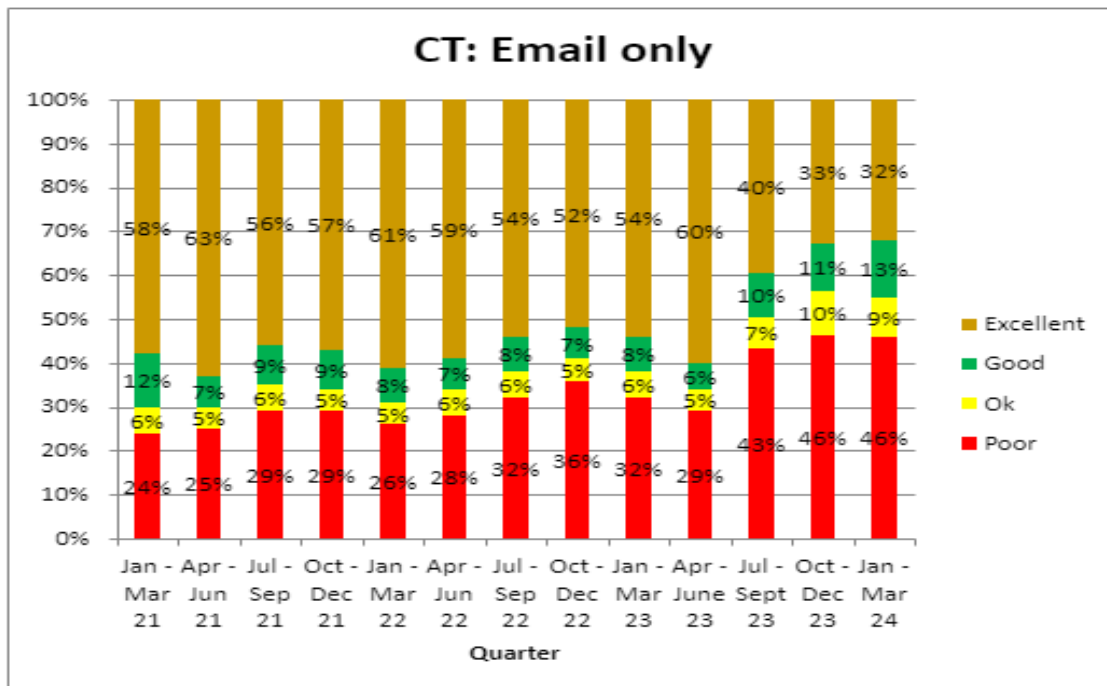
3.1 Key takeaways:

- We received over 8,000 pieces of feedback, which is around a 60% increase in responses from the previous year.
- 19 teams are using the email feedback surveys, an increase of 5 from last year.
- Overall customer satisfaction rating for emails was 56%, 12% lower than in 2022/23.
- The largest volume of negative ratings for email correspondence relate to services that engage with a large section of our residents by virtue of the services they provide, e.g., highways, parking and school admissions.

Graph 4 - Customer satisfaction ratings: Email, 2023/24



Graph 5 - Email satisfaction ratings: three-year comparison, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24



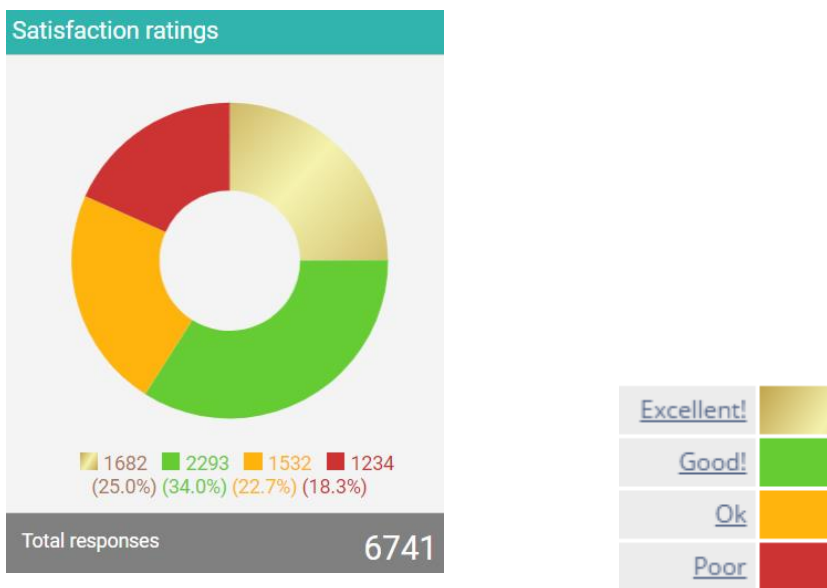
3.2 Analysis of customer feedback and staff comments show that:

- Staff have voiced frustration where feedback is provided but no details are given for them to follow up on concerns raised. The surveys do make clear that responses are anonymous, and customers can reply directly to services for any further conversation needed. Where sufficient information is provided to investigate the response, this is undertaken by services.
- Customers are increasingly providing reference numbers in their comments where they feel issues have not been resolved so they can be contacted using this information and these comments often relate to not being given a point of contact or a response from a 'no-reply' email address when they feel the matter is not resolved.
- Comments provided with 'excellent' ratings provide compliments about staff, quick service and the clarity of information provided.

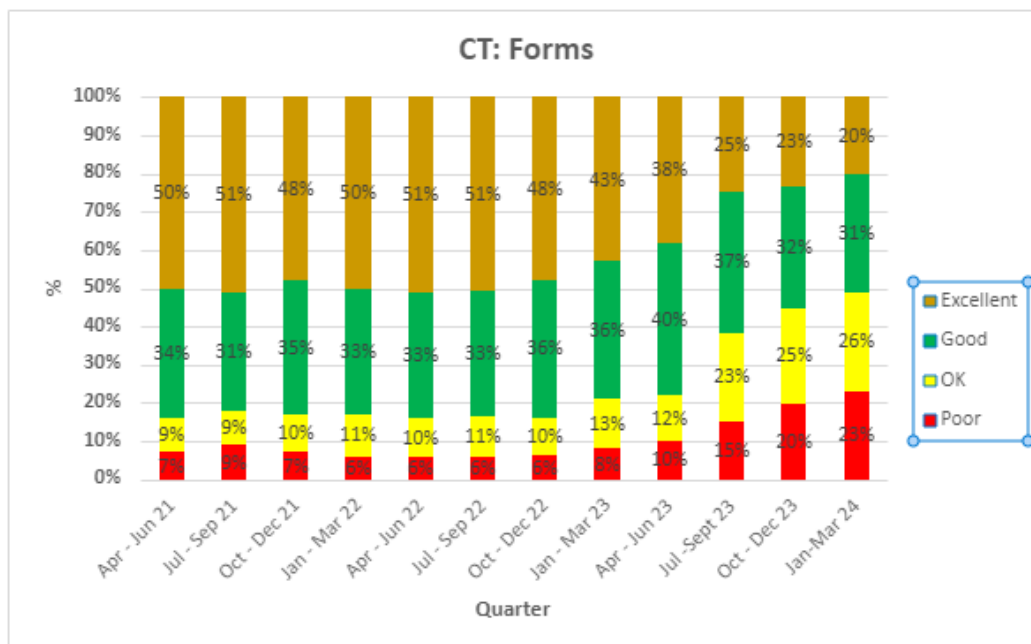
4 Form feedback 2023/24

- 4.1. Form feedback is still well used although there has been a decrease in responses of around 1,500 since last year. Following the success of collecting feedback through the Highways reporting and School Admissions forms in 2021/22, we began collecting feedback from seven ASC Portal forms and one CSD Portal form in 2022/23. Seven additional ASC portal forms, one additional CSD Portal form and one CET Parking Controls form have begun collecting feedback in 2023/24 bringing the total number of form surveys to 19.
- 4.2. Satisfaction with forms has decreased by 9% this year with a total of 82% satisfaction. This is a significant decrease considering these journeys have maintained a consistently high level of satisfaction around (90% above) in previous years. The most significant decrease in satisfaction for forms has been for Highways (see further analysis below).

Graph 6 - Customer satisfaction ratings - Forms, 2023/24



Graph 7 - Form satisfaction ratings: three-year comparison, 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24



5.0 Customer experience feedback ‘drivers’

5.1 This year we have piloted feedback ‘drivers’ for surveys across two services; Customer Services Team and Parking Services Team. ‘Drivers’ are an additional option customers can select when they choose a rating which gives an indication of what has driven their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their experience.

Figure 1 - Example of ‘drivers’ displayed on a survey

The figure displays two examples of a survey 'Thank you for your response!' screen. The left example shows the initial state where three driver options are listed: 'Relevance of information', 'Time taken to find information', and 'Easy to navigate'. The right example shows the same screen after a user has selected 'Relevance of information', with a checkmark and a 'Change selection' button appearing next to the selected option. Both screens include a 'Submit comment' button and a disclaimer about not providing identifying information.

5.2 For the last financial year, less than a quarter of the customers that responded to our surveys left a comment (total responses 26,343 and 5,875 comments left). Comments are left most commonly for excellent and poor ratings, and these provide valuable information about what has gone right and where improvements are needed.

5.3 ‘Drivers’ provide a ‘one-click’ option for people to provide further information about their experience without having to write a comment. The option to leave a comment is still available, however this provides an additional layer of qualitative data allowing customers to respond effectively and more quickly.

5.4 A maximum of eight options can be added to a survey and tailored to the method of contact or service requirements and priorities. The options have currently been determined by what teams are trying to achieve for their customers, e. g. good communication, easy to follow processes and clarity of information. These can be made available for all methods of contact except face-to-face feedback devices.

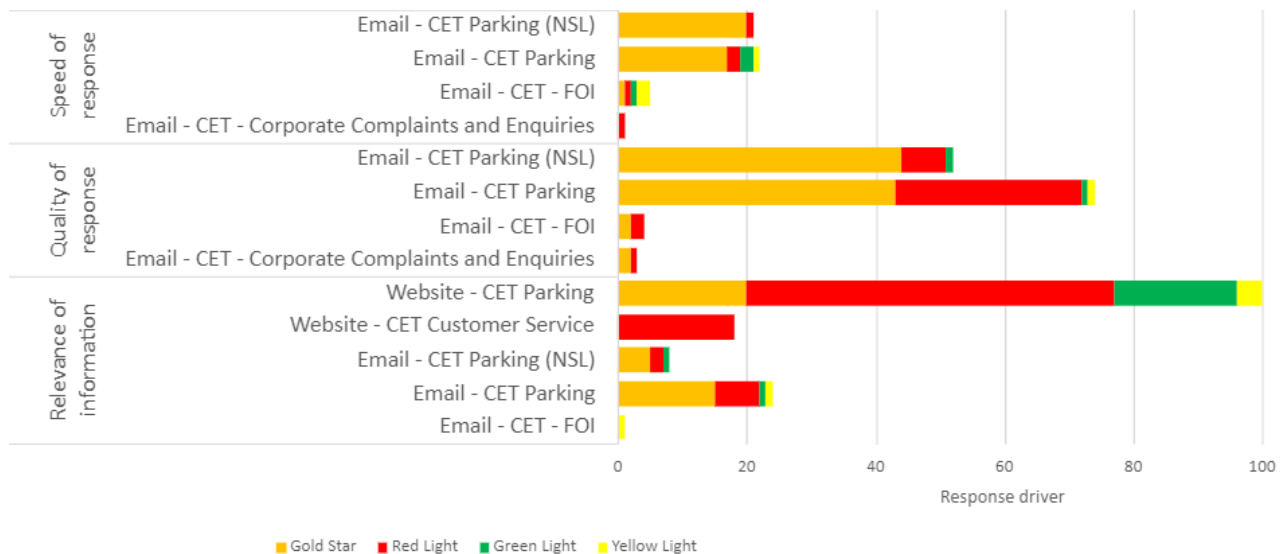
5.5 For 2023/24, the pilot teams have received 3,376 responses in total and 428 of these respondents have selected a ‘driver’. Of those 428, 194 have also left comments which is above the average for comments compared to the total responses provided, therefore the ‘drivers’ do not discourage customers from also leaving a comment and suggests that it may even encourage the customer to provide further information on their experience. 234 respondents selected a driver, rather than leave a comment. Therefore, including these is helpful to gain further understanding from customers without them needing to provide a full comment, however some comments have indicated that customers want to select more than one ‘driver’ which isn’t currently an option.

The ‘drivers’ being selected most regularly are:

- Relevance of information

- Quality of response
- Speed of response

Graph 8 - Survey responses showing rating for customer experience alongside the reason for the selection



5.6 Parking Services receive the most feedback from ‘drivers’ with the majority satisfied with their experience. The highest dissatisfaction is with the parking team website content with 68% of customers stating that the information was not relevant to them. This suggests that there may be improvements to be made on the navigation of the content if customers are not able to easily find what they are looking for.

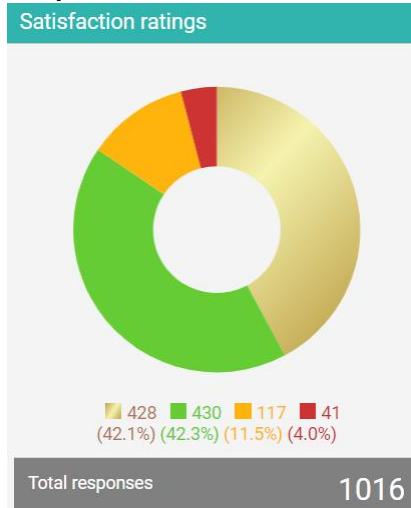
5.7 In response to the increase in dissatisfaction with emails especially, it’s likely to be beneficial to focus on using ‘drivers’ for more team emails to identify and improve any specific issues within correspondence for specific teams.

6.0 Newsletter Feedback 2023/24

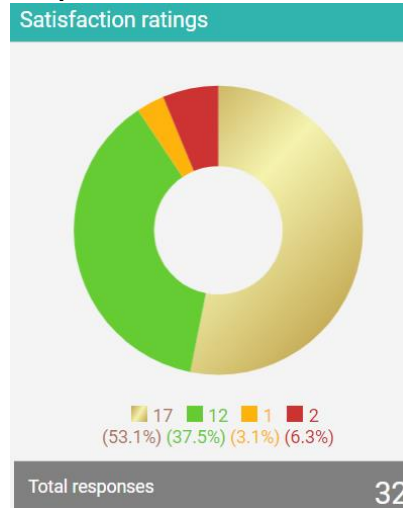
6.1 Collection of feedback on the libraries e-newsletter began in June 2023 and there are around 26,500 residents currently signed up to the newsletter. The response rate for this year is relatively low with only 1,016 responses since June 2023, however this has consistently received positive feedback each month with a satisfaction rating of 96%.

6.2 Similarly, a survey for the ASC Winter e-newsletter has been carried out this year. This newsletter is distributed to around 6,000 service users each year and has had only 32 responses since being distributed on one occasion on 9 November 2023. The audience for this newsletter is often older residents in the County who may not be familiar with online surveys or willing to provide feedback in this way. This may have contributed to the low response rate, however the newsletter received a satisfaction rating of 94% and the service will decide whether to distribute this again next year.

Graph 9 - Libraries Newsletter



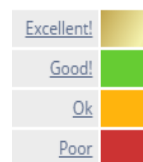
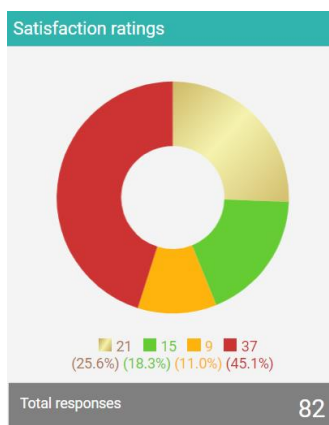
Graph 10 - ASC Winter Newsletter



7.0 Microsite Feedback 2023/24

7.1 There are currently two microsites managed by Children’s Services which are collecting feedback using the Customer Thermometer surveys. These are the [C-Zone](#) and [Family Hub](#) sites. The Family Hubs site began collecting feedback in June 2024 therefore the figures below reflect only the C-Zone site from 20 October 2023 - 31 March 2024.

Graph 11 - Customer satisfaction ratings - Microsites, 2023/24



7.2 The response rate is relatively low. Although C-Zone is available publicly, the site is for use by schools and educational settings, therefore the users are professionals rather than members of the public. This is likely to contribute to the low figures and it is apparent from some comments that parents are accessing the site for information relevant to them in error and this has been reflected in the ratings.

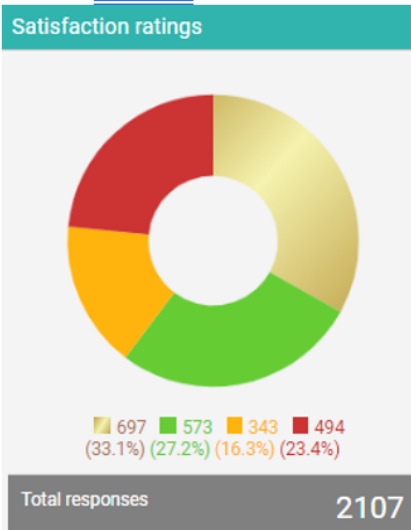
8.0 Comparison of feedback surveys received by department, 2023/24.

8.1 The following graph provides satisfaction ratings and volumes by department. There is higher usage of feedback surveys in CET where there is more web content covering the diverse range of services delivered by CET, which increases the volume of feedback for this department.

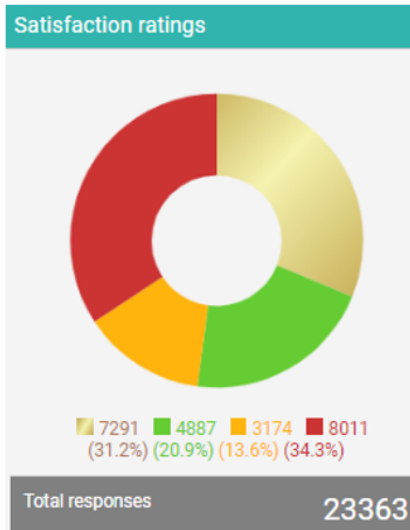
Graph 12 - Customer satisfaction ratings by department (excluding face to face) - 2023/24.

Figures include newsletters and microsities.

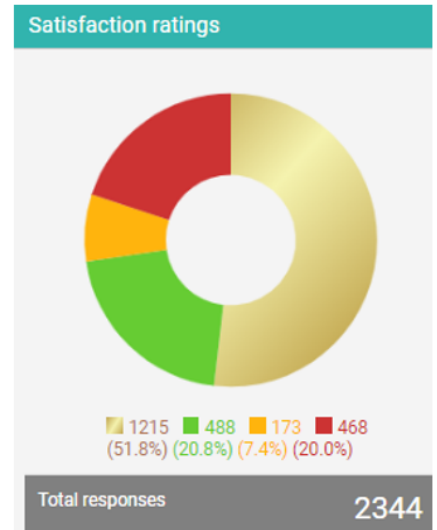
ASC Satisfaction rating 2023/24 76%



CET Satisfaction rating 2023/24 66%

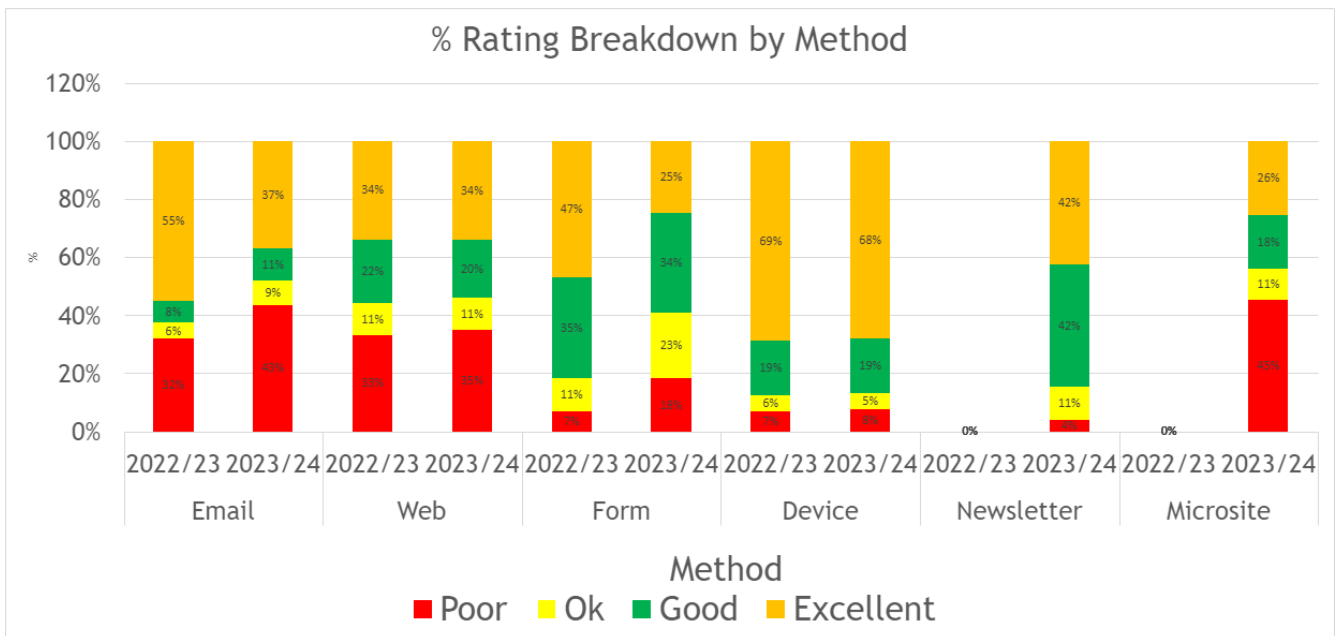


CSD Satisfaction rating 2023/24 80%



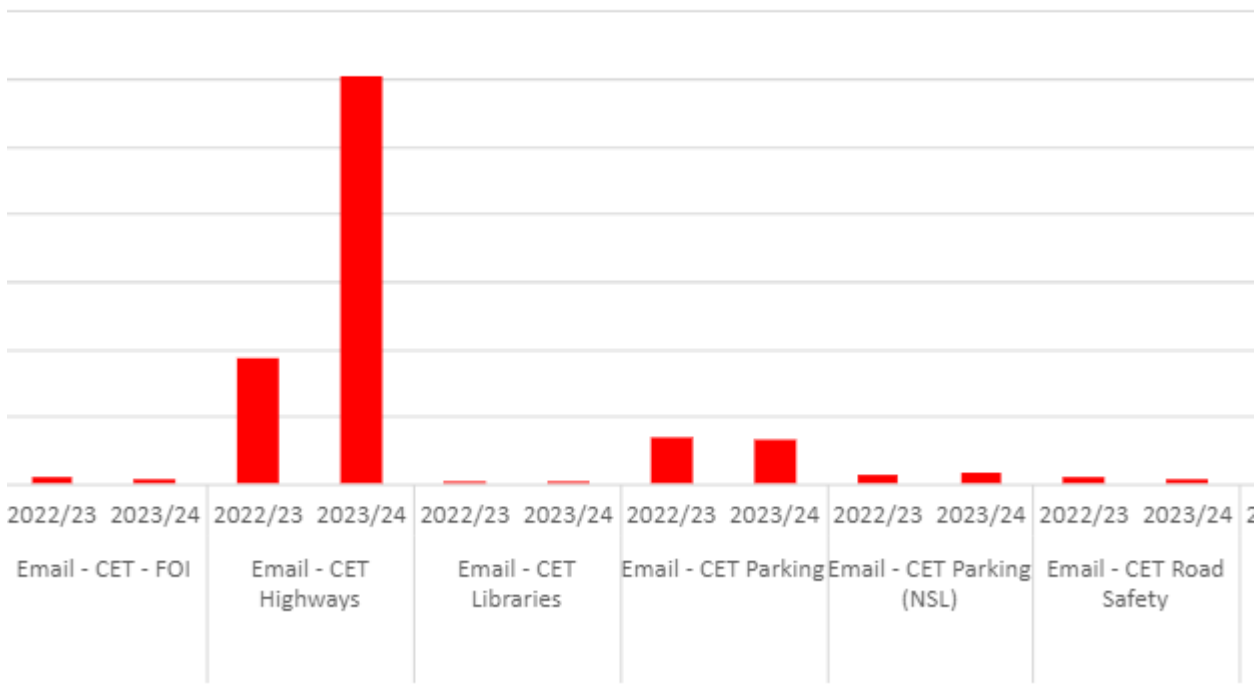
8.2 Satisfaction in both ASC and CSD have increased in comparison with 2022/23, however there has been a 10% drop in satisfaction in CET. The most significant decrease in satisfaction by method is attributed to emails and forms (see graphs 13-15 below).

Graph 13 - Customer satisfaction ratings by method for 2022/23 and 2023/24



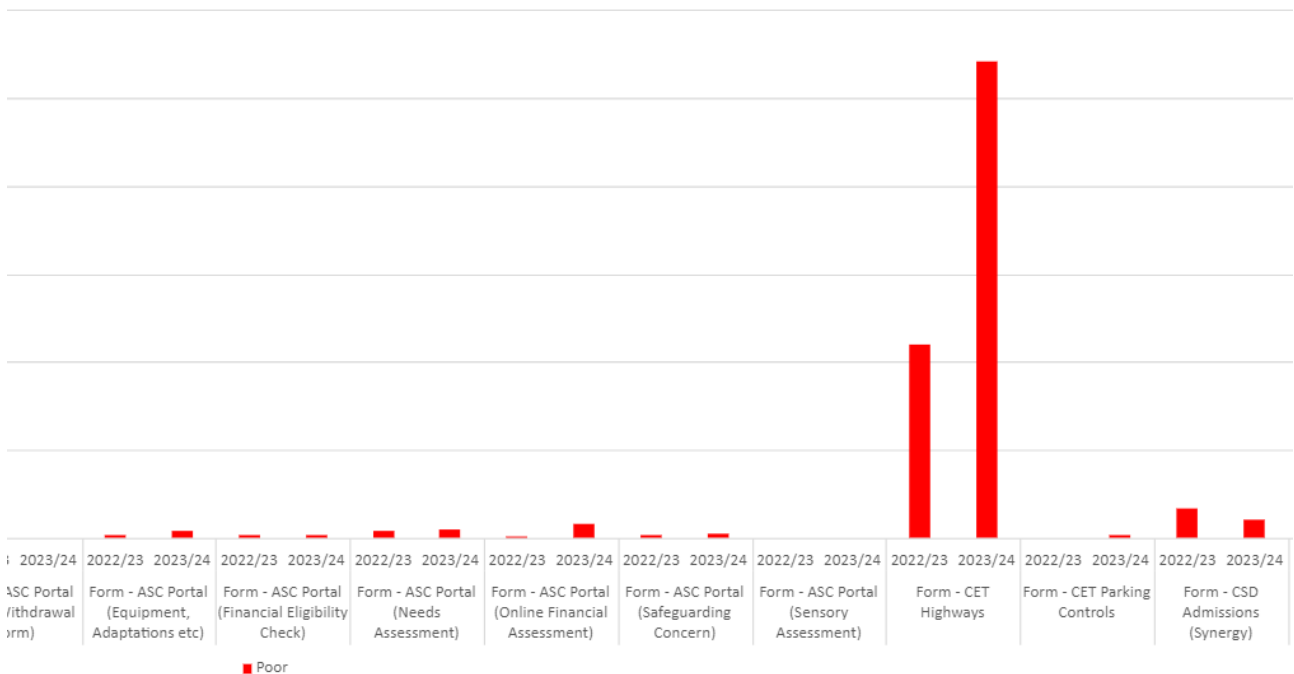
Graph 14 - An extract of the volume of poor feedback by CET team email for 2022/23 and 2023/34.

Poor Email Feedback - 2022/23 and 2023/24



Graph 15 - An extract of the volume of poor feedback for forms for 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Poor Form Feedback 2022/23 and 2023/24



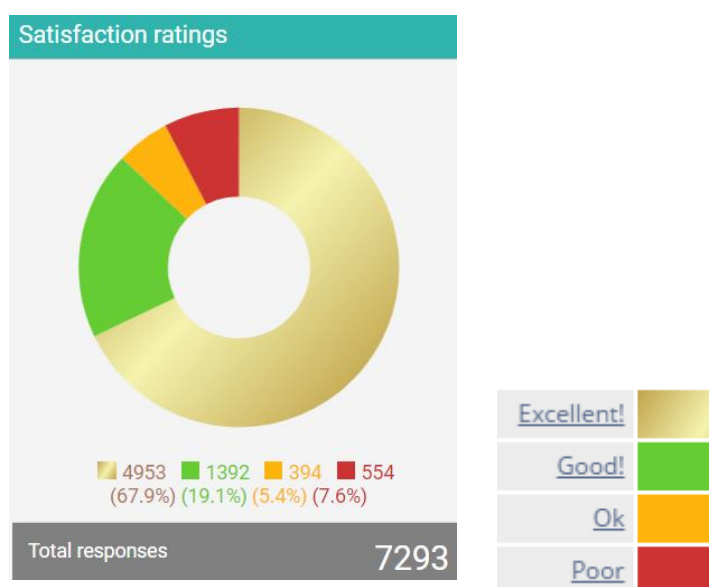
8.3 Highways have had the largest increase in poor feedback on emails and forms over this period and this has contributed to the overall decrease in satisfaction for CET. This increase in dissatisfaction for Highways in both emails and forms, aligns with the increase of potholes and defects on the network which has been worsened by the poor, and at times extreme, weather in the county over recent years. This is likely to be contributing to these results.

9.0 Face to face feedback 2023/24

9.1 A feedback device has been installed at Bexhill Library this year bringing the total number of in-person feedback devices to four. The response rate has more than doubled despite feedback unable to be gathered for some of this year due to problems with devices being logged out for longer periods than normal and hardware being broken.

9.2 The level of satisfaction with accessing services in-person remains high at 92% and the Library Service has requested that feedback devices are installed in 11 additional libraries in the upcoming year, which will extend feedback being available in 14 of our 17 libraries.

Graph 16 - Customer satisfaction ratings - Face to face (Tablets), 2023/24



10.0 Telephone feedback

10.1 As in the previous year, East Sussex Highways (ESH) remained the only service to continue collecting feedback by telephone in 2023/24. These telephone surveys paused at the start of the new highways contract in May 2023 and resumed in January 2024. Therefore, the figures provided are from 24 January to 31 March 2024. Numbers remain relatively low however the Highways Service have still found the telephone surveys valuable in addition to other measures that make up the customer satisfaction performance indicator for the contract.

10.2 There were 208 customers who provided feedback during 2023/24, which is only 170 less respondents than for the full year in 2022/23 (378) so the response rate is showing an increase and 94% of customers were satisfied with the overall service they had received. This indicates that overall satisfaction for service by telephone has increased for the period 24 January - 31 March 2024 in comparison with 2022/23 (68%).

Table 1 - Telephone survey statistics: East Sussex Highways, 2023/24

The table below shows the total volume of feedback received and the average of customers satisfaction with elements of their experience out of 5.

Monthly scores	Overall	Time Taken	Helpful /Polite	Understood Needs	Info/Advice	Average	Total feedback recorded	% Positive

Jan-24	4.3	3.7	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.4	26	88.5%
Feb-24	4.5	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.5	64	95.3%
Mar-24	4.7	4.5	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	118	97.5%

Table 2 - Telephone survey statistics: East Sussex Highways, 2023/24

The table below shows the feedback broken down by the responses given by customers for each of the measures of satisfaction. Not all customers answered every question or may have ended the survey early.

	Overall	Time Taken	Helpful/Polite	Understood Needs	Info/Advice
Excellent	162	132	183	184	164
Good	23	41	14	13	21
OK	8	19	2	2	10
Poor	3	6	0	1	1
Very Poor	9	10	7	6	9
Totals	205	208	206	206	205
Average Score	4.6	4.3	4.8	4.8	4.6
% Satisfied	94%	92%	97%	97%	95%

10.3 At the Customer Experience Board in March 2023, it was agreed to postpone a re-trial of telephone surveys and additional SMS surveys for other services across the Council until we have the necessary statistics of the number of telephone calls and related hunt groups. The Customer Contact Data project team are continuing to work on obtaining these figures and the Customer Services Team are also keeping up to date on progress of the incoming telephony system before advancing a trial of telephony surveys for other services. The Customer Services Team have also worked with teams across the council to investigate hunt group journeys to contribute to the wider telephony project.

11.0 Customer Feedback further rollout

11.1 The further rollout of customer feedback surveys continues and the steps which have taken are highlighted throughout this report but are listed here for clarity:

- Face to face feedback device installed at Bexhill Library
- Successful pilot of Libraries newsletter and ASC Winter Newsletter
- Surveys added to CSD Microsites; C-Zone and Family Hubs
- Five additional form surveys added: Parking Request Form, 4 ASC Portal forms for the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Team.
- Piloted use of feedback 'drivers' for Customer Services and Parking Services Teams on emails, web and forms.

11.2 Ongoing investigations and suggestions for further rollout:

- Installation of devices at Family Hubs
- Inclusion on chatbot/Digital Assistants
- Expand use of 'drivers' wording on surveys, notably highways emails
- Installation of feedback devices in 11 additional public library sites

12.0 Customer Service Network

12.1 The Customer Services Network in 2023/24 continued to provide a vital platform for staff from across the authority for sharing lessons learned and best practice and discuss challenges faced by their services.

12.2 The meetings have allowed us to share feedback results from the feedback surveys and gain valuable insight from services in response to their own feedback. We have also shared the approved recommendations from the Customer Experience Board and used the network to encourage the use of feedback surveys.

12.3 Significant updates shared with teams have been the trial of drivers, feedback for large mailouts/newsletters and project updates for the telephony replacement and addressing violence, harassment and discrimination against staff.

13.0 Conclusions

13.1 The increased quantity of customer feedback gathered during 2023/24 is attributed to the increase in number of forms and email surveys available as well as a review and update of web pages hosting the surveys. This is alongside customers being more active in providing feedback for certain services, such as highways, parking and ASC team emails and portal forms.

13.2 We will work with library services to complete the roll-out of devices into most of their libraries. We also investigate the possibility of providing feedback devices in Family Hubs. As the use of digital assistants becomes more prevalent, we will work with teams to explore the possibility of using customer feedback surveys on this platform.

13.3 We will continue the pilot of 'drivers' on surveys ensuring that the wording is appropriate for the audience and with a focus on extending the pilot to highways email and form surveys to try and identify reasons for the increase in poor feedback.

13.4 Service-specific feedback still proves valuable to allow individual services to review their own feedback and make local changes, while the analysis of all surveys by the Customer Services Team provides a useful Council-wide overview.