

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review 2023



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Vision

- To deliver excellent customer services that are easy to use, provide value for money to all our residents, and wherever possible, to provide digital access to all our services.
- To use digital technology to help us put the customer at the heart of everything we do.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Key themes

- To provide an excellent customer journey
- To provide good quality, easy to use digital services
- To make it clear how customers can contact us
- To make it clear what we can help customers with and what we can't
- To listen to our customers and use this to improve services
- To deliver value for money
- To invest in our people



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Digital Exclusion

Whilst we promote the shift to digital channels as a way to deliver most services and communicate with residents, we will also ensure that no-one is left behind.

For those who cannot use digital services, we continue to provide full support either face to face or over the phone.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Progress

- Work has continued to improve the website and to make it easier to use and understand.
- Initial work on the website to make the content plain English has been completed.
- The overall reading age of the website continues to fall as documents and content are updated.
- Landing pages on the web have been converted to new style which is more visually engaging and concise.



Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Progress (cont)

- Corporate Customer Standards have been implemented across the Council to ensure customers receive the same level of service across all Council departments.
- Successfully rolled out the corporate visitor and customer appointment system to ensure that we have appropriate staffing resources available within the Customer Services Centre to offer support to customers accessing services online via public PCs.
- Increased publicity via One Darlington, social media and internal magazines on how residents can contact us.

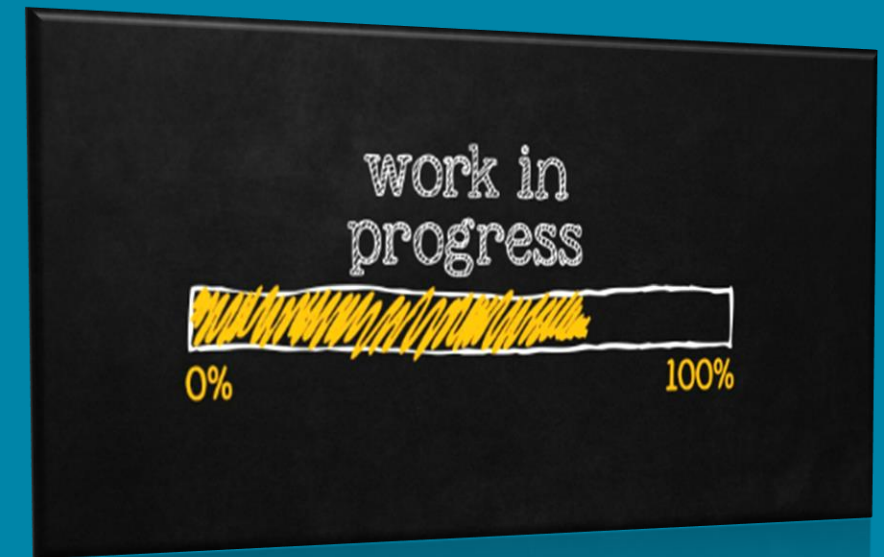


DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Progress (cont)

- Introduced new online options for customers to pay for their Blue Badge online, order bulky waste collections, order replacement equipment (bins, recycling boxes) and continued to promote the online garden waste collection.
- Services such as Childrens Front Door, Dolphin Centre& Housing Services have fully adopted the new telephony system (Netcall) to allow them better control and performance reporting on phone calls and emails.
- Expanded the use of Docusign in Housing Services to allow new tenants to sign documents without the need to come into the Town Hall.
- Piloted an online feedback facility with StreetScene customers who make contact by email, telephone or face to face with Customer Services.



Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Corporate Customer Standards

- Introduced in 2021 and aim to put customers at the heart of everything we do.
- Sets out corporate standards and a shared commitment to excellent customer service across the Authority.
- Ensures customers should receive the same level of service from all departments.
- Sets performance standards for online, telephone, correspondence and face to face contact.
- <https://www.darlington.gov.uk/customer-services/our-performance/>

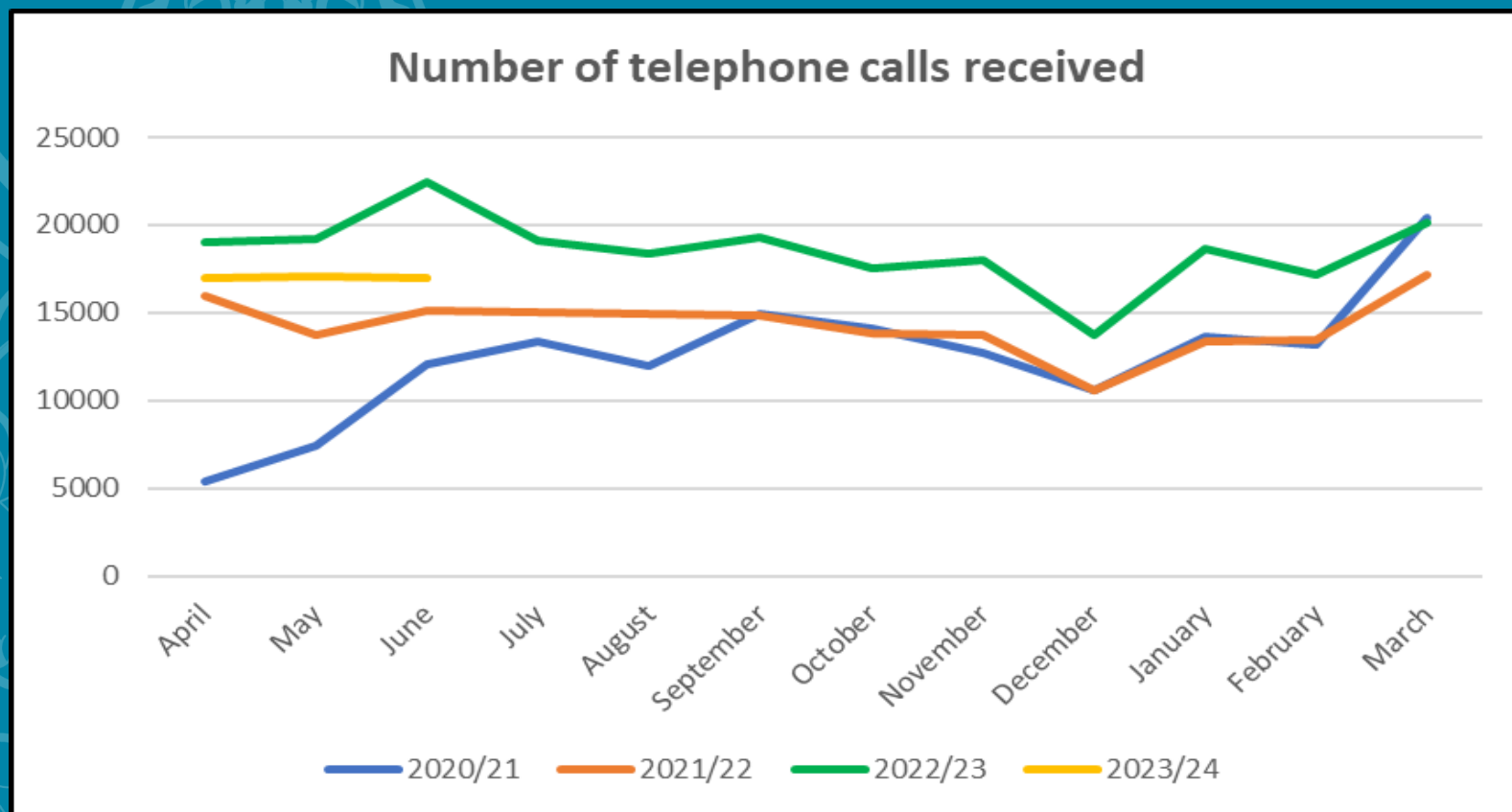


DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Outcomes

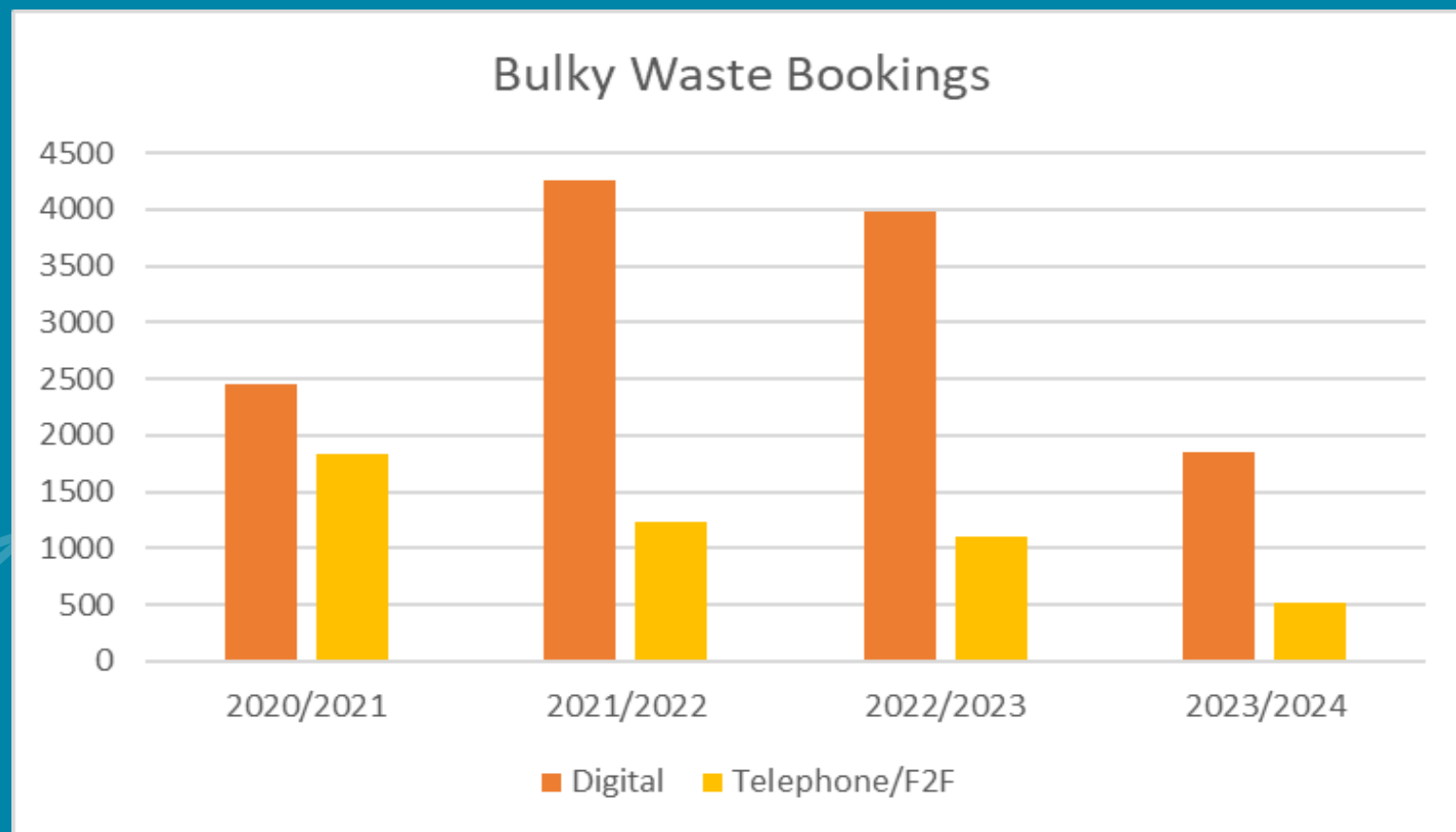
- Numbers of calls into Customer Services have declined for services that have increased their online forms as more residents use this method of contact (e.g. StreetScene)



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

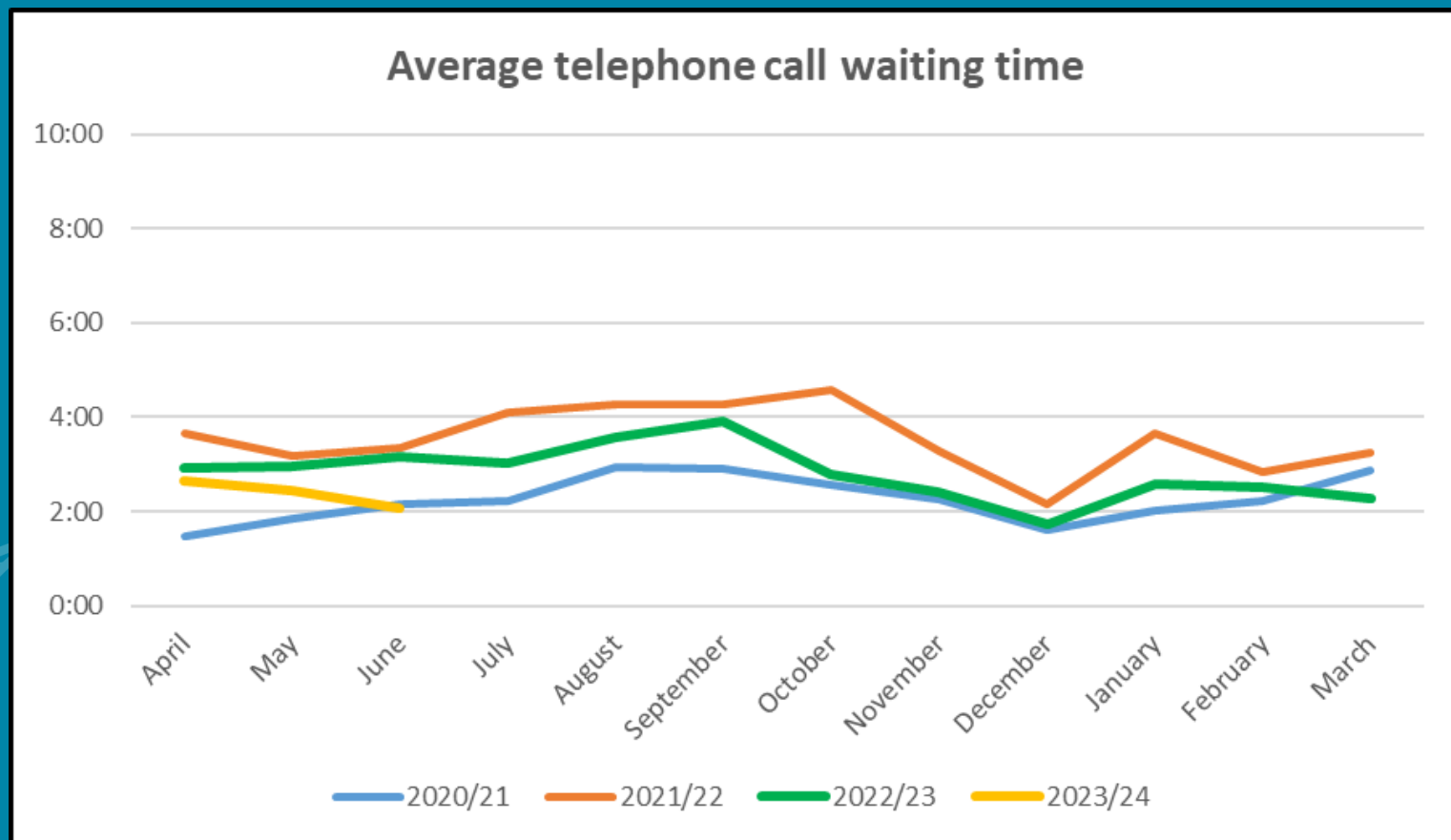
Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Online applications for bulky waste is the most popular method of booking for customers and has reduced the telephone calls for this service significantly.



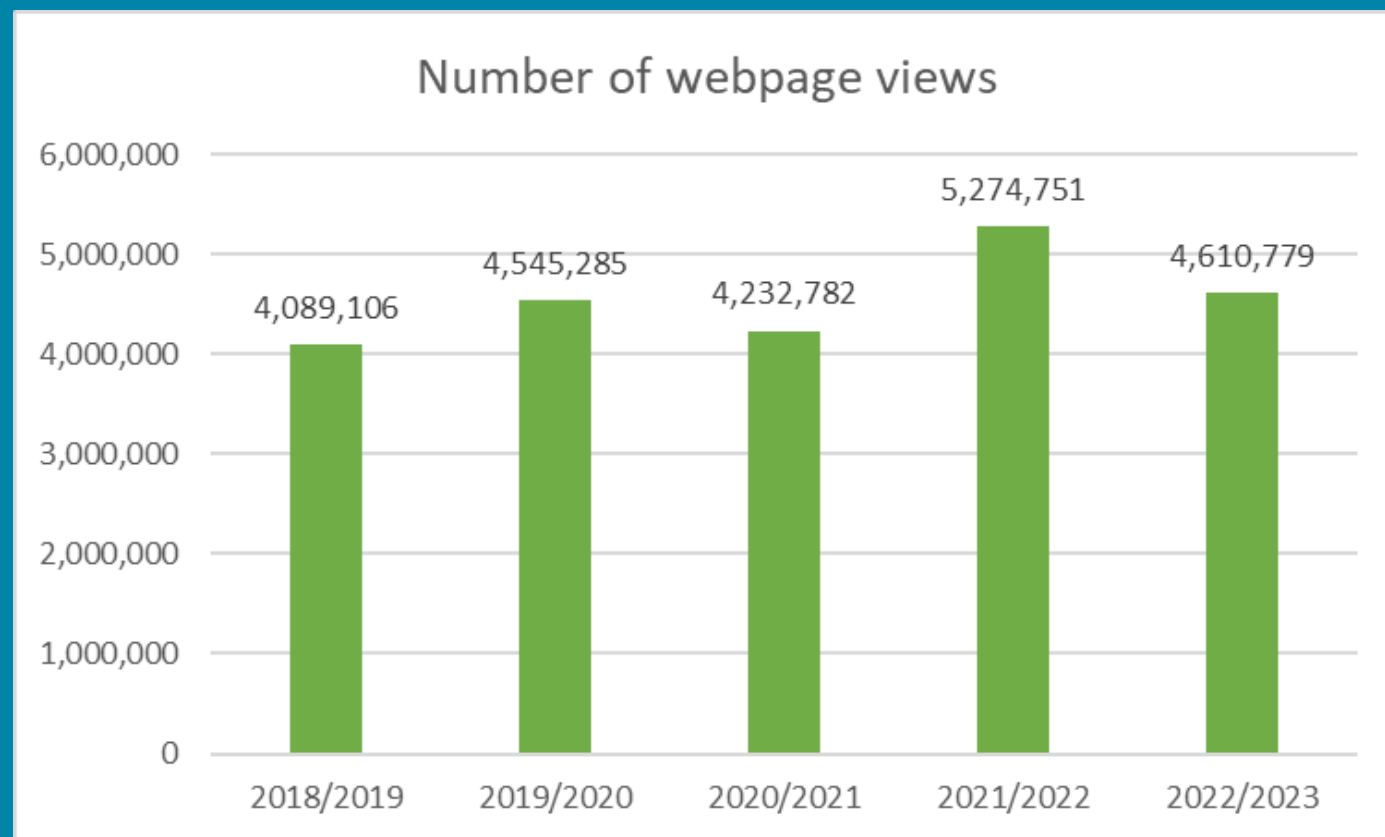
Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

Average wait times for customers have continued to decline thereby improving the customer journey and meeting performance targets.

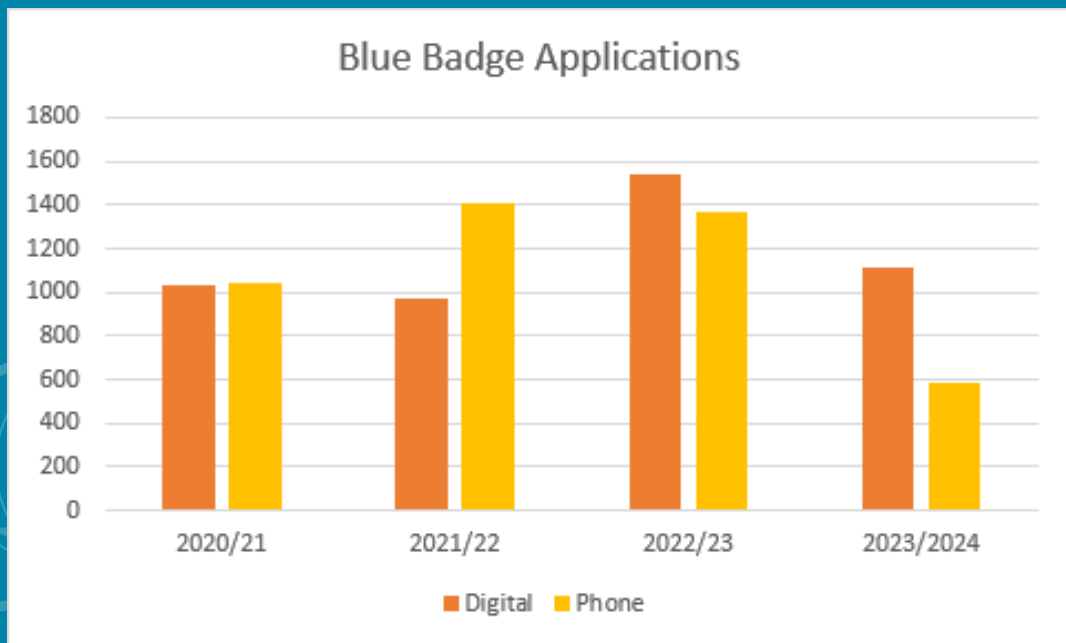


Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

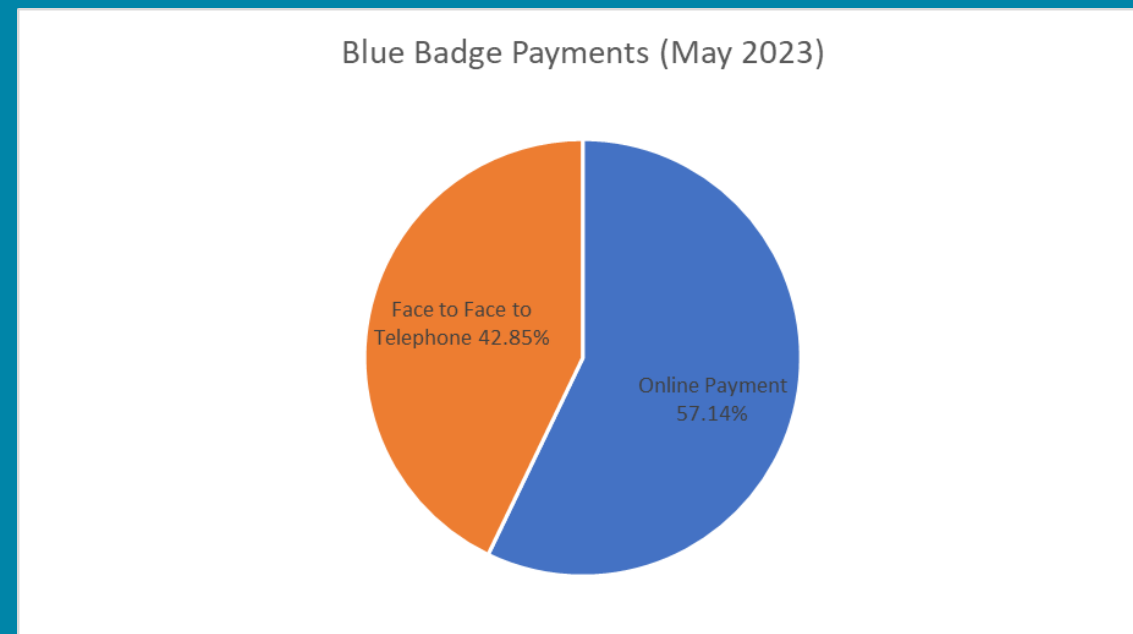
Number of webpage views to the DBC website showing that customers are using the webpage to access services, advice and support.



Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review



Since the introduction of online Blue Badge applications in 2019 numbers have increased annually, with online now the preferred way to apply.



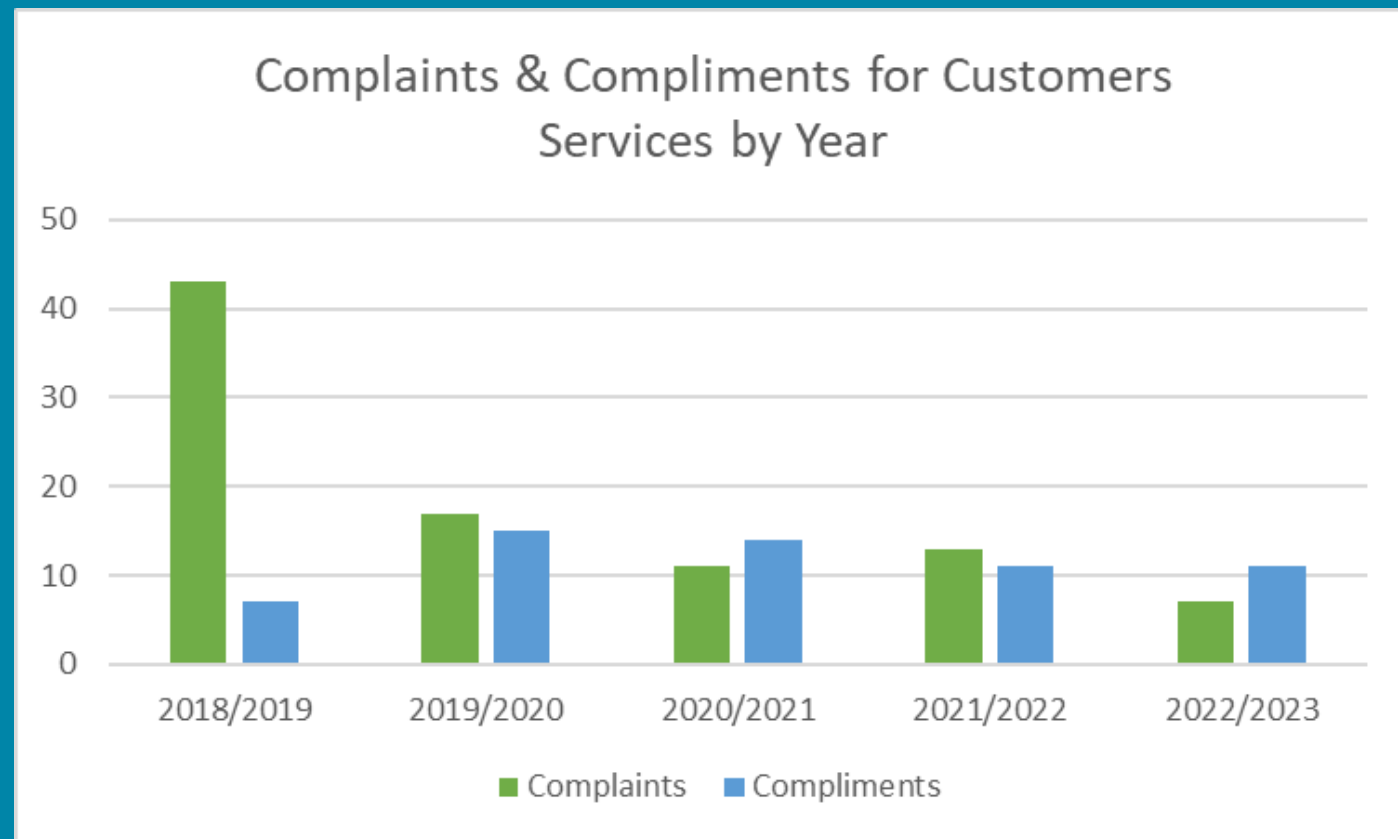
Within the first month of offering an online payment facility for Blue Badge applications more than half of customers (57.14%) used this option.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

- Complaints received for Customer Services have decreased following the introduction of more online services. Compliments increased.
- Average call wait times have continued to meet Corporate Customer Standards targets.
- Complaints make up less than 0.01% of total calls received through Netcall.



Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

The next 12 months

- Trial chatbot and webchat facilities through the Customer Services telephony system (Netcall) to provide an automated webchat facility for customers for basic queries and requests.
- Continue to improve the website and online forms.
- Review customer feedback pilot.
- Move all customer telephony lines to Netcall.
- Review Customer Services & Digital Strategy to ensure it meets requirements for 2024 onwards.
- Further upgrades to the website are planned for Autumn 2023 including “password-less” login to MD+ to make it easier to login.



Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review

The next 12 months (cont)

- Promote the new online Housing allocation system, looking at additional digital functions such as integration with existing back office systems.
- Expand Darlington Home Online (digital tenancy portal for Housing tenants) to allow customers to book repairs online and without requirement to speak with staff.
- Introduce new online forms to make it easier for Council tenants to contact Housing Services.



DARLINGTON
Borough Council

Customer Services & Digital Strategy Review 2023



DARLINGTON
Borough Council