



**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

REDDITCH

1st July – 30th September 2011

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

*making
a
difference*

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

Introduction

This report aims to provide Members with some of the key customer service information for the organisation, including:-

- analysis of the complaints and compliments received during this quarter and any other relevant feedback;
- Customer Service Centre management information, including transactional statistics;
- customer satisfaction;
- progress highlights in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy;
- Hub Update; and
- Voice of the Customer – the big issues for customers this quarter.

Customer Feedback Analysis

Compliment and Complaints Received

The following table sets out the numbers of complaints and compliments received during the second quarter of 2011/12.

Dept	Compliments	Complaints	Complaint target met	Complaint Justified	Complaint not justified
Business Transformation	0	0	0	0	0
Community Services	4	2	2	1	1
Customer Services	8	7	7	6	1
Environmental Services	21	10	10	5	5
Housing	17	19	12	7	12
Leisure and Culture	2	0	0	0	0
Planning and Regeneration	2	4	3	0	4
Policy, Performance And Partnerships	2	0	0	0	0
Resources	2	3	3	3	0
Totals	57	45	37	22	23

These compare with the following statistics from last year and last quarter:

	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time	Justified
All 2010/11	80	65	20
Q1 2011/12	56	35	23

What did we learn from the Complaints received?

The majority of complaints received this quarter had several factors in common which were:

- not keeping the customer informed;
- giving customers the wrong information
- delays in dealing with their complaint
- not treating the customer with respect

These are all issues that we are addressing with staff by customer service training and the introduction of key behaviours for all staff which will be monitored by managers through personal development review

Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days. 82% were dealt with within that timeframe, which is a 9% improvement on last quarter.

Where it has taken us longer to respond than expected, customers were informed that there would be a delay in all cases.

Complaints Received	Number handled within target	1-2 days after target	3- 10 days after target	11- 21 After target
	37	3	1	4
Reason		This is due to users not entering the correct date when closing cases	Complex and varied investigations- Tenancy	Complex and varied investigations- Homelessness, neighbour issues and repairs

Details of justified complaints and actions taken

It is important that we understand the scope of complaints received and what action was taken to address the issue. The following table provides some detail on each justified complaint.

Service	Nature of Complaint	Action Taken/Improvement Action
Dial a Ride	Customer not happy with the attitude of a driver	Apology given and customer assured that all drivers will assist her when travelling on Dial a Ride. All drivers have received this message through

		the daily schedule and staff member advised on correct procedure and attitude.
Customer Service	Customer handed in tenancy termination form at reception but claims it was mislaid.	Apology given and system checks made as customer had no evidence of handing in..
Customer Service	Customer handed in information re benefits but claims it was mislaid	Apology given and system checks made.
Customer Service	Customer had problems contacting some services by telephone	Apology given and teams reminded of need to arrange cover to ensure phones are answered.
Customer Service	Customer did not receive her CTV tip permits ordered by OSS	Apology given for this error and staff advised of correct procedure.
Customer Service	Customer was given wrong information about council tax reference number which caused confusion when she paid bill.	Apology given and staff member given additional training.
Customer Service	Customer unhappy about the way she was treated when trying to sort out her council tax bill	Apology given and staff member advised of correct procedure and how to respond to customer queries.
Waste	Customer has assisted collection but bin has not been returned	Apology given and crews advised of correct procedure. This will be monitored.
Waste	Customer upset at receiving a letter about leaving bins out in a public area when she was not responsible.	Apology given and process will be reviewed
Waste	Customer has ongoing problems with refuse crews blocking disabled ramp or leaving bins in disabled parking areas.	Apology given, however neighbours have been blocking access with their bins. Crews have been briefed and situation will be monitored
Waste	Customer is not receiving sacks for his waste collection despite numerous requests	Apology given. System will be reviewed.
Waste	Customer received verbal abuse from waste crew when they asked if the bin could be emptied after crew missed it.	Apology given and crew member reminded of the need to be respectful at all times.
Housing	Customer unhappy that her complaint about her boundary and access has not been resolved	Apology given with advice about boundaries.
Housing	Customer unhappy about the delay in replacing his boundary fence	Apology given for not keeping the customer informed that the delay was caused by contractors unable to access the adjoining property.
Housing	Customer not happy about delay to repair leak in airing cupboard	Apology given and guidance given to staff to ensure that jobs are picked up and followed through.

Housing	Customer has ongoing problem with overflowing drain and neighbours garden	Apology given. Drain and garden cleared and neighbour's garden causing the problem will be monitored.
Housing	Customer was unhappy about the way she and her partner were treated when applying as homeless and were kept waiting for 3 hours in reception	Apology given, case taken over by manager as requested by customer.
Housing	A lock on customer's garage was changed in error, so she could not get her car out and then she had to take time off work to report this mistake.	Apology given, lock changed and staff advised to check details.
Housing	Replacement boiler has been making loud noises and has a pressure fault. Customer contacted the contractors to deal with it but they did not turn up.	Apology given and contractor attended to inspect the boiler.
Income and Debt Mgt	Customer received lifeline invoice and telephone call demanding payment for his late fathers bill. He had returned the equipment and the bill was for after his father had died.	Apology given. A letter had been received but not acted on.
Benefits	Customer provided information but they were not scanned and were returned to her. She then had another letter requesting the information.	Apology given and information process to be reviewed.
Council tax	Member of staff rude to customer when she was upset about her late grandmother in a phone call about bill arrangements	Apology given and staff member reminded of the need to be courteous at all times.

“You said – we listened” – what did we change as a result of complaints?

Waste – Review of system that sends out generic letters to customers

Benefits- System for recording information received from customers to be reviewed

Housing Repairs- new guidance given to staff about job schedules

Number of complaint escalated to Head of Customer Services

There was one complaint escalated to the Head of Customer Services, for further investigation or action. This related to **Housing** – an ongoing tenancy issue about the Council wishing to inspect a tree in the customer's garden and the customer refusing access. After investigation the Head of Customer Services felt this complaint was not justified and that we could not meet the customers' expectations.

What did we learn from the compliments received?

From the range of compliments received it is apparent that customers appreciate when we take the time to listen to their concerns and take prompt action. Here are some of the compliments we have received.

Team	Compliment Details
Shop Mobility	I would like to say all staff are very helpful- they will go out of their way for anyone – this service is the best I have ever seen and all the staff should have a medal
Childrens Centre's	Customer called to leave very complimentary praise for all the hard work and efforts that Mo Dennis went to regarding the two year funding for her grandson. She really feels that Mo went above and beyond, and Sure Start are lucky to have someone as wonderful as Mo on the team.
Customer Services	Customer arranged for large waste bin to be collected and told it would be within 5 working days which did not happen. Reported this to the Contact Centre and wished to thank Hannah for solving the delay in collecting the bin. Our concerns at the call centre have been promptly and politely dealt with and we would like to thank everyone for ensuring we had a good quality service.
Customer Services	Thank you for your help and kindness regarding my application for Blue Badge application.
Landscaping	Customer phoned to say thank you for arranging to cut the hedges in Meriden Close at such short notice. His wife was overjoyed and the lads were excellent, he even made them a cup of tea.
Waste	Customer phoned up to express how thrilled she was with the service received today from the refuse crews. Her bin has been missed this morning because her son had not put it out properly. She contacted the OSS who logged her request for them to return but said they could not promise anything. However, within the hour the crew came back up her road and emptied her bin. She was extremely pleased and very grateful and thinks this was a very good service.
Street Cleaning	Customer would like to say a big THANK YOU to Redditch Council for their swift and thorough action. When he called to complain about excessive mud on the

	road that was caused by the contractors at the building site in the road. On Tuesday morning a team of sweepers arrived and cleaned up the road really well! He could not believe how quickly this had been dealt with and such a thorough job too!
Sports Development	Customer had a stroke and was referred to Abbey Stadium gym. Martin Carver took me under his wing and the amount of work he has done to help me is quite unbelievable
Planning and Regeneration	In my dealings with Mr Whittles, he has not only been extremely helpful, but he has also maintained a sense of humour. This latter point goes a long way, in my opinion, in cementing good customer relations. He has helped me many times in explaining planning processes, and never wavered from giving me clear and concise honest answers. In fact, he has always gone the extra mile in providing additional information. Items I wouldn't have thought to have asked for in my original enquiry. I can recommend his way of dealing with things as an example to the rest of the council.
Revenues	Thank you for your excellent service in dealing with my Mothers change of address and circumstances

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were no LGO complaints received during this period.

Customer feedback in respect of complaint handling

Since April 2011 we have been asking customers for feedback on how their complaint was handled. The response to this tells us that **70%** of customers that responded are satisfied with way we are handling their complaint even when we can't give them the outcome they want. From their comments it is clear that customers are most unhappy about the lack of contact from the Council in response to their queries. Some customers have told us that they would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss their concerns in person.

Managers are encouraged to discuss complaints over the phone or in person whenever possible as this often results in a better outcome for all.

Customer Service Centre Information

The section aims to give members useful information in respect of the service provided at the Customer Service Centres (CSC) and One Stop Shops (OSS). The CSC's and OSS's provide facilities for the majority of customer enquiries made face to face, and the telephone enquiries for many of the key frontline service. The Customer Services Team also deal with email enquiries received to the Hub email address.

The purpose of the Customer Services team is **to help resolve customer's problems or requests**. We use measures rather than targets to assess what is happening in the service and this section includes some of the headlines.

Through transformation we are learning that for some services it is more cost effective and efficient, for both the organisation and the customer, if the enquiries are dealt with by a specialist member of staff. In respect of revenues and benefits this has resulted in less enquiries being dealt with by the CSC team, although the CSC staff are still involved in filtering enquiries, capturing customer information and then allocating the enquiry to the correct officer for resolution. Some CSC staff have increased their knowledge to enable them to deal with Council Tax enquiries to resolution. There are also a number of customer service staff involved in systems thinking reviews and therefore helping to establish new ways of working.

Customer numbers

The following table shows the numbers of customer enquiries dealt with:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter
Face to face enquiries	20,955	17,724
Telephone enquiries	19,333	19,261
Email enquiries	725	469
Payments	32,454	31,958
Total customer contacts	73,467	69,412

It is generally the case that the first quarter sees the highest number of enquiries due to main billing for Council Tax and other annual events which prompt enquiries.

Waiting Times

Our average waiting times for seeing or speaking to a member of staff who could help the customer were:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter
Face to Face	33 seconds	5 minutes 28 seconds
Telephones	1 minute 30 seconds	1 minute 7 seconds
Email	We always respond to emails within 1 working day of receipt.	

The increase reported in average waiting times is due to longer waiting times to see specialist staff. However, the vast majority of customers are seen by as soon as they arrive. The majority of customers who see a specialist member of staff leave the office with full resolution to their enquiry, making the extra wait worthwhile for the customer.

Customer report they are happy to wait longer provided they get resolution to their problem, or know exactly what they must do next to enable resolution.

In future recording waiting times will become less useful to us as we change the service to one which is more responsive to customer demand and there are likely to be many different staff and services providing services through the CSC facilities. Instead we will focus on responding to demand and the resolution of the customer's problem or enquiry.

Failure and Value demand

Failure demand is customer contact that is a result of the organisation not doing something, or not doing something right.

For the purposes of transformation it is necessary to establish the rate of failure demand within a service. As the CSC's deals with customer demand for a range of services we record failure demand across those services, so this is not a reflection on the CSC, but for the organisation as a whole.

During the 2nd quarter of 2011/12 the CSC recorded an average of 32.5% failure demand. It is too soon to start seeing trends in respect of failure demand but as we move towards becoming a true systems thinking organisation this data becomes one of our key measures. We are currently developing a system to enable us to better record customer demand, value and failure and the capability of the system to deal with that demand.

Cost of service

The average transactions costs based on the total cost of the service for 2010/11 were:

Face to Face	Telephones	Payments
£2.80	£3.29	£0.98

Customer Satisfaction

During this quarter we asked **33%** of customers how happy they were with the service provided at the Customer Service Centre's.

100% of face to face customers were satisfied with the service they received.

99% of telephone customers were satisfied with the service.

Because this data is not really telling us anything useful about the service we provide I intend to cease ongoing capture of satisfaction data and carry out an annual snapshot survey to enable us to ensure that our service is continuing to meet customer excellence.

As our purpose is to help resolve customers problems and requests, but many of these problems or requests are handed over to someone else within the organisation to resolve, we are instead implementing a customer callback system. This will entail Customer Service staff calling customers back a few weeks after they initially made contact to survey them about whether their enquiry was resolved to their satisfaction.

This will provide the organisation with valuable data about how well all services are dealing with customer demand.

Strategy Action Plan Progress

Work has been progressing well across the organisation in respect of meeting the aims set out in the Every Customer, Every Time Customer Experience Strategy.

This quarter's headlines are.....



Delivered Customer Care staff to approximately 200 staff



Developed customer service awards scheme to recognise excellent customer service across the organisation.



Conducted customer satisfaction survey (see Voice of the Customer below for results)



Testing of redesigned Revenues and Benefits systems, which has increased resolution at the first point of contact, reduced failure demand and improved the service to customers.



Commenced work in Environmental Services and Housing transformations.



Improved web content by removing unnecessary information, improving the quality and implementing improved web pages for Housing Services, Customer Services and the implementation of a feedback mechanism to enable us to further improve webpages based on customer's needs.

Some areas of work in respect of the Strategy Action Plan have not been progressed for various reasons. These are:-

Plain English Training – Although originally planned for during 11/12 more generic customer centric writing skills training has been agreed as more useful and will be implemented in the 3rd and 4th quarter. This will pick up on elements of plain English and will also focus on quality written communications which meet customer's needs.

Tell us Once Project – This was delayed by DWP. This scheme enables the Registrars' Service to advise a wide range of public services of the death of a resident, and was due to go live during summer 2011, but it now looks like that we will be going live early in 2012.

Worcestershire Self Service Strategy – Due to wide variations in the requirements of some of the partners, work in respect of this has continued in but in a less structured way than previously expected. We are focusing on our local requirements and will be led by the outcome of our system thinking reviews.

Staff Surveys/internal customer surveys - These have not been carried out as we have decided to take a systems thinking approach to measuring staff morale. Where transformation reviews have commenced a measure of morale has been taken and this is re-taken periodically throughout the review and subsequent changes in service delivery. Likewise internal customer surveys have become somewhat obsolete as services become designed around customer demand.

Hub Partnership Update

We continue to work with colleagues across Worcestershire through the Hub Partnership to deliver joined up access to services. Through the Redditch Customer Services Centre and One Stop Shops we assisted approximately 2,800 customers with county related enquiries such as blue badges, concessionary bus passes, highways and street lighting, during the last quarter.

There are no major developments or events to report this quarter as our focus is on our own transformation of service. The Hub Shared Service is focusing on the enhancement of self service projects to shift customer to online channels for doing business.

Voice of the Customer



During the summer we carried out a satisfaction survey through the residents magazines.

The response was disappointing with only 12 residents completing and returning the survey. One of the surveys was not completed so only 11 were analysed. Unfortunately this is not enough responders to consider this representative but the results are as follows.

Contact with services

The survey asked responders to indicate which services they had had contact with in the last few months. The results show that the following percentage of customers have contacted these services:

Benefits and Council Tax	45%
Refuse and Recycling	63%
Planning or Building Control	18%
Housing	9%
Sports/Leisure Parks	36%

Satisfaction with services

Customers were then asked to indicate whether they were satisfied with the services they had contacted and these results show the percentage that were satisfied.

Benefits and Council Tax	60%
Refuse and Recycling	71%
Planning or Building Control	66%
Housing	not stated
Sports/Leisure Parks	75%

Overall rating of Council

We then asked responders to rate the Council overall with the following results:

1	Very poor	20%
2	Poor	Nil
3	Adequate	10%
4	Good	50%
5	Excellent	20%

What could the Council do to get to a five star rating?

Finally responders were asked to tell us what we could have done differently to get a 5 rating and customers that completed this section of the survey gave the following comments;

- Increase single [person council tax to 50%. Reduce waste, unnecessary spending and pensions
- Increase bin collections in summertime
- Keep the parks the same and more flowers
- Don't waste public time, be polite when answering calls
- Improve Environmental Health by enforcing littering, fly tipping and education
- Sort out pot holes in road more promptly.

These comments echo results of other surveys which confirm that the environment and keep it clean and pleasant are important to resident's.

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services