



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

**Making Experiences Count
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st October – 31st December 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; and
- progress highlights in respect of the Customer Experience Strategy;

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	5	6	5	2	4
Customer Services	7	3	3	1	2
Environmental Services	13	4	4	4	0
Housing	6	20	14	11	9
Leisure and Culture	3	4	4	0	4
Planning and Regeneration	0	3	2	0	3
Policy, Performance And Partnerships	0	0	0	0	0
Resources	1	7	4 1 still open	5	1
Totals	35	47	36 (1 still open)	22	23

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These compare with the following statistics from last year and the last two quarters:

	Total complaints	Dealt with in target time	Justified
All 2010/11	80	65	20
Q1 and Q2 2011/12	101	72	46

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

Time taken to respond to complaints

We aim to respond to customer complaints within 15 working days. 76.5% were dealt with within that timeframe. 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
47	36	3	6	2
Reason		This is due to users not entering the correct date when closing cases.	Complex and varied investigations- Rent arrears, Tenancy, Repairs, Benefits, Council Tax	Complex and varied investigations- Homelessness, Planning Objection

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 rang into Dial A Ride on 64910 and had a 40 min wait and was in the queue. She was advised next in queue the phone was answered then cut off and went dead.	Apology given. Investigation could not find any reason for this happening but it may have been due to telephone lines being tested.

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	Customer complained about the behaviour of a member of staff. She has stated that the (volunteer's) behaviour has become increasingly aggressive and feels that it unsettles her and other customers.	Apology given. Measures put in place to minimise contact the volunteer has with customers and a review of volunteers will be undertaken.
Customer Services	Customer unhappy about failure of report it tool online to prompt action in respect of missed bin and subsequent failure to respond to his email sent to OSS.	Apology given as email was not logged and acted on however the report it tool did work as bin was requested.
Landscaping	Customer wrote to report that trees bordering his road had died since last year and he is directly affected by loss as they are at rear of property. Believe there is evidence to suggest tampering to deliberately cause harm to the trees.	Apology given as Officers did not spot the holes during their inspection. There is no evidence as to who caused the holes and why.
	State of woodland area in Park after the coppicing that has been undertaken and no consultation/no advance notice of works. Customer also wants to complain about response from staff.	Apology given as original response did not deal with all of the customers issues. However many of the issues raised were not found to be justified
Waste	Customer complained that the bin men empty her bin and leave it much further down the road outside no. 30. Also she had to report the green bin had gone missing immediately after it had been emptied. She was assured that this would be monitored.	Apology given and collection to be monitored
	Customer rang to say his bin is regularly missed and despite many previous requests was missed again this week. He is fed up that we chase him for his council tax but cannot manage to empty his bin.	Apology given and collection to be monitored

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Housing	Customer wrote to complain about the way her former tenancy arrears were handled.	Apology given. This complaints dates back to 2007 and improvements have been made to this process since then.
	Customer unhappy about her place on the housing list despite evidence given of medical needs.	Apology given about the time it has taken to assess and customer placed on gold band status.
	Customer unhappy about the delay in getting back to him about his request for a garage.	Apology given for not responding and advice given.
	Customer not happy about repairs to her ceiling which have caused further damage and the numerous calls she has made to the Council with no response.	Apology given. Remedial works have been arranged.
	Customer has ongoing problem with mould and damp. Has asked several times for it to be repaired but has had no definite response.	Apology given. Messages were left for customer but his phone did not recognise the Council number so he did not receive them. Repairs have been arranged.
	Customer has made several calls about the unsafe communal doors and is unhappy about the way she and her partner were spoken to about this matter.	Apology given for not returning calls. Repairs have been rectified.
	Customer not happy about ongoing repairs needed to his flat. He has reported these several times with no response.	Apology given, repairs have now been rectified.
	Customer reported subsidence at property but has not received any response since initial inspection.	Apology given and consultants have been instructed to carry out further inspection before repairs are carried out.
	Customer requested repair to light switch and lamp on landing. Advised that this would be reported and action expected in 5 working days. This did not happen.	Apology given, repairs have now been rectified.
	Customer unhappy about some repair issues that has been reported in July but still not resolved.	Apology given as some issues were not reported back to the Repair Team

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	Customer unhappy about the lack of communication between contractors and gas company about the reconnection of his cooker.	Apology given as misleading information was given by contractor.
Council Tax	Customer unhappy about the rude and uncaring ways she was spoken to by a member of the Council Tax team.	Apology given and staff member reminded about the Council's policy for customer care
	Customer unhappy about the attitude of a council tax advisor who was rude and spoke down to her.	Apology given and staff member reminded about the Council's policy for customer care
	Customer unhappy about the mistakes that have been made with her bill.	Apology given and customer asked to provide new information.
	Customer unhappy about the ways she was spoken to when querying her bill.	Apology given.
Benefits	Customer unhappy about mis-calculations of benefits.	Apology given and refund issued.

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

We aim to use complaints as a mechanism for making improvements to our services and changes have been made as result of complaints in the following services:-

Landscaping – training was given to staff on responding to all issues in customer’s letters;

Dial a ride- a review of the volunteer list is to take place;

Housing Repairs – are reviewing systems for getting back to customers.

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 **Landscaping** – the customer was concerned that he was not consulted about coppicing work undertaken at the local wood and that when he contacted the Council his issues were not responded to. After investigation the Head of Customer Services felt this complaint was not partly justified as some of the issues were not dealt with in the response from the Council. However many of the issues were found not to be justified and that we could not meet the customers’ expectations.

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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
Customer Services	Customer called to say thank you and compliment us on the service she has received the last few occasions she has called us. Jo Frost dealt with her today but she thinks that the CSA's are generally great, very efficient and quick and on this occasion the drain people were out within 2 hours to fix the drain. She said customer services do a great job with their honesty, friendliness and accuracy.
Engineering and Landscaping	Customer wrote to say thank you for making a wonderful job of the garages at the side of his house. The difference is amazing so tidy and clean and most of all open.
Landscaping	Customer phoned in to say thank you very much for arranging and carrying out the tree works.
Refuse	Thanks to the waste collection service for providing an assisted collection over the last few years for his mother, who has now moved house.
Street Cleaning	Customer phoned to say a big thank you to the Council and the work men that have just come out to clean the pathway and the car park – they have done a lovely job thank you!
Housing – Home Support	Just a little note with a great big thank you for the care and support they gave to my Dad and myself. It was very much appreciated. Thank you so much for everything.
Leisure - Theatre	Could you please pass on to the Theatre Staff, our thanks for the support that was given to us all by your team. As always you make us feel that we are the most important people in the world when it is our show week and you and your staff are always so welcoming and helpful and are always ready to guide us through problems.
Resources- Income Team	Letter from customer to Income Team, thanking Mandi generally and stating how helpful she was at a trying time.

Local Government Ombudsman Complaints

There were 2 LGO complaints received during this period.

Complaint 1- Related to Housing/Landscaping and was responded to in 23 days. The LGO agreed a local settlement of a letter of apology from the Council about the way a letter was worded.

Complaint 2 – Related to Housing Repair and was responded to in 28 days. The LGO decided to close the case as the Council had already taken action to provide a satisfactory remedy for the customer.

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 69% 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 number of times they have to contact the Council to get a response to their issues and the time this takes.

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 by the Customer Service Team:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter
Face to face enquiries	20,955	17,724	15,840
Telephone enquiries	19,333	19,261	16,946
Email enquiries	725	469	882
Payments	32,454	31,958	30,383
Total customer contacts	73,467	69,412	64,051

Waiting Times

Our average waiting times for seeing or speaking to a member of staff who could help the customer (not including payments) were:

	1 st quarter	2 nd quarter	3 rd quarter
Face to Face	33 seconds	5 minutes 28 seconds	3 minutes 35 seconds
Telephones	1 minute 30 seconds	1 minute 7 seconds	1 minute 8 seconds
Email	We always respond to emails within 1 working day of receipt.		

We are now seeing a fairly consistent service in respect of answering the telephones but this is not the full picture as in fact 71% of all calls answered were answered in less than 8 seconds. Only 13% of callers waited longer than two minutes. Given the resources available and the unpredictability of incoming calls, and the fact that we avoid the use of automated system to answer calls this is a very good level of service.

Our priority is to ensure each customer receives the best possible service and that we resolve their issue. This means that at times others may have to wait a little longer and queues do develop at peak times. As previously reported the waiting times and management of the queues is closely monitored. We have monitored events closely and customers are rarely waiting more than a few minutes and customer satisfaction is high. We manage the queues and look out for visitors when we know they are expected to be able to fast track them

We are looking at options for remodeling the public area which would relieve the pressure on the space just inside the main doors but there will be costs associated to this.

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 3rd quarter of 2011/12 the CSC recorded an average of 34% failure demand. This is reasonable consistent with previous months, although we know from looking at some services more closely through transformation that failure demand is very variable in each service and also dependent on what is happening within the service at the time.

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A study of value and failure during this period shows the variation of value and failure demand in the following services.

Service	Value	Failure
Housing Repairs	64%	36%
Environmental Services	77%	23%
Council Tax	84%	16%
Benefits	55%	45%
Blue Badge	70%	30%

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

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. So during this quarter we implemented a scheme to try to establish how well the organisation (or a part of it) responded to customers problems.

During this November we called 23 customers, who had made contact with us with issues relating to Environmental Services, a little time after they had initially contacted us to find out whether their issue had been resolved to their satisfaction. We received the following responses to our questions:

How was your enquiry handled by the customer services adviser?

Poor	Fair	Average	Good	Excellent
0	0	1	5	17

Was your enquiry resolved to your satisfaction by the council?

Yes	No
14	8

If not why not?

1. Ongoing situation – more investigation required
2. Bins delivered but then had problems with bins being collected/emptied
3. Smaller grey bin arrived – very dirty

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4. Ongoing issue, signs erected and there is still only 1 bin, but there are 4 entry and exit. 1 exit point 2 bins close together. Signage looks unprofessional
5. Trees have not been cut back, no one has contacted to say what is happening
6. Although someone has returned feel it has been left in a poor state
7. Not heard from anyone
8. Rubbish is still there, its an ongoing problem- area used as a dumping ground

3 Call Back's were referred to Environmental Services for action and 1 New job was raised

All call back satisfaction checklists have been passed to Environmental Services Managers and the information will be used to help inform transformation in that service.

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.....



Customer Call backs introduced, to establish whether we have resolved customer enquiries.



Mystery Shopping exercise started using Customer Focus Group staff from across Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council to establish the quality of response to customer enquiries by email or letter.



Customer Focused Writing Skills training provide to around 30 staff



Ongoing changes to Benefits and Council Tax service to provide enhanced face to face service, resulting in greater resolution and reduction in failure demand.



Implemented 'Tell us Once' service in conjunction with registrars service for the reporting of bereavements once and updating all relevant council records.



Implemented 'star' system on web pages to gather feedback on the usefulness of content.

Amanda de Warr
Head of Customer Services