

Report of the Head of Customer Contact (Contact Centre)

Report to: Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)

Date: 14th March 2016

Subject: Contact Centre Performance Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 Summary of main issues

1.1 Since my last report in September, I am pleased to report an improvement in performance and provide an update on the items we specifically discussed. Good progress is being made in each of the areas covered within the last report.

2.0 Purpose of this report:

2.1 At the Board's request I am following up my September report with an update on the following items raised at that meeting:

- **Call answer rates** – some concerns were raised around the decline of call answer rates, particularly involving housing related calls. In response it was noted that staff turnover had been exceptionally high and that any new members of staff need to be appropriately trained first.
- **Career progression opportunities** – as highly trained staff, it was noted that many Customer Service Officers will apply for higher grade jobs elsewhere in the Council and particularly within Housing Leeds. To help retain staff, Members agreed that more career progression opportunities within the contact centre environment are needed.
- **Breakdown of call answer rates** – Members acknowledged that there will be peak times when customers will be calling the contact centre. As such, the Board requested that future performance reports provide a breakdown of call answer rates by time of day.

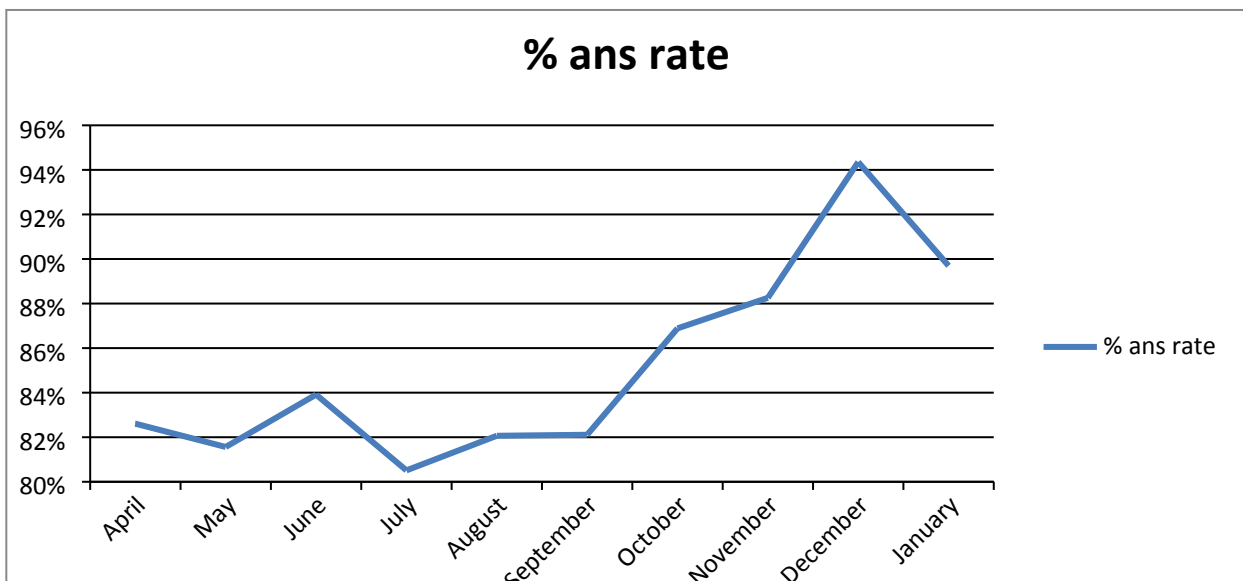
- **Recruitment initiatives** – to help address call demands during peak times, it was noted that a new recruitment initiative based around offering flexible contracts to cover peak times was also being progressed.
- **Out of Hours Service** – it was highlighted that a full review of this service was now being undertaken to reflect on the demand and level of service provided in response to the floods during August.
- **Digital access** – in welcoming the introduction and development of the new customer portal, Members requested to be kept informed of progress in this regard.

3.0 Background information and main issues

Call answer rate

3.1 Call answer rate has increased each month since our September as we have been able to recruit back up to the required level and the volume of leavers has reduced back to normal.

Call answer rate target is 90% which has been met in December and January
December is traditionally a quieter month in the contact centre and January a particularly busy month. Considering the call volumes, 90% answer rate is a significant achievement



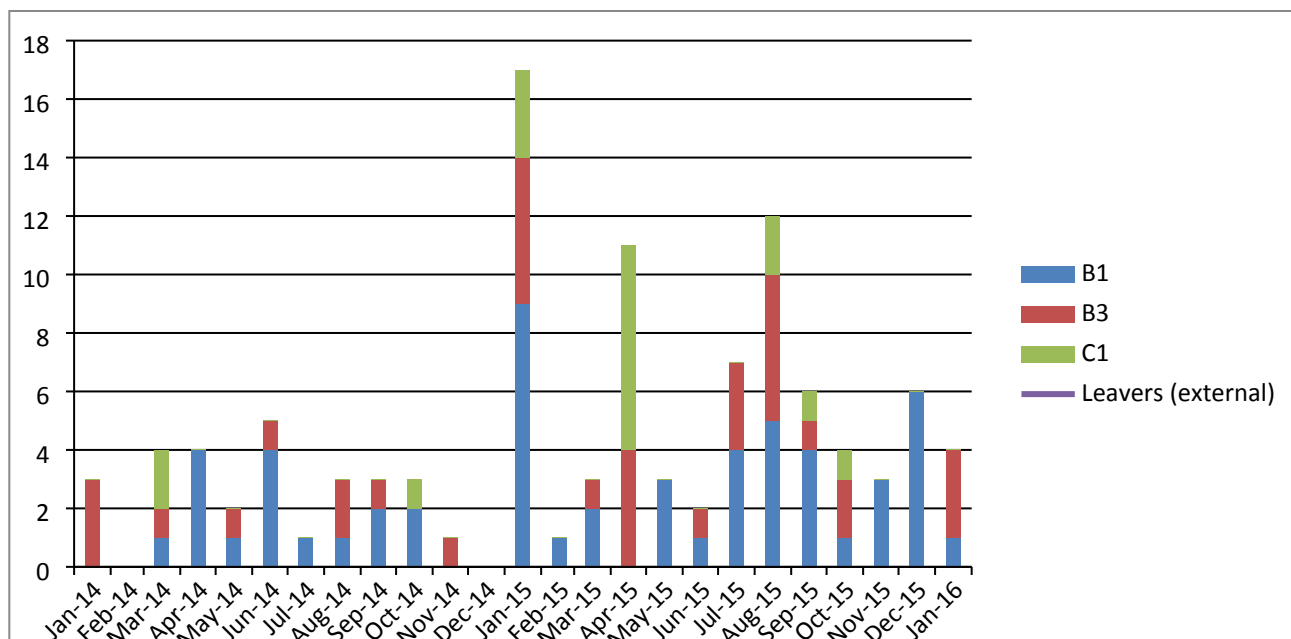
Source: Contact Centre data library. Calls answered includes IVR

Career progression

3.2 The contact centre will continue to be susceptible to large scale 'internal only' recruitment campaigns due to the high quality of staff employed and the training received. We have worked hard to mitigate against this risk by working with colleagues in housing and HR to liaise with us over upcoming recruitments and also to allow external recruitment where numbers are high.

Volume of staff leavers, Jan 14 to Jan 16

Staff turnover hit unprecedented levels in January 2015 and continued high up until August 2015. A major reason for this was the large recruitment campaigns which were 'internal ad only', mainly in Housing Leeds.



Source: Analysis of leavers within the contact centre. 'internal' moves added from June 2015

- 3.3 The two most significant reasons for the drop in staff turnover have been, firstly, a fall in the number of jobs being recruited into housing, and secondly, getting permission to advertise those jobs externally so the impact on the contact centre is reduced.
- 3.4 However, we have also reviewed our processes for internal progression within the contact centre and as a result are simplifying the steps for internal candidates. We have listened to staff and are removing the requirement for an assessment centre – as they will already have been through one when they first joined; simplifying the application procedure; put more emphasis on identifying and supporting colleagues in demonstrating competencies in order to progress.

Breakdown of call answer rate by time of day

- 3.5 The systems we use allow us to see answer rates broken down in this manner, but to present this on paper would be incredibly busy and require numerous tables. As offered to Councillor Illingworth, we would be happy to host a visit and show what data is available, but it is only meaningful on a day by day and service by service basis but there is not a weekly or monthly pattern that can easily be presented.

Recruitment initiatives

- 3.6 We are in discussion with HR about the possibility of undertaking a combined grade recruitment, meaning just one advert and recruitment process to cover the 3 CSO grades (B1, B3 and C1). We would be able to align new recruits with the

appropriate grade, rather than taking in at the lowest grade and seeing them move elsewhere within the year.

- 3.7 A further initiative we are exploring with HR is to attract students and consider how we can find mutually beneficial arrangements to make this work. We have advertised through Netmums.com, have joined with Housing Leeds at a jobs fayre, and are exploring other targeted advertising. We have yet to demonstrate a particularly successful route, most applicants still coming via the council's jobs web pages. However, we are continuing to explore alternative options.

Out of hours review

- 3.8 Since taking over the out of hours service in April 2015 we have reviewed rotas and strengthened the team, including adding to the number of daytime staff able to be called upon in an emergency. We are exploring the possibility of enabling the service to be delivered from home so that we could add further contingencies in the event of transport difficulties, and to make it a more appealing option at short notice. We are also investigating the possibility of using an external organisation as an overflow during peak periods of demand.

Digital access / customer portal

- 3.9 The MyLeeds portal was launched in May 2015 to enable customers to report issues direct to the environmental action service (EAS) and highways. The ability to book large collections was added in November 2015. We have found that approx. 50% of customers choose to self-serve directly from the website to make an initial report.
- 3.10 Data, up to January 2016, on usage can be found in appendix 2.
- 3.11 The next services we are looking to make available via the MyLeeds portal are Registrars and Waste, followed by Council Tax and Benefits. Other services will follow. There are many advantages to customers, e.g. convenience, 24/7 availability, automated updates, and in addition, the council is able to realise financial savings.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The performance at the contact centre has increased to the agreed target levels. This has been helped by the stabilising of staff turnover which has been influenced by both internal and external factors.
- 4.2 We have acted on the issues raised at the last board and are confident that the success achieved so far can be continued.

5.0 Recommendations

- 5.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities) are asked to note this update on the Contact Centre and make appropriate comment and or recommendations.

6.0 Background papers¹

None used

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

APPENDIX 1 Contact Centre Performance Tables 2014/15 – July 2015

	Calls offered	Total calls answered	Answer rate (incl. IVR)
Apr-14	124,954	111,172	89%
May-14	121,699	104,514	86%
Jun-14	117,457	103,339	88%
Jul-14	121,162	111,654	92%
Aug-14	120,953	105,175	87%
Sep-14	124,893	112,481	90%
Oct-14	115,012	104,258	91%
Nov-14	104,486	91,451	88%
Dec-14	93,834	80,938	86%
Jan-15	120,886	95,547	79%
Feb-15	115,785	89,925	78%
Mar-15	135,551	108,015	80%
Apr-15*	134,990	111,513	83%
May-15	124,216	101,314	82%
Jun-15	129,623	108,771	84%
Jul-15	131,801	106,116	81%
Aug-15	109,354	89,742	82%
Sep-15	127,593	104,767	82%
Oct-15	118,380	102,855	87%
Nov-15	111,000	97,966	88%
Dec-15	93,610	88,324	94%
Jan-16	119,391	107,089	90%

*Out of hours team joined the contact centre

APPENDIX 2 MyLeeds self-serve portal usage May to January 2016



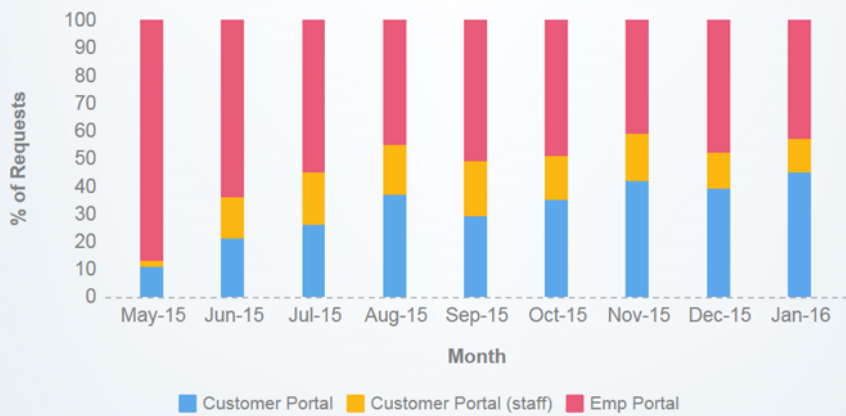
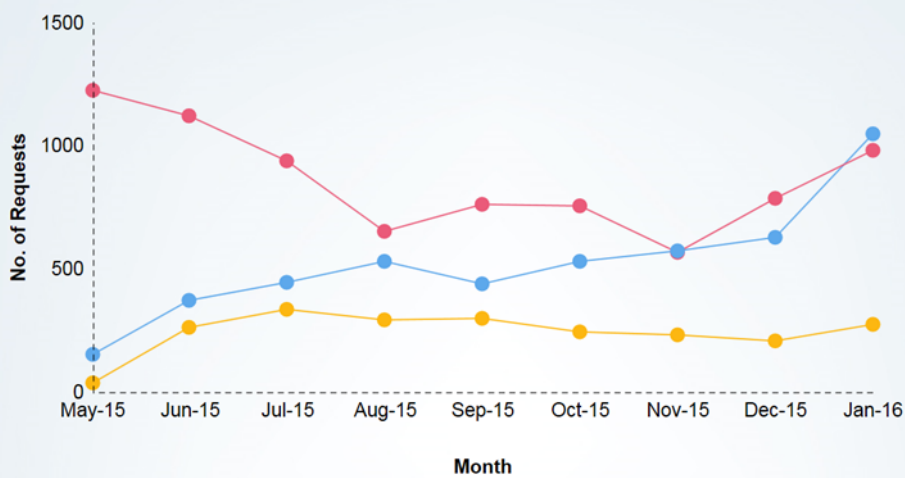
CCP - Monthly Update

May - January

Highways



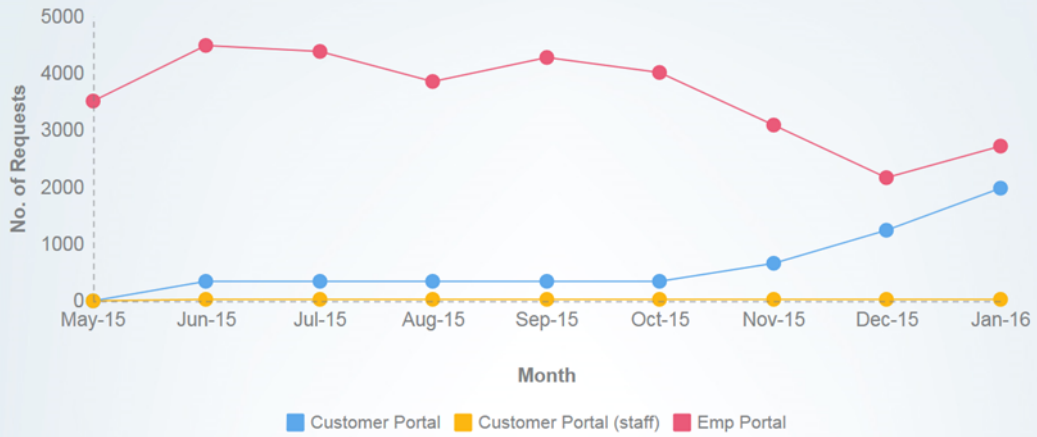
Highways went live on the Customer Portal on the 19th May. Since then there have been 6848 request submitted.



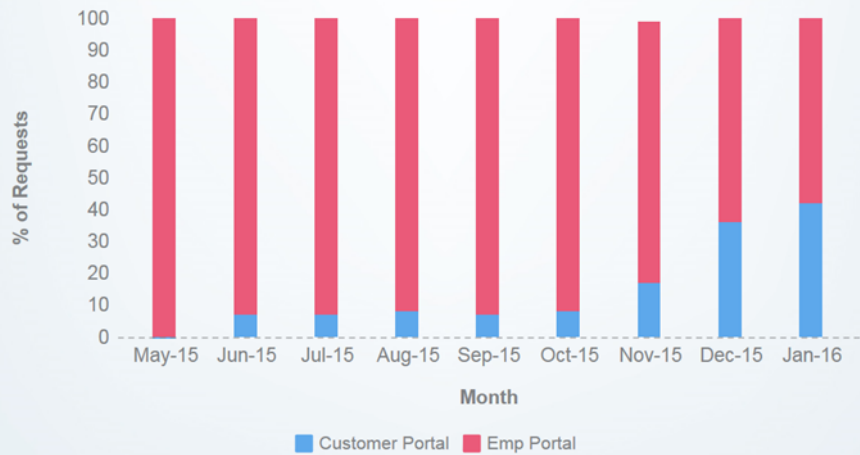
EAS



EAS went live on the Customer Portal on the 4th June. Since then there have been 5607 request submitted.



Includes bulky collections. Bulky collections went live to customers on the 24th November



Account Registrations

Since go live 2732 customers have registered for an account via the Customer Portal.

