

Report of the Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare

Report to Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

Date: 8th February 2021

Subject: Annual Assurance Report on Arrangements In Relation To Customer Contact and Satisfaction

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| Are specific electoral wards affected? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If yes, name(s) of ward(s): | | |
| Has consultation been carried out? | <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 |
| Will the decision be open for call-in? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |
| If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: | | |
| Appendix number: | | |

Summary

1. Main issues

- 1.1 This report provides the annual update on customer contact and satisfaction levels with customer services delivered through Customer Access on behalf of the Council.
- 1.2 It provides:
 - An overview of customer contact policy and procedures which define and direct the work of customer services as delivered through Customer Access and Welfare;

- An overview of the communication systems which ensure focus on a customer centric approach and systematic delivery of the work as defined and directed by the policies and procedures;
 - Information about performance which shows the extent to which the policies and procedures are embedded and effectively drive this area. This includes a focus on arrangements on customer satisfaction and targets/indicators to show what 'good' customer service looks like;
 - Information about how performance monitoring is meaningful and leads to service improvements;
 - Information to show the review and refine process.
- 1.3 The report outlines the work which ensures a consistent approach to service delivery, whilst recognising the current economic constraints. Whilst satisfaction levels with Customer Access remain high there are ongoing challenges and teams are working hard to mitigate these. There have clearly been many changes over the year due to Covid and these are highlighted.
- 1.4 Based on the information provided in this report, it is the view of the Chief Officer for Customer Access and Welfare that the Council's processes and procedures around customer contact and satisfaction are deemed adequate and acceptable, given the prevailing financial climate and the changing demands on services. As CGAC is aware significant changes are taking place in the council and improvements will continue to be made in order to deal with these challenges.

Best Council Plan implications (see the [latest version of the Best Council Plan](#))

The work described is in line with council policies and the city priorities. The following key performance indicators are in the Best Council Plan 2020 – 2025:

- Level of customer complaints;
- Proportion of people using self-service when getting in touch with the council

Resource implications

This year has been an exceptional year, with additional resources being required to deliver the support required around Covid. Nevertheless, all work takes place within the agreed budgets, supplemented by government grants, and with a focus on being flexible and making sustainable improvements, so that efficiencies can be achieved.

Recommendations

- a) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee are asked to:
- note and provide challenge to the information provided;
 - support the work outlined to develop the approach further;
 - recognise the developments outlined which will further enhance customers' experiences;

- receive an assessment of the council wide changes, as they relate to customer satisfaction with customer services, in next year's report; and
- Suggest areas where they would like to see further focus.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides the annual update on customer contact and satisfaction levels with customer services delivered through Customer Access on behalf of the Council.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Discussion of the last annual report by this committee in January 2020 raised the following requests:

- To draw a distinction between Member enquiries resulting from resident's 1st contact and those resulting from resident escalating to members when not satisfied. Although work began to look at this it has had to be put on hold due to Covid;
- Call waiting times – provide details of band width (best and worst) as well as average wait times. These are included in Appendix A – Effectively Embed section

- 2.2 In addition a key action was included in the Annual Governance Statement for 2020 stating that

We will continue to set and monitor robust targets for customer contact and satisfaction and will make improvements where necessary to deliver a consistent experience for our customers.

Information about targets is included at Appendix A – Effectively Embed section.

- 2.3 During consideration of the Annual Governance Statement by this committee in November 2020, Members requested that this report include arrangements for measuring customer satisfaction (or an action plan), and identification of what 'good' customer service looks like and an action plan to achieve 'good'. It is believed that the work delivered through Customer Access is sufficient, given the current economic restrictions, and further information on this, and actions to maintain/develop are included in Appendix A – Effectively Embed section.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 The systems and processes which support the Council's arrangements in relation to customer contact and satisfaction are set out at Appendix A– Define and Document, and Review and Refine sections. The arrangements are specific to work delivered through Customer Access and Welfare and supported corporately by the Customer Care Standards, which provide a set of basic principles which outline our expectations which underpin good customer care. Each directorate considers these in the light of their services and develops targets/monitoring which is appropriate, proportionate and helpful to them and our customers. This paper focusses purely on those services delivered through Customer Access arrangements ie contact centre, face to face services and customer relations.

- 3.2 In March 2020 significant changes were made to enable the council to respond to the Covid pandemic. Some specific examples of this are highlighted in Appendix A – Meaningfully Monitor section. At a broader level the service had to make substantial changes both to the work being delivered and also to the way in which this took place. Workplaces were closed, some services suspended, whilst others were delivered with less face to face contact and within Covid secure working practises
- 3.3 From the very start around 97% of the contact centre worked from home. This was a completely new arrangement and consideration had to be given to a wide range of areas to ensure that this change enabled the services to continue to be delivered efficiently, and effectively, whilst maintaining contact and support for all staff.
- 3.4 Immediate work took place to develop a new phone line to address customers' Covid support needs, and staff were retrained and deployed from other areas of the council to take calls, and respond to need; either through the new food warehouse and/or through the newly developed Helpline Liaison Support services that ensured referrals reached the voluntary sector. All this work was initially developed to provide a service across 7 days a week, which had not been done before in this area.
- 3.5 In order to resource this work there has been additional training provided, staff have been deployed from other work to provide support, and non-priority phone lines have been closed. These phone lines are Waste, Highways (non-emergency) large item collections, and environmental action.
- 3.6 In the face to face service new methods of delivery were established including phone appointments, and click and collect library arrangements. In addition this service provided significant support to the Covid line and the food warehouse arrangements.
- 3.7 Performance information in relation to this work is included in Appendix A, but to highlight the scale of work:
- In total, 790,591 calls were answered this year, an 8.5% increase from last year (729,302).
 - The number of abandoned calls fell significantly in the last year from 208,988 to 113,186; an improvement of approx. 45%. This was due to the improvement in call wait times.
 - The Covid line handled a total of 28,500 calls between 23rd March – 31st August and LWSS handled 24573 calls over the same period (12394 relating to food and 12179 relating to finance).
 - The food warehouse delivered 1,314 prescriptions between 23rd March – 31st August;
 - Between March and September the food warehouse distributed around 34,000 food parcels. In addition to this support, the Council also provided breakfast and lunch bags to up to 230 homeless people every day that were being rehoused in hotels and B&Bs. This resulted in over 68,000 meals to the homeless. From September this provision was handed over to St George's Crypt;
 - There were 1011 instances of a member of the job shop team securing a customer employment between Jan and end Nov 2020.
 - Over 7,000 Befriending calls were made by Library Service.

Looking Ahead

- 3.8 The changes made over this period have resulted in new ways of working and many of these will be retained where it has been seen that these have worked well for both the customers and the council, can increase our level of efficiency, and support cost saving measures. The changes to be retained include:
- Use of phone appointments;
 - Working from home as appropriate and in line with corporate direction;
 - Non priority phone lines remaining closed ie Waste, Highways (non-emergency) large item collections, and environmental action to deliver on the service's 21/22 financial savings.
- 3.9 Further changes are planned in response to the current financial situation. These will retain the learning that has taken place over the duration of the Covid pandemic and maintain the customer at the heart of services. The move of the contact centre to Resources will support closer working with digital colleagues and further enhance the customers' digital journey. The close working between the contact centre and face to face will be maintained to enable flexibility and a one council face and experience.
- 3.10 It is recognised that this may be more challenging across 2 leadership teams, and consideration is being given to ensuring supporting governance, policies and procedures are in place to counter any potential disconnect, and to support a one team approach. As part of this organisational change, consideration is being given to the development of a council wide board to ensure:
- focus is retained on the customer;
 - policy and processes are consistent and appropriate;
 - attention is given to performance monitoring and development/use of targets.
- 3.11 Further to this, the Council will continue to develop and implement our best practice work on addressing Digital Inclusion in the city. The impact of Covid in this area has been profound and has touched all aspects of individuals and families lives. Given this, work is ongoing within the Council and city to build on the excellent work delivered to-date through the Library Service and the 100% Digital approach by implementing a sustainable approach through DIS and the Library Service to ensure that everyone can access the help and support they need through digital means and benefit from the many positives it brings.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 This report has not been consulted on as it outlines the progress and developments in relation to different aspects of customer contact and satisfaction.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equality impact assessment has not taken place in relation to this report, but specific work areas described within it have, where appropriate.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 The work described is in line with council policies and the city priorities. The following key performance indicators are in the Best Council Plan 2020 – 2025:
- Level of customer complaints;
 - Proportion of people using self-service when getting in touch with the council

Whilst there are no targets included in the Best Council Plan in relation to these indicators, good performance is seen as a fall in complaints and a rise in the proportion using self-serve.

Climate Emergency

- 4.3.2 The council declared a climate emergency in March 2019 with the stated ambition of working to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 for the city. Many of the changes and efficiencies gained when working with customers is through moving to online services, where possible and appropriate, and this negates some of the need for travel and reduces waste. The Covid pandemic has contributed to significant changes which have resulted in the need for less travel, less use of offices, and more use of on line facilities thereby supporting this agenda.
- 4.3.3 The climate agenda is also a key focus of our web content standards. This focusses on ensuring that only pages that are needed and are of use are in place (data storage takes energy), ensuring that content does not take up a lot of bandwidth and is not data heavy (e.g. doesn't drain users batteries faster meaning they use more electricity to re-charge sooner).

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 All work takes place within the agreed budgets and with a focus on making improvements so that efficiencies can be achieved.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications, Access to Information and Call in issues associated with this report.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 There are significant risks of an organisational, reputational and service delivery nature, associated with poor customer contact and satisfaction levels. The actions taken to improve council processes and procedures around customer contact and satisfaction help to mitigate the risks.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The information contained in this report highlights a range of information about customer contact, satisfaction levels and complaints. It also demonstrates the flexibility of the service and the agility of being able to develop new services, exceptionally quickly, in order to provide appropriate support for customers in unprecedented times.
- 5.2 It is clear that many of the adaptations have worked well, and it has also highlighted where some areas are of lower priority. These factors will be taken into consideration when completing the service reviews with a view to reducing the strain on council budgets.
- 5.3 Based on the information provided in this report, it is the view of the Chief Officer for Customer Access and Welfare that the service has responded well to the Covid pandemic and has adapted to meet the changing needs. In addition, the Council's processes and procedures around customer contact and satisfaction are deemed adequate and acceptable, given the prevailing financial climate and the demand for services. Improvements will continue to be made in order to deal with the challenges faced and to deliver a more consistent experience for customers who contact the Council.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Corporate Governance and Audit Committee are asked to:
 - note and provide challenge to the information provided;
 - support the work outlined to develop the approach further;
 - recognise the developments outlined which will further enhance customers' experiences;
 - receive an assessment of the council wide changes, as they relate to customer satisfaction with customer services, in next year's report; and
 - Suggest areas where they would like to see further focus.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None

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.

Arrangements for Customer Contact and Satisfaction

Define and Document

The following provides an overview of the primary policy and procedures which direct the Council's corporate customer services function, and is followed by an overview of roles and responsibilities in relation to decision making and oversight in Customer Access and Welfare. The final section, Review and Refine, provides an overview of arrangements to ensure that these policies and procedures are appropriately monitored and developed to meet any changing circumstances.

| Policies | Principles and Standards | Procedures |
|---|--|---|
| Officer Delegation and sub delegation Schemes (Council and Executive Functions) | Customer Care Standards | Training guides for each service delivered through the contact centre |
| Digital Strategy 2020 - 2022 (draft) | Web content Principles and Standards | Social media toolkit |
| Compliments and Complaints 2019 - 2021 | Web accessibility regulations compliance | Process charts for service complaints |
| Service policies | Matrix Accreditation | Complaints Investigating Officers Guide |
| | Customer Services Excellence Standard | Project Briefs |
| | Equality Improvement Priorities | |

Roles and responsibilities

Delegated decision making

Each Director has separate and joint responsibilities for areas of customer contact and satisfaction within their remit. In particular this covers the following:

- Director Resources and Housing: Tenant involvement (with regard to housing), housing advice;
- Director City Development: Employment and skills, Culture including museums and galleries, arts and sporting events, Sport and Active Leeds including leisure centres and community sports facilities and active lifestyles and development programmes.

- Director Children and Families: Prevention and early intervention to offer early help to children, young people and families, support for carers. Youth Offending Services.
- Director Adults and Health: Information, advice and advocacy including in relation to available services, advice to potential service users; and arrangement of independent advocacy.
- Director Communities and Environment – City wide support and delivery functions of integrated locality working, the council’s corporate customer services functions, Library and Information Service, Cemeteries, crematoria, burial grounds and mortuaries, parks, licensing functions and welfare and benefits services

In addition to general functions, The Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare is authorised to carry out specific functions in relation to customer services function on behalf of the council, within the delegation scheme. This covers:

- a) The telephone contact centre;
- b) Digital access including the council’s website and e-services;
- c) Community hubs covering provision of the Councils:-
 - i) One Stop Centre Services;
 - ii) Community based housing management and advice services;
 - iii) Front line community library services and mobile library services; and
 - iv) Local job-shop provision; and
- d) Interpretation and translation services (not specifically included in this report).

Democratic and Management Oversight

The following outlines the opportunities for democratic and management oversight of the policies, procedures and subsequent outcomes:

| | |
|--|---|
| Executive Member | Monthly updates by Chief Officer with Executive Member for Communities on all matters relating to customer services. These have continued throughout the lockdown period, thus providing the continuous democratic oversight during a challenging and ever evolving situation. |
| Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources) | Regular half yearly performance reports describing the work and performance in relation to Customer Service Best Council Plan key performance indicators: Proportion of customers using self-serve when getting in touch with the council, and Level of Customer Complaints. This ensures that members are kept as up to date as possible and can provide constructive challenge to performance in relation to these key indicators. Two meetings held in 2019-20, the meeting scheduled for June 2020 was postponed due to the lockdown. |
| Corporate Governance and Audit Committee | Annual report on customer contact and satisfaction. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Chief Executive/CLT | Biannual reports are provided to Directorate Leadership teams and CLT in relation to complaints (DLT reports had been paused during Covid, but are being reinstated). Annual report received by Chief Executive from Local Government Ombudsman, which is publically available, along with performance information. Where there are any governance concerns these are highlighted as appropriate and action taken. |
| Communities and Environment Leadership Team | Quarterly reports, and any concerns arising from the quarterly Customer Access and Welfare performance reports are escalated where required to Communities and Environment Leadership Team. |
| Customer Access and Welfare Leadership Team | Detailed quarterly performance reports are provided to Customer Access and Welfare Leadership Team. This includes targets and monitoring in relation to satisfaction, use of self-serve, footfall into hubs, and answer rates in the contact centre. |

Services supported by the Contact Centre

| Directorate | Services |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Adults and Health | Adult Social Care, Blue Badge. |
| Children and Families | Children's Social Care, School Admissions. |
| Communities and Environment | Priority Registrars (deaths), Registrars (not priority), Elections, Refuse, Pest Control, Large Collections, Environmental Action Services, Gold Number, Council Tax/reminders, Benefits, Welfare Support, ASBU. |
| City Development | Highways, Planning. |
| Resources and Housing | Choice based lettings, Housing Repairs, Housing General, Out of Hours. |

Services supported by Face to Face Services:

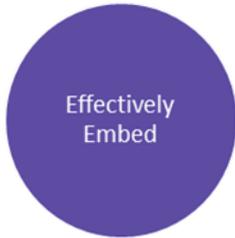
A resident can walk into a public office about any Council service but primarily these are

- Libraries – to borrow books, use the computers, job search
- Job shops – provide access to job opportunities and support to gain employment
- Enquiries – council tax, housing, benefits



The service places emphasis on a customer centric approach, and customer care standards have been developed (underpinned by the council values) which embed this. In addition to clear internal communications the service is responsible for web accessibility to ensure clear communications with members of the public. The following ensures the communication approach is delivered consistently and accurately:

| Format | Outline |
|-------------------|--|
| Leadership | CLT is corporately responsible for delivering a customer centric culture and this expectation is cascaded to directorates. At a more local level in Customer Access and Welfare, communication takes place in regular weekly Customer Access and Welfare Leadership Team meetings, and information is cascaded to all members of staff, as appropriate |
| Training | <p>New customer care training is currently under development, and will provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic mandatory eLearning, for all staff, based on the customer care standards and expectations of the council; • How to handle more challenging conversations; • Complaints handling. <p>Training guides are in place for each service delivered through the contact centre and articulate the approach and methodology for dealing with calls.</p> <p>Individual coaching takes place based on performance information</p> |
| Guidance | <p>Customer Care Standards</p> <p>Hoot - (SharePoint site) to share/communicate service improvements and changes</p> <p>Clear guidance and protocol on web accessibility included on Insite to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content is clear and up to date; • that most people can use the website without adapting it; • those who do need to adapt it, can do so easily. |



Assurance that the processes are effectively embedded throughout the work is demonstrated through the performance information. This includes measurements of customer satisfaction, with services delivered through Customer Access and Welfare, and complaints in relation to all services. Customer care standards were developed in 2019 and shared with CGAC in January 2020. These form the basis of what ‘good’ customer service looks like, and each service across the council has been challenged to consider how to ensure that their services live up to these expectations.

The standards are underpinned by the council values and help focus on services being accessible, provision of clear timescales, and clear communications, and the customer being kept informed by approachable and knowledgeable staff. The commitment is to measure timescales and use customer surveys and feedback to share and learn from customers’ experiences. The main measurements are therefore around timescales, complaints and satisfaction surveys. The following gives information about these as delivered through Customer Access and Welfare.

Over the reporting period there have been specific challenges as a result of the Covid pandemic. The service has responded quickly and flexibly to this, providing the much needed wrap around assistance required. Some of this is highlighted below. It is recognised that this change of focus has resulted in closures and staffing changes both of which have had an impact on performance information.

Level of Contact

Face to Face

| Channel | Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Nov 19 – Oct 20 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Community Hubs * | 366,620 | 690,075 |
| Community Libraries - Visits | 1,415,448 | 461,304 |
| Books Issued | 1,451,039 | 653,862 |
| PC usage | 354,022 | 147,784 |
| Central Library - Visits | 561,126 | 207,354 |
| Books Issued | 355,069 | 214,145 |
| PC usage | 75,237 | 31,401 |

*The 18/19 figure reflects an issue with IT at the time resulting in limited footfall data

Contact Centre

| Channel | Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Nov 19 – Oct 20 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Gross No. of calls received | 1,336,456 | 1,374,774 |
| Calls answered via Interactive Voice Response, and Enhanced Voice Recognition | 398,166 | 470,997 |
| Calls answered by CSOs | 729,302 | 790,591 |
| Abandoned Calls | 208,988 | 113,186 |
| E-Mail & Admin received | 231,718 | 271,226 |
| FTE (ave) | 149 | 168 |

Council website

| Channel | Nov 18 - Oct 19 | Nov 19 - Oct 20 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Unique website page visits | 11,544,806 | 13,894,920 |

Self-service online transactions

| Channel | Nov 18 - Oct 19 | Nov 19 - Oct 20 |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Self-service online transactions | 2,330,771 | 3,420,773 |
| Percentage of customer access digital services contact via online transactions | 73% | 79% |

Emails received for Digital Services

| Channel | Nov 18 - Oct 19 | Nov 19 - Oct 20 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Emails received for digital services | 10,543 | 2,511 |

Emails for digital services have reduced by over 75% against the same period last year; this is due to closing the Waste email in July 2019 and ensure that contact was made for this service via online channels instead, and the return of Leeds Homes emails to the service to manage directly in April 2020 – this is now closed.

Social Media

| Followers | Nov 19 | Oct 20 |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| Facebook | 31,576 | 39,609 |
| Twitter | 24,951 | 25,905 |

Since lockdown, the council has reached over 7 million people with outgoing posts on Facebook and of these, there have been 128,732 engagements with the posts (clicking links, sharing etc.).

| Facebook | Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Nov 19 – Oct 20 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Direct messages received | 14,005 | 24,361 |

From the 24,361 enquiries received, 18,487 were dealt with directly or signposted online (76% of enquiries).

Contact Centre Wait Times

| Wait Times | Nov 18 – Oct 19 | | Nov 19 – Oct 20 | | Target 20-21 | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| | Ave speed of answer | % of gross calls abandoned | Ave speed of answer | % of gross calls abandoned | Ave speed of answer | % of gross calls abandoned |
| Care & Safeguarding | 446 seconds | 19% | 188 seconds | 9% | 180 seconds | 8% |
| Digital Services | 236 seconds | 18% | 101 seconds | 7% | 300 seconds | 15% |
| Housing | 290 seconds | 7% | 120 seconds | 2% | 60 seconds | 2% |
| C/Tax, Benefits & Welfare | 680 seconds | 18% | 481 seconds | 14% | 180 seconds | 8% |
| Average Wait Time | 394 seconds | 14% | 217 seconds | 7% | 180 seconds | 8% |

Longest average wait times, by month, were for Council Tax (11 minutes) and Housing Benefits (13 minutes). No further details are available re length of wait, but it is known anecdotally that there have been wait time of around 40 minutes at certain times for both Council Tax and Housing Benefits.

Customer Satisfaction

Face to Face

Continues to be at 99%

Contact Centre

| Metric | Jan 19 – Oct 19* | Nov 19 – Oct 20 | 20-21 target |
|----------------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| General Satisfaction | 79.4% | 82.8% | - |
| Knowledge | 86.2% | 87.1% | 88% |
| Empathy | 88.4% | 89.3% | 90% |
| First Time Calling | 73.7% | 75.6% | - |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|---|
| First Contact Resolution** | 75.5% | 72.8% | - |
| Answer Time | 57.4% | 71.1% | - |

*From January 2019, a new customer feedback survey system was introduced that randomly selects customers to call back following their telephone enquiry.

**During the first lockdown all non-emergency repairs were stopped. Callers could report a repair, but appointments or timescales for completion could not be given

Targets are set for Knowledge and Empathy as they are the two that the contact centre can directly influence. The other aspects are important to monitor, but there are other influencers eg the web content, the service process etc.

Complaints

Number of complaints

| | (Stage 1) | | (Stage 2) | | Ombudsman Cases | | LGO Cases Upheld | |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | Nov 18 to Oct 19 | Nov 19 to Oct 20 | Nov 18 to Oct 19 | Nov 19 to Oct 20 | Nov 18 to Oct 19 | Nov 19 to Oct 20 | Nov 18 to Oct 19 | Nov 19 to Oct 20 |
| Communities & Environment | 1599 | 1936 | 167 | 163 | 31 | 24 | 9 | 3 |
| Resources & Housing | 2749 | 2114 | 381 | 360 | 48 | 64 | 9 | 15 |
| City Development | 297 | 327 | 56 | 77 | 25 | 22 | 7 | 4 |
| Adult Social Care | 578 | 444 | 51 | 39 | 18 | 21 | 9 | 6 |
| Children's Services | 279 | 276 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 27 | 4 | 3 |
| Total | 4645 | 4377 | 604 | 600 | 142 | 158 | 38 | 31 |

Complaints responded to within 15 working days target

| | Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Nov 19 – Oct 20 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Communities and Environment | 76.2% | 88.7% |
| Resources and Housing | 87.3% | 88.3% |
| City Development | 79.3% | 75.1% |
| Adults and Health | 96.8% | 97.2% |
| Children and Families | 85.1% | 79.6% |
| Total | 84.5% | 87.5% |

The target is to respond to 95% of complaints within timescale. Children and Families Adults and Health work to statutory timescales as follows:

- Adults & Health 20 working days for single area and 40 days for mixed sector complaints at both low risk (stage 1) and medium risk (stage 2):
- Children and Families - 20 working days at stage 1 and 65 workings days at stage 2;

All other services work to 15 working days for both stage 1 and stage 2

The details above relate only to complaints which have been formally logged and acknowledged under the complaints policy. Customer contact received by members and not directed to the complaints process is managed independently, with processes in place within services for response. Further work will take place to better understand the relationship and most appropriate process for these.

Web self-serve forms

| Survey question | All Nov 18 – Oct 19 | All Nov 19 – Oct 20 | Waste Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Waste Nov 19 – Oct 20 | Highways Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Highways Nov 19 – Oct 20 | Env Services Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Env Services Nov 19 – Oct 20 | Unwanted items Nov 18 – Oct 19 | Unwanted items* Nov 19 – Oct 20 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| How easy was it to make your request? | 72% | 73% | 65% | 71% | 72% | 71% | 75% | 75% | 83% | 76% |
| Were the updates you received clear and accurate? | 85% | 85% | 80% | 81% | 82% | 84% | 82% | 84% | 94% | 89% |
| Customers happy with the service received | 64% | 69% | 48% | 53% | 60% | 61% | 64% | 70% | 94% | 93% |

* The decline in Unwanted Items satisfaction from July 2020 and can be attributed to less appointments slots being available when customers check online, this means they may need to try several times before making a booking.



The information above provides performance monitoring information which has directly influenced the development of the service. As a result of meaningful monitoring the following changes have taken place/are planned.

Organisational Changes

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|---|--|--|
| The council structure is changing from April 2021 to take account of, and respond to current challenges | Contact Centre to be more aligned to digital services to ensure better and more efficient services for customers | Policy and processes to be reviewed Attention to be given to the development/ use of targets. |

Face to Face

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|--|--|--|
| The Community Hub and Library development programme aims to enhance customer experience and to increase the range of Council enquiries at these sites. | Completed refurbishment of Armley, Farsley and Holt Park | Schemes on hold or delayed – Halton, Beeston, Crossgates and Wetherby |
| Lock down resulted in reviewing what services could | Four Covid Hubs were created (Armley, Compton, Dewsbury Rd and Merrion) to deal with requests for Local Welfare Support, food parcels either to customers direct or via 3 rd sector partners, and provide access to the Credit Union. | These approaches help to minimise the number of people in a site and maintain social distancing, while providing help and assistance to those in need. The work will |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>continue to be provided and how this should be done</p> | <p>Following the easing of restrictions the Hubs and libraries began to re-open on a phased approach. Customers were able to access PC's, use library services and drop off proofs for Benefit or Housing enquires. Appointments for booth enquires were offered on a telephone basis, where a member of staff would call the customer back at an agreed time, rather than them visiting and being seen at the site.</p> | <p>continue to consider the most appropriate approaches, given the changing situation.</p> |
| <p>Contact Centre needed additional resources to staff the Covid line which was open 7 days a week during the peak. Some staff from sites which were closed were deployed to this</p> | <p>The Covid line supported residents with requests for Local Welfare Support/food parcels/help with prescription delivery etc. The calls were varied, sometimes complex and very often dealing with distressed customers.</p> | <p>The face to face staff continue to support the contact centre work and to work flexibly where needed in order to best serve customers. This will continue with changes being made to accommodate the changing situation</p> |
| <p>New food services were established to provide support for customers. Some staff from sites which were closed were deployed to this</p> | <p>The service provided a home food delivery service and prescription home delivery from a warehouse for vulnerable residents who were self-isolating or experiencing financial hardship. The warehouse delivered 34,000 food parcels and 1,314 prescriptions during lockdown.</p> | <p>The home food delivery and prescription services by the council have now ceased. Work is ongoing with the 3rd sector to ensure that customers continue to receive these services in the best way.</p> |
| <p>It is vital to continue job support but this could not continue in its usual form, so different options were explored, to meet customer needs and to conform with Covid guidelines</p> | <p>Job support was delivered to existing and new customers by email then by phone. The total number of job outcomes during this period is 1011</p> | <p>This service will continue, and will continue to be reviewed to deliver the best possible service in the changing circumstances.</p> |

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| <p>It was recognised that many older library customers would be isolated in the lock down.</p> | <p>A new befriending line service was developed for library customers aged over 70 in order to provide contact and offer support. Over 7,000 calls have been made, and support provided as appropriate.</p> <p>The Library service also offered a variety of online events and activities.</p> | |
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Contact Centre

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Aim to improve handling times and customer experience through focus on IT systems, and development of self-serve</p> | <p>Replace the old Customer Access IT system - C360 with a new more intuitive system – CATS (Customer Access Transactional Services).</p> <p>Work queue functionality included to allow allocating tasks to particular teams or individuals and track their progress. This removes the need for email transactions and allows us to provide customers with real time progress updates on their service requests</p> | <p>Currently 21 live customer forms on CATS, with a final release of a further 37 customer forms in Jan 21. C360 will then be decommissioned</p> <p>Evaluate the CSO performance dashboard to ensure it drives improvements</p> |
| <p>Aim to reduce wait times in the contact centre</p> | <p>Further development of IVR - sign post callers to relevant online options or redirect calls to the correct department first time, rather than them being transferred internally across teams.</p> | <p>Continual monitoring against targets (as outlined under effectively embed section), and appropriate action taken eg increase training and move resources.</p> |

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| | Further development of EVR - calls to be connected with the correct department without the need for a CSO to take the call or the customer to go through a number of IVR options | |
| Covid pandemic resulted in significant changes to the demands on all services. | The IT system CATS (Customer Access Transactional Services) enabled more detailed analysis of calls to be made. The 2020 data showed 7,789 enquiries directly relating to the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and resources were diverted to deal appropriately with this. | This work continues, with ongoing review and reflection |
| Focus on improving individual performance and positive feedback through use of feedback from customer survey data, | Developing a new model for coaching staff - running a pilot with staff who take Housing Calls to look at the quality monitoring process. | Evaluate the pilot |
| Improved understanding of customer satisfaction across all channels to identify areas of improvement | Rolled out customer survey approach to include email contact | Evaluate the survey approach prior to the end of the contract |

Digital

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
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| Significant changes have been required to enable the service to react to the customer needs brought about by the pandemic. | The Covid response line was set up and a technical solution created and implemented to capture the relevant information from customers through to the food warehouse, volunteer organisations or Welfare Support | Work continues to be developed to meet the changing circumstances. |

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| <p>Embed the user research and content design work to ensure clear understanding of customer's needs</p> | <p>Developed staff only section on the website to provide easy access to vital information</p> <p>Created campaign pages which link directly with social media, ambient media campaigns, and static website content for Clean Air Leeds, Connecting Leeds, Child Friendly Leeds, Foster4 Leeds and Housing</p> | <p>The user research approach is receiving national recognition and team members often speak at national events.</p> <p>Work continues to proactively review how customers use digital content and use this information to help improve our online services.</p> |
| <p>Development of self-serve, in order to meet customers' expectations and to use resources more effectively</p> | <p>Strengthening the design and content of e forms which also enables monitoring of how customers use them</p> | <p>Building on current work and customer appetite for self-serve to maintain more transactions on line</p> |
| <p>With general focus on social media the council needs to be able to respond and pro-actively use this approach</p> | <p>Changes have resulted in e.g. setting up face book pages for Covid information, and support new channel and protocols for live broadcasting council meetings on YouTube</p> | <p>Continue to identify and respond to issues, to improve accessibility, efficiency and continuity of services</p> |
| <p>Provide support to services to be accessible and to get messages to customers, whilst being conscious of our ambitions around reducing our carbon footprint and meeting customers' needs.</p> | <p>Examples of changes include:</p> <p>Variety of digital communications methods used, combined with the development of the new booking system has meant that over 400,000 users have successfully booked a slot at a recycling site;</p> <p>In the lead up to Council Tax annual billing, posts went out to advertise the benefits of signing up to view your account online and register for e-billing, resulting in huge upturn in sign-ups online</p> | <p>Work continues to explore ways to ensure that customers find it easier to find the information they are looking for. There is a focus on web accessibility and work is taking place to ensure that all council sites are compliant with this</p> |

Complaints

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
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| <p>Complaints – Housing</p> <p>Throughout Q3 and Q4 in 2019/20, over 200 complaints were received each month, just over ¾ of complaints related to Housing Property, and largely concerned repairs. From April, there was a significant reduction in the volume of complaints received, due to the suspension of non-essential repairs in response to the pandemic. With fewer repairs carried out, the potential for complaints to be generated from these reduced. In general, there had been a good understanding from Customers as to the reasons for the suspension of non-essential repairs.</p> | <p>Categorisation monitoring was limited, and work has been undertaken to reclassify complaints categories to give finer detail.</p> <p>The reclassification work has shown roofing repairs have generated the largest number of repairs complaints, and there have been larger volumes of gas and plumbing repairs complaints.</p> | <p>Detailed case studies are to be undertaken around the root causes of complaints and actions taken to mitigate these.</p> <p>Furthermore, consideration is being given to how the nature of complaints change in the context of the pandemic, and also how this will change in our recovery from this.</p> |
| <p>Complaints – Waste Management</p> <p>Complaints more than doubled between June and November 2020, due to changes to the service in response, and due to the Covid crisis</p> <p>Following an extensive route-review, a newly designed garden waste collection routes was implemented in 2020, with a view to improving logistics and efficiency.</p> | <p>A charge hand position has been introduced, where a member of the crew takes on greater responsibility in ensuring any problems are reported, and to ensure the daily tasks are completed. This has enabled us to deal with complaints in a quicker, informed way, as the issues leading to collection problems are now often noted by the charge hand.</p> | <p>The Waste Management service will be endeavouring to complete a further service review of residual and recycling collections in 2021. This will again look at route-rationalisation and efficiency, as well as consistent collection schedules city-wide.</p> <p>Additionally, the service will be looking to conduct a service-review of the medical waste collection service we provide, again</p> |

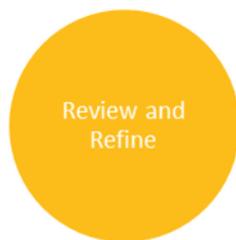
| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Garden Waste collections were suspended March – June.</p> <p>On resumption there was more garden waste being presented, and an increase in missed garden waste collection complaints between June and August these account for over half of the missed collection complaints.</p> | | <p>looking to improve route-rationalisation, efficiency and quality of service.</p> |
| <p>Complaints – Customer Services</p> <p>The increase between Nov 2019 and Oct 20 compared to the previous period is due to an event planned by Libraries which was seen to be controversial. In total this accounts for 140 complaints</p> <p>Other than this the largest number of complaints overall have been received by the Contact Centre, although reduced numbers since April 20.</p> | <p>An event was planned in Libraries in June, and subsequently held in October. The event proved to be controversial and a large number of complaints were received, which reflected both sides of the argument.</p> <p>Complaints relating to the contact centre include dissatisfaction with staff conduct and errors relating to the processing of requests.</p> | <p>The complaints were fundamentally due to differences of opinion/belief. Consideration is being given to how to manage any future complaints in relation to differences of opinion/belief</p> <p>Actions have focused on individual training needs or a wider need for process clarification and development, and this will continue.</p> |
| <p>Complaints – City Development</p> <p>There had been a 10% increase in complaints between Nov 2019 and Oct 20 compared to the same period in 18/19, which was due to an isolated spike in Leisure Centre complaints in January 2020, in relation to changes to swimming lanes in Leisure Centres.</p> | <p>Minimal changes were made and these were done on a site by site basis based on feedback.</p> <p>COVID has meant the evaluation of the changes has been limited as current programmes have been amended for COVID compliance.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Complaints - Children and families</p> <p>Numbers of complaints received are comparable over these two periods although there was a lull in incoming complaints at the beginning of Covid restrictions in April/May 2020.</p> <p>Escalations have been more involved and complex especially in Special Educational Needs and Disability cases.</p> <p>We continue to see challenges to child and family assessments around accuracy, bias to other parent and wording</p> | <p>At stage two, virtual meetings with independent investigators and complainants has been a more efficient use of resources.</p> <p>Improved working with schools with regards to Education, Health and Care Plans, ensuring responsibilities are clear.</p> <p>Where possible, assessments are shared with relevant family members at an early stage. For disputes after the assessment is complete, complainants are encouraged to give their comments to sit alongside the report</p> | <p>Continue to improve virtual meetings and interviews with some basic guidelines to follow.</p> <p>Training for staff to be updated to ensure Education Health and Care plans are specific, auditable and accountable. Work with parents to feed into this work</p> |
| <p>Complaints – Adults and Health</p> <p>Quality of service concerns have included perceptions that the services provided were not meeting the identified needs</p> | <p>An audit of a homecare provider was undertaken in order to ensure that invoices correlate with client’s care plans and the duration of the care visit and the scheduled call time of the care visit.</p> <p>Review of the recovery process and ensure letters are clearer and assist service users and their families to understand the audit findings and provide clearer information on the review and recovery process.</p> | <p>Continue audits on a regular basis and ensure continuous improvements as a result of these.</p> |

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Complaints – Adults and Health</p> <p>People challenging assessment outcomes included people challenging the outcome of Blue Badge assessments. This is mostly in relation to the impact of the new legislation which now allows hidden disabilities to be taken into consideration as eligibility for a Blue Badge. Complaints were also received from service users disagreeing with their requested financial contributions or an increase in their contribution or where they have to fund their care following a deprivation of assets.</p> | <p>In some instances a reassessment was undertaken resulting in an increase and/or an adjustment to the care package.</p> | <p>Work continues to improve the assessment and communication processes</p> |
| <p>Complaints – Adults and Health</p> <p>Complaints about Staff attitude and conduct often occur following difficult conversations about assessment decisions and care fees. Many complaints that mention staff attitude and conduct are often part of a bigger complaint that also includes dissatisfaction with decisions to do with the outcome of an assessment. Where investigation has identified a genuine concern about a worker's behaviour this is addressed through staff supervision, training, and monitoring by management.</p> | <p>Each instance is immediately addressed in the most appropriate way and any changes needed take place as a result</p> | <p>Ongoing conversations and training continue with staff to improve customer's experiences</p> |

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Complaints – Adults and Health</p> <p>24 Covid related complaints were received primarily in relation to visiting family in care homes, issues in relation to PPE, and lack of communication about family members</p> | <p>A number of changes have been made, including the following:</p> <p>New Care Service Delivery Log in the Hubs to ensure improvement of communication with relative of service users. Examples of good practice will then be shared in daily 'Safety Huddle' meetings.</p> <p>Other commissioned services are also putting in procedures to improve communication with family members due to Covid 19 restrictions.</p> | <p>The situation continues to be reviewed and changes made in the light of government guidance and regulation</p> |
| <p>Complaints – Performance information</p> <p>Service specific dashboards have been developed, and are currently being tested.</p> <p>These will help, amongst other things, to track and therefore improve timescale responses</p> | <p>The dashboards provide services access to tailored complaint information which gives regular updates in volumes and also provides the opportunity to monitor open cases.</p> | <p>These dashboards will be expanded to areas where these will be beneficial. The outputs of the dashboards will be used to provide information as required eg to services, CGAC and Scrutiny</p> <p>Use to increase response rates against target of responding to 95% within timescales</p> |
| <p>Customer Care Training</p> <p>A review of customer care training has taken place, which firmly embeds the customer care standards and best practice</p> | <p>Basic customer care eLearning is being developed and will be mandatory for all staff.</p> <p>Complaints Investigations guide has been reviewed and is in draft.</p> | <p>Finalise and roll out eLearning package. Target April 2021</p> <p>Agree and sign off complaints investigations guide. Target April 2021</p> |

| Performance Narrative | Changes Made | Further work to take place |
|-----------------------|--------------|--|
| | | Develop training which addresses challenging conversations Target October 2021 Evaluate training against the customer care standards. Target March 2022 |



The information above sets out details of the policies, processes and monitoring in place to ensure there is high quality consistent decision making in relation to customer services. These processes and internal controls also exist to ensure that there is a proportionate approach, deploying resources at the correct level in the interest of efficiency and value for money as well as being responsive to service, legislative, budget and other challenges.

A suite of documentations exists to embed and communicate those systems and processes; as part of the service responsiveness to change, these documents are subject a programme for systematic review to ensure that they remain an accurate reflection of arrangements and are up to date and fit for purpose.

| Document | Purpose | Monitored | Review date | Review | Accountability and oversight |
|---|---|--|--------------------|--|---|
| Officer Delegation and sub delegation Schemes (Council and Executive Functions) | Sets out authority for Chief Officer, and those of suitable experience and seniority, to discharge council and executive functions. | Corporately | 2021 | Reviewed annually | Leader of Council (Executive Functions) Full Council (Council (non-executive) Functions) |
| Digital Strategy 2020 - 2022 | Outline approach to digital working in the council | Governance arrangements to be determined | Currently in draft | Governance arrangements to be determined | Best Council Leadership Team |
| Compliments and complaints policy | Overview of approach to compliments and complaints and how these are addressed | Directorate SMTs and CLT | November 21 | Consultation with Directorate SMTs | Director Communities and Environment |
| Service policies | These direct the approach and methodology used in the contact centre. | Within services | As appropriate | As appropriate | Relevant service managers and directors |

| Document | Purpose | Monitored | Review date | Review | Accountability and oversight |
|---|--|--|-------------------------|--|---|
| Customer Care Standards | Articulates core standards which underpin all customer contacts | Within directorates | November 21 | Consultation with Directorate SMTs | CLT |
| Web content principles and standards | They are key in enabling us to meet the standards set in the local digital declaration which as a council we have signed up to. They are based on the guidance/best practice set out by the Government Digital Service | Digital Access Team | Ongoing | Digital Access Team and relevant services | Best Council Leadership Team |
| Web accessibility regulations compliance | To meet statutory requirements in relation to access to websites | In line with project brief approach | To be determined | In accordance with agreement | Director Communities and Environment |
| Customer Services Excellence Standard | An improvement tool to help services put customers at the heart of what they do | Externally accredited, annually | 2021 | Action plan developed and regularly reviewed | Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare |
| Matrix accreditation | An improvement tool to help Jobshops put customers at the heart of what they do | Annual continuous improvement check, with full accreditation every 3 years | Full accreditation 2021 | Action plan developed and regularly reviewed | Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare |
| Equality Improvement Priority - Increase digital inclusion particularly for those in poverty to provide greater access to jobs, | Support focus on key area of equality priority for the service | Customer Access Leadership Team. | July 2021 | Review and update included in the Equality Annual report | Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare |

| Document | Purpose | Monitored | Review date | Review | Accountability and oversight |
|--|---|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|--|
| skills and learning to reduce poverty | | | | | |
| Training guides for each service | To provide clarity and consistency of approach when contact centre responds to calls | Customer Access Leadership Team | As determined by service lead | As determined by service lead | Relevant service lead |
| Social media toolkit | To provide charter and toolkit that supports responsible use and response to social media | Digital Access Team | Currently under review | Digital Access Team, Communications Team, and HR | Chief Officer Customer Access and Welfare/ Chief Officer Strategy and Policy |
| Project briefs (approach in development) | An approach to consider all appropriate changes and service developments within the contact centre and wider service business area. Fundamental to this is all work engages 5 key partners. | Customer Access Leadership Team | In line with each project brief | Each project has a show and tell at the end of each stage for all its stakeholders | Governance meetings by Customer Access and Leadership Team follow each show and tell |
| Process charts for service complaints | To provide a consistent approach to allocating and administering complaints as per service requirements | Customer Relations Team | October 23 | Consideration in consultation with services | Customer Relations Manager and appropriate service manager |
| Complaints Investigating Officer Guide | To provide guidance for investigating officers to ensure a consistent and customer centric | Customer Relations Team | October 23 | Against the compliments and complaints policy, ombudsman advice | Customer Relations Manager |

| Document | Purpose | Monitored | Review date | Review | Accountability and oversight |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| | approach to investigating complaints | | | and benchmark with other authorities | |