

Customer Services Survey – Standards Of Service

Introduction

From November 1st – 7th 2019, customers calling into the Customer Service Centre at Basildon Council on the Golden Number (the main advertised number for the Council) were offered the opportunity to participate in an automated telephone-based survey.

The survey worked by automatically transferring customers (who had not been transferred to another service area outside of the Customer Service Centre as part of their initial query) to a survey line which played 4 questions following their call. If the caller hung up before the transfer process completed, they would of course not hear the questions but if they allowed the transfer to complete, could participate by entering a number on their telephone keypad to respond to the questions being asked – typically those requiring a Yes / No answer.

This particular survey was based around the Standards of Service for the Customer Service Centre, which set out how this area of the Council's performance is measured.

The questions asked in the survey were linked to the Service Standards for Customer Services which can be found online at www.basildon.gov.uk/standards.

The 4 questions asked were as follows:

- Question 1: We aim to answer 80% of your calls within 2 minutes. Is this an acceptable timeframe?
- Question 2: We aim to achieve an 80% satisfaction rating from our customers. Is this an acceptable target?
- Question 3: We aim to resolve 80% or more of your queries at first contact so you don't need to contact us again about that exact same matter. Is this an acceptable target?
- Question 4: We aim to respond to e-mails and letters within 10 working days. Is this an acceptable target?

263 customers took part in this survey initially, with 238 answering all 4 questions. This is a completion rate of over 90% of participants starting the survey and staying on to answer all questions posed (there was an overall reduction of 9.5% in respondents from the start of the survey to the end). This was therefore a successful survey with an acceptable level of “drop-off” (participants deciding not to continue through all questions).

5% of respondents ceased participating after answering the first question; 3% of those who had went on to answer the second question then stopped and did not answer the third. 2% of those who answered the third question then ceased their participation.

Question 1: Calls Answered Within 2 Minutes (80%)



249 out of 263 respondents indicated that they felt the Service Standard for answering 80% of calls within a 2 minute wait time was acceptable, representing 95% acceptance of this measure.

Question 2: Satisfaction Rating Of 80%



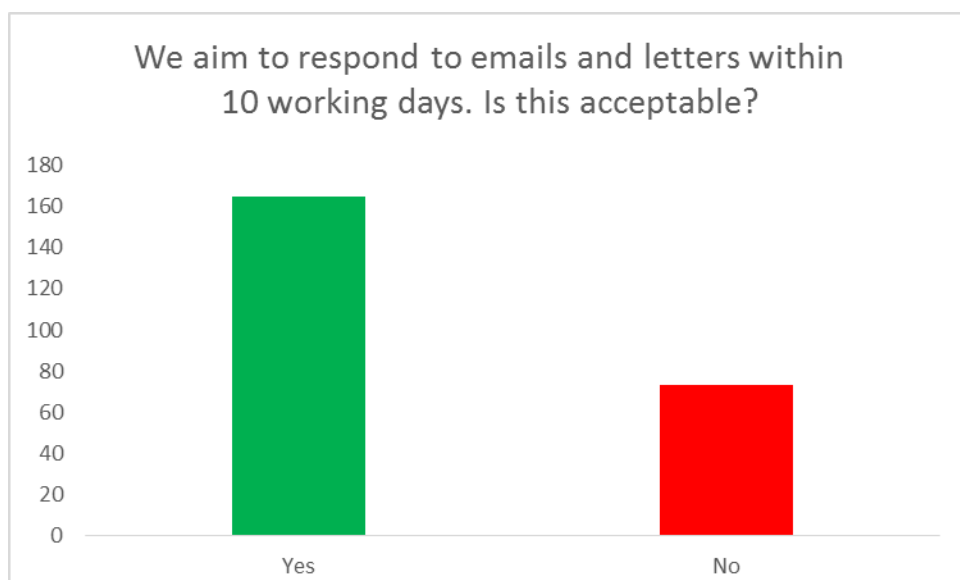
211 out of 250 respondents indicated that they felt the Service Standard aim of 80% of customers rating the service received from Customer Service Centre as satisfactory was an acceptable target, representing 84% acceptance of this measure. The most recent data (for Q2 2019) shows satisfaction at over 84% for the telephony service from the Customer Service Centre and which indicates the target is being achieved.

Question 3: 80% Of Queries To Be Resolved At First Contact



218 out of 242 respondents indicated that a first contact resolution target (the aim of resolving queries where possible during the initial contact so that the customer does not have to contact us again about the same matter) was acceptable, representing 90% of respondents agreeing.

Question 4: Respond To E-mails And Letters Within 10 Working Days



165 out of 238 respondents were happy with the target of responding to emails and letters within 10 working days, which is a corporate target rather than specific to the Customer Service Centre but one which nevertheless applies to this area. At 69% of respondents finding this an acceptable target,

this is the Service Standard which customers are least happy with, although the majority support the timeframe as acceptable.

At the following webpage; [see Make It Easy: Make the Most of our Services](#) is a graph showing the date of the oldest email outstanding (the number of letters received into the Customer Service Centre is very small). As of January 30th 2020, 67% of emails (for which the Customer Service Centre are responsible) in a rolling 30 day period had been dealt with in 6 working days or less and therefore significantly improved on the Service Standard in place.

Conclusion

The purpose of the survey was to establish whether the Service Standards in place for the Customer Service Centre were representative of what our customers would consider reasonable measures upon which to be judged.

All 4 Service Standards were positively received by customers as follows:

Call Answering in 2 minutes (80%)	- 95% acceptance
Customer Satisfaction (80%)	- 84% acceptance
First Contact Resolution (80%)	- 90% acceptance
Emails / Letters (10 Working Days)	- 69% acceptance

As of Quarter 3 2019, the availability and scope of Customer Service performance data has been improved with much of the data now automatically uploaded / copied to the website address for a rolling period; see [Make It Easy: Make the Most of our Services](#). This ensures full transparency about how the Customer Service Centre is operating and whether Service Standards are being met.

As mentioned above for question 4 (the target for written correspondence), whilst customers were generally positive about the time frame for responding to written correspondence (emails and letters), this was the Standard with the lowest acceptance. As this is a corporate target and given the overall majority of customers have found the target acceptable, there are no plans to change this however it is worth noting that for the majority of the time Customer Services exceed the target by several working days. The graph on the performance page above shows the oldest outstanding email, and the data is often representative / based on a very small number of emails outstanding. In other words, if 100 emails are responded to in 6 days but just 1 is outstanding at 9 days, the graph will show the oldest as 9 days old whereas for the vast majority of customers a much shorter time frame for a reply to their query would have been taken.

The Customer Service Centre does provide a fast, efficient service in relation to written correspondence although would highlight that answers to many of the questions asked of the service are already provided on our website.

Following a review of customer feedback as part of this survey, the decision has been made to increase the target for First Contact Resolution from 80% to 85%, so that the Customer Service Centre focuses even more on ensuring customers get all the help they need contacting us, so that where practically possible and where it falls within the scope for this service, there is no need to contact us again about the exact same matter. [See IA1](#)

In addition, an internal review is also to be undertaken on alternative measures upon which the service can or should be judged to maintain focus on providing a satisfactory, high quality and timely service. [See IA2](#)

Improvement Actions

Action	Details	Owner	Due
IA1	Increase First Contact Resolution target from 80% to 85% to ensure even greater focus on resolving queries as fully as possible during initial contact	Customer Services	Complete
IA2	Internal review to be undertaken on Customer Service quality and performance measures	Head of Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services	Sept 2020