

Customer Services Survey – Front of House Satisfaction

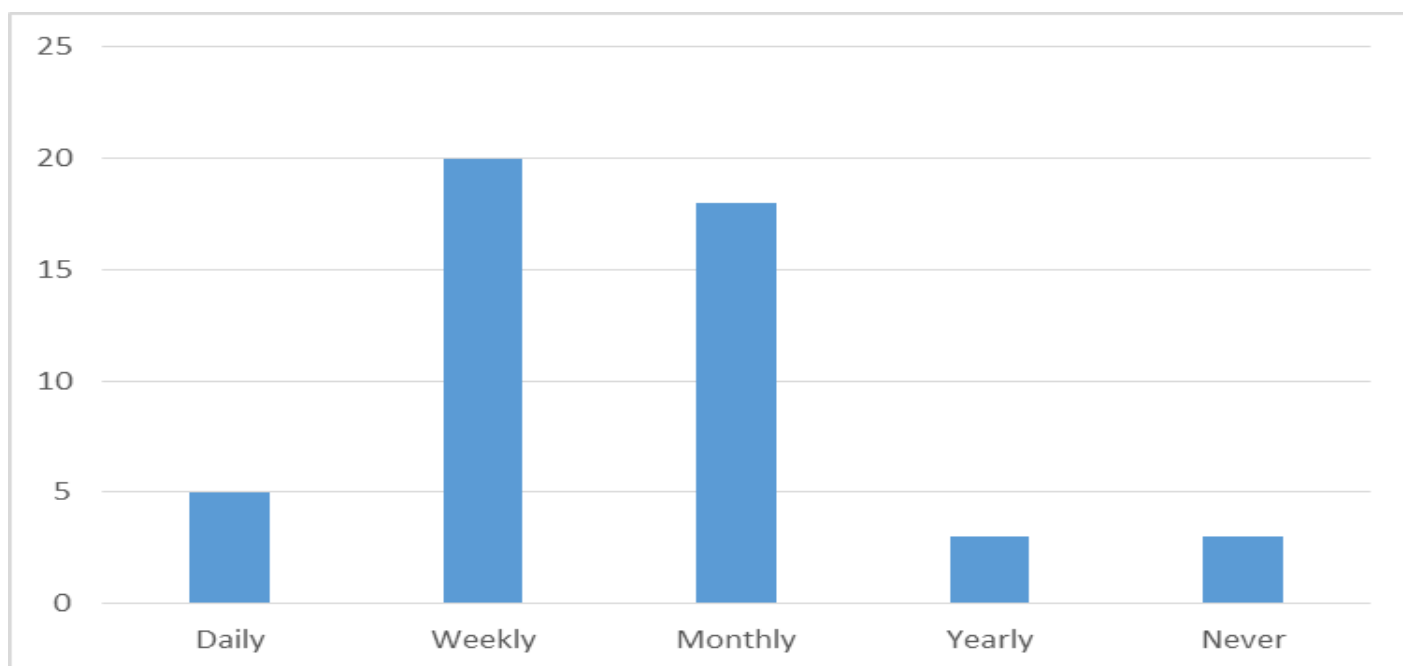
Introduction

From October 1st for one week, visitors to the Basildon Centre were asked to complete a survey based around their purpose for visiting and the service(s) accessed, their experience of that visit, and overall satisfaction. The survey also included questions around fairness, their preferences for contacting the Council, any comments or observations about improving the experience and several other questions.

8 of the 12 questions asked in the survey offered multiple choice responses using a tick system (Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10-12). Of these 8 questions, 3 also offered a free text field for further comments by way of explanation or to provide feedback. The remaining 4 of the 12 questions were entirely qualitative based for individual consideration (no pre-defined answers, just space for the customer to express their view). This report details the quantitative responses and summarizes the qualitative.

49 survey responses were received. Most were completed in full. A small number omitted to look at the back-page suggesting future surveys should include a “please turn over” at the foot of page 1 to ensure customers know they need to carry on reading the other page. [See IA1](#)

Question 1 : How often do you visit the Basildon Centre?



- 41% of respondents visit weekly, and of these 40% visit for the purpose of using the Library, and 30% for the self-service kiosks for making a payment. 10% of respondents indicated they visit the library *and* visit to make a payment although there is no scope within the current survey design to establish whether they did both in the same visit.

Given that customers were asked in general why they visit, and not just answering why they visited *on this particular occasion*, there is little evidence to draw conclusions about how many services

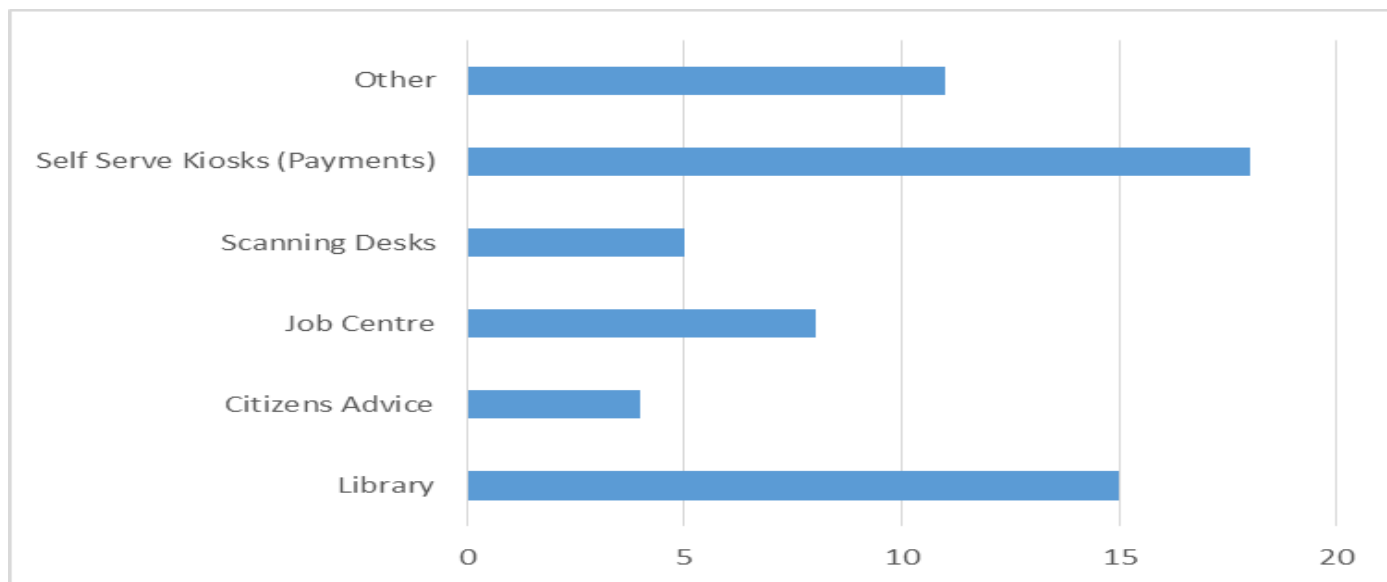
they access during a particular visit and this may be something to investigate in a future survey to determine usage of the hub approach.

The survey is effective in understanding overall satisfaction and the delivery of quality and fairness, and contains useful qualitative comments but there is scope in future surveys to focus on why customers attended that day and to capture if more than one service was utilised. This would give an improved insight to the concept of the Hub approach where multi-services can be accessed in one location. [See IA2](#)

- 37% of respondents visit monthly, 44% of which visited for access to the self-serve kiosks and 8% for the Job Centre. The remainder indicated visits for the Library, to use a computer, to see a Benefits advisor, Citizens Advice and Scanning Desks.
- 12% of respondents visit daily – 67% to access the Library, 33% Job Centre (including one that visits daily for both Job Centre and Library). One person indicated they visit daily for scanning although this is unlikely to be an accurate response given there is finite information that would need to be scanned.

Interestingly, given how busy the Scanning team Front of House are, very few respondents overall indicated that they visited for scanning purposes – just 2%. This may indicate the need to carry out a further survey in the future, concentrating on a particular area of Front of House – e.g. scanning only in order that any feedback or suggested improvements can be captured for each service. [See IA2.](#)

Question 2 : Which services do you use most often when you visit the Basildon Centre?



- 37% of all visits were for customers to make a payment, followed by 31% for the Library. This data is somewhat of limited use given it is difficult to determine how many customers use more than 1 service regularly. The survey did not concentrate on visiting habits so to learn more, a new survey would need to capture the frequency by which each individual service was accessed. [See IA2.](#)

- Of those that indicated they had a different reason for visiting, the reasons were as follows:
 - 3 – To collect pink recycling sacks
 - 3 – For Benefits advice
 - 3 – To use the computers and phones
 - 1 – To see a Probation officer
 - 1 – To see reception (it is not known for what purpose)

Question 3 : Which services would you like to see at the Basildon Centre that are not currently here?

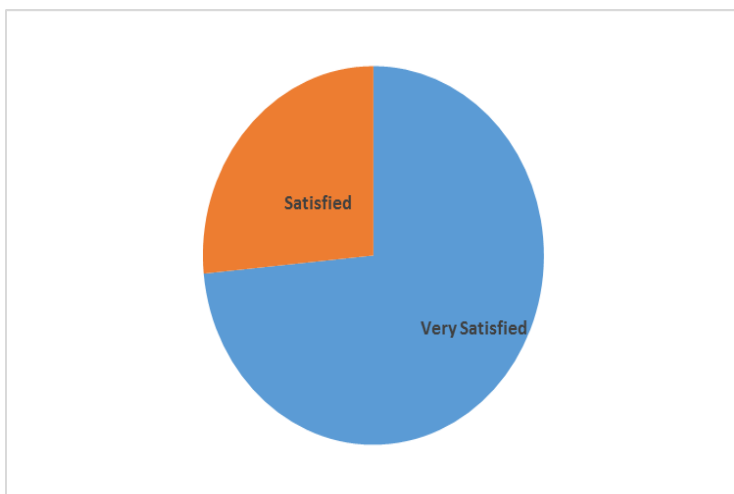
- One person from every department to be represented on the ground floor
- An advisor from Rents (2 requests)
- St Mungo’s representation (See www.mungos.org)
- A mini-supermarket
- Toilets
- Cashiers
- Café
- Youth Centre for education and training
- Utilities Services

2 respondents requested facilities for face to face consultations which are already in place for some services but it is not clear whether they feel more services should be represented than those services already available.

The second most common feedback received and accounting for 10% of all responses (including the 2 referenced above) is that customers want improved representation from service areas available to meet with them face to face. [See IA4-IA10](#) for feedback

The most common feedback, however (76%) is that there is a good provision of services front of house and nothing to be improved upon.

Question 4 : When visiting, how satisfied were you with your visit?



100% of the customers responded to say they were satisfied with the service provided Front of House irrespective of the service(s) accessed, 73% of which said they were very satisfied.

Many of those who marked the service provided as satisfactory only, went on to say nothing could be improved, another commented the experience was perfect, and staff were very helpful. It is unclear if nothing could be improved, why the service was only scored as satisfactory and not very satisfactory.

6 (46%) of those who did not say they were very satisfied fed back a reason to place their score in context:

- 3 wanted more staff on the ground floor, 1 specifically to help customers on computers
- 1 wanted more help for the Homeless
- 1 wanted a human Cashier to whom they could pay their bills behind a glass window
- 1 wished for a coffee machine

Question 5 : Do you feel you were treated fairly when you visited?

98% of customers felt they were treated fairly, with only 1 indicating they were only treated fairly "sometimes". Despite this question having space for the respondent to explain why they did not feel they were treated fairly, no information was provided. The same person requested a coffee machine to improve the service and indicated they only accessed the Library and self-serve kiosks thus it is unclear where in the visit(s) there was a lapse in fairness, what this means and who is responsible.

It is noted they also use the phone as well as Face to Face as their preferred means of contact and that they do not like the existing IVR phone system when calling the Council. On 22nd October 2019, the IVR was changed to reduce messaging and other changes to the structure following engagement with a customer Focus Group and taking into account feedback from customers, and there is a satisfaction survey running the month of October on the phones which also asks if customers are treated fairly.

The Customer Service Centre can therefore demonstrate action is continually taken to review the services provided and take on board customer feedback which is incorporated into service provision and improvements. Furthermore, Front of House does treat customers fairly and the vast majority leave having had a positive customer service experience.

Question 6 + 7 : What do you like about the Front of House design and are there any areas we could improve?

61% of respondents advised the design was good, spacious, inviting and overall gave a positive score. The remaining 39% (19 customers) all gave good feedback as well but had ideas for further improvement.

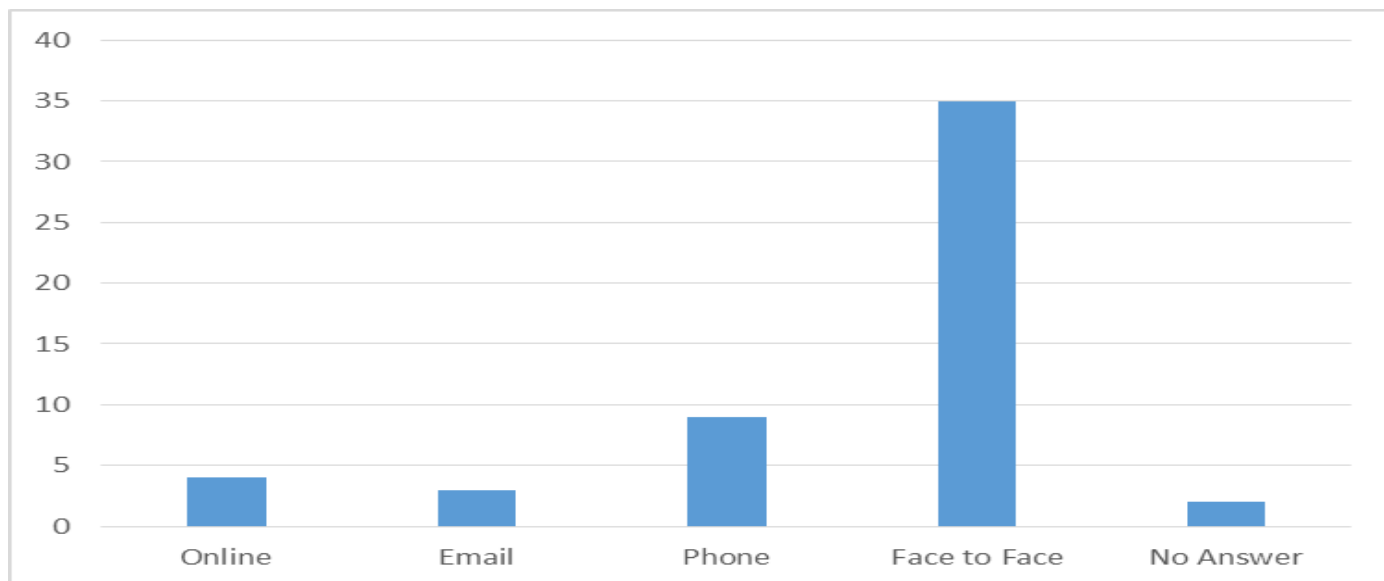
- 53% of those who suggested an improvement wanted toilet facilities.
- 16% wanted improved signage, where to go and for what service

The remaining feedback related to one suggestion for each of the following:

- Private booths for telephone calls to be had
- Job Centre staff (did not elaborate what this meant)
- Improved waiting area
- Allowing drinks into the building
- More than 1 pack of pink sacks to be given
- Suggested that some visitors to the Centre should not be allowed entry but did not specify.

Question 8 : What is your preferred or most common method of contacting the Council?

Unsurprisingly for a Face to Face based survey, the majority of respondents indicated Face to Face was their preferred means of contacting the Council, accounting for 74% of those who answered the question. In consideration, a better question for a future survey (if this question is to remain) would be to ask for an explanation why that is. [See IA2](#)



This question has limited value for analytical purposes, and a future survey should aim to establish whether the service they needed can be accessed by other means, and if so why did they choose Face to Face to fully understand whether the customer truly showed a preference for Face to Face over an alternative method or whether the service is not available by other means. This would give a valuable insight into where service provision can be improved, where customers can be better informed / notified, and of course what customers truly want from their Council.

Question 9 : What are your opinions on the IVR options when calling the Council's Golden Number?

- 31% are happy with the IVR
- 31% felt there were too many options
- 20% do not call in
- 18% suggest waiting times are too long

On 22nd October 2019, a new IVR was launched following consultation with customers via a Focus Group and following customer feedback. The survey data originates from the first week of October and therefore, in due course, customers should again be asked how they find the (new) IVR for comparative purposes. [See IA3](#)

Customers may also wish to review the Customer Service Centre's Service Standards via <http://www.basildon.gov.uk/standards> and our performance page "Making the Most of Our Service" www.basildon.gov.uk/article/6321/Making-the-most-of-our-Services, together which details our aims (service standards) for answering queries and our performance against those aims to see whether responses are within the target timeframe.

Question 10 : Are you a Council tenant,

Only 30% of respondents were Council tenants, and 83% advised they had no Contents insurance irrespective whether they were a tenant or not.

Question 11 : Do you have Contents Insurance

Of those who are Council tenants, 62% do not have Contents Insurance, rising to 91% who are not Council tenants and do not have Contents insurance either. The only conclusion would be that there is a clear majority of residents who claim they do not have Contents insurance although it is unclear what relevance the latter data would have to the Council in terms of improving service or understanding customer requirements.

Question 12 : Do you pay Rent or Council Tax by Direct Debit?

52% of those who answered whether they paid by Direct Debit for either Council Tax or Rents, said that they did.

Of the remainder, all were asked whether they would like a Direct Debit form sent to them (in order to convert to paying by this means). 100% advised they did not want a Direct Debit form sent to them. 41% of those who do not pay by Direct Debit advised they use the self-serve kiosks to make payments. 56% who use the self-serve kiosks use them monthly.

The conclusion to be drawn therefore is that there is a high propensity of visitors to Front of House who do so for the sole reason of paying their Council Tax or Rent regularly and who do not wish to pay by another means. This data would be useful when considering the ways to pay offered to residents.

Conclusions

The survey successfully captured a mix of positive and constructive feedback showing that customers like the open design of Front of House and that there is a good range of services that can be accessed, but that there is scope for more variation. All suggestions need to be considered with a regard to cost of implementation, the practical constraints around available space, any regulatory considerations including those around health and safety.

Customers have fed back that they are treated fairly, they found the visit satisfactory and staff were helpful although some would like to see more service areas represented for individual consultations.

Whilst most respondents prefer face to face contact, around a third who use the telephone to contact Customer Services were happy with the experience, a further third found there to be too many options although the survey took place prior to the launch of a new IVR which was the result of customer engagement and consultation.

There is scope to improve future surveys to establish a better understanding of the frequency in which particular services are used and why this is, as this information can be used to shape service delivery.

Customers who are not already on Direct Debit have made a conscious choice to refrain from adding this means of payment and have a propensity to use Front of House self-serve kiosks to make their payments instead.

Perhaps one of the most interesting observations from the survey is that some customers appear to view the Basildon Centre as a potential location for social engagements and not just to access a particular service. It also suggests customers would feel visiting the Basildon Centre was a part of their routine rather than visits being a reactive response to a particular problem or service need.

Improvement actions are listed at the end of this report.

Improvement Actions

Action	Details	Owner	Due
IA1	Future survey to feature "Please turn over" prompt if questions spread to an additional page	Customer Services	As required
IA2	Future survey to focus on what service(s) were accessed that day; Identify how often a specific service is accessed rather than which combined services are used Ask why a response is given (E.G why is X the preferred means of contact) for improved insight More focus on specific service functions (E.G a survey solely on the Scanning Desk)	Customer Services	As required
IA3	IVR survey to be conducted asking customers if they are happy with the (new) IVR design	Service Analysts	To be confirmed
IA4	One person from every department to be represented on the ground floor The Front Of House staff are a representation for each department. Should further advice be needed, this is arranged at the time of the visit.	Customer Services	Complete
IA5	An advisor from Rents A 3 month trial of this was run in 2019 but take-up was minimal. If a face to face appointment is needed for this service, customers can arrange this directly with that team.	Customer Services	Complete
IA6	St Mungo's representation St Mungo's do visit Front Of House. We are liaising with them to determine the next date and will advertise this accordingly	Customer Services	Pending
IA7	Toilets Due to lack of space in the building, toilets have been provided but are located just outside the building by the new market.	Customer Services	Complete
IA8	Cashiers 4 kiosks have been in place for 5 years with assistance of the Front Of House team should anyone need it	Customer Services	Complete
IA9	Café A café run by adults with learning difficulties was in the Library but closed earlier this year due to minimal use made of the facility.	Customer Services	Complete
IA10	Youth Centre for education and training A new Advice Centre was opened this year, located opposite the Basildon Centre for training / educational needs for young people.	Customer Services	Complete