

LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT
EXECUTIVE - 12 NOVEMBER 2003
FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ONE STOP SHOP

REPORT TITLE: One Stop Shop Annual Performance 2002/2003

FOR ACTION

NAME OF WARDS

1 Summary

- 1.1 This covering report introduces the attached detailed report, which provides members with information regarding the demand and performance achievements of the One Stop Shop service for April 2002 to March 2003.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report and determine any further information requirements.

3 Staffing Implications

- 3.1 There are no staffing implications.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications.

5 Detail

- 5.1 The 02/03 report has taken a similar format to previous years' reports to enable a more comprehensive and consistent view of the service. Detailed facts and figures are provided in the attached report but the following key points and management issues are highlighted for information.

6 Demand

- 6.1 In total the One Stop Shop dealt with 916,257 enquiries and this is an increase of 16.91% (132,514) on 01/02. This increase in demand is largely attributed to the One Stop Shop taking over management responsibility for the Revenue & Benefits Call Centre (91,800 calls). Once these calls are discounted this allows a true comparison with the previous year and represents an increase of 40,714 (5.19%) on the previous year
- 6.2 The shop locations experienced an increase of 4% (9,300) on last year, but due to statistical errors it is difficult to break down the increases between counter and

reception enquiries. The shop demand now accounts for 25.6% of total demand (including Revenues and Benefits line)

- 6.3 The largest numerical increase in face-to-face demand was experienced by Brent House with a 5,200 (15%) increase on 01/02, however the largest percentage increase of 109% was experienced by Kilburn (3,600). This was due to relocation to Dyne Road, extended hours and an enlarged reception from 1 to 2 staff.
- 6.4 Due to the introduction of LOCATA scheme in July 2002 Housing Resource enquiries have increased dramatically and are now the second most frequent enquiry, overtaking Council Tax Benefit.
- 6.5 In the Contact Centre demand has increased by 123,214, which represents an increase of 22%. However 91,800 of those calls were due to Revenues and Benefits line which was returned to Brent in October 2002. Once this is excluded a comparison on the previous year (01/02) shows that demand has increased by 5.6% (31,414). The Contact Centre now accounts for 74.4% of overall OSS demand, an increase of 3.4% on 01/02.
- 6.6 The largest increase in demand was for the StreetCare line (14,900), followed by the Switchboard (13,100). The StreetCare line has increased in demand due to increased advertising for special collection and an increased demand for gritting services during harsh weather conditions in January 2003. The switchboard had increased largely due to strike action and technical problems with dedicated lines that meant customers increasingly used the switchboard.
- 6.7 The fastest growing Contact Centre service (within standard hours) has been in correspondence, but more specifically the use of online and emailed enquiries which increased by 42%. (2,100) on 01/02. However the Extended Hours service has experienced the largest percentage increase overall with a 57% (5,582) increase on 01/02. 3,356 of this increase was due to a 306% increase in the use of the Cashiers line. Extended Hours (between 5-8pm & 8- 9am) were introduced for the cashiers' line on 26/7/01. When looking at the percentage change since 01/02 (306%) it should be noted that April is the busiest month for this line (due to the new financial year and prompt payment discount) and was therefore not included in the 01/02 figures.

7 Performance

- 7.1 The shops have recorded an increased waiting time of 2 minutes, from 13 minutes in 01/02 to 15 minutes, and an increase in interview times of 4 minutes, from 20 minutes in 01/02 to 24 minutes. The increases are due to a correction in the way statistics are collected. In previous years some reception demand was being added to counter demand. Once this was corrected a lower level of demand relates to the counters and hence increases the average waiting and interview times.
- 7.2 The Generic Telephone Line is now answering 79% of calls within 15 seconds which is a 7% increase on the previous year (01/02). The StreetCare line's performance has increased by 10% - now answering 70% of calls within 15 seconds. The Switchboard has also increased its ability to answer calls within 15 seconds by 0.5% to 96.5%.

- 7.3 The Revenue and Benefits Line answered 92% (91,800) of calls presented, with 44% being answered within 15 seconds. There has been a steep learning curve involved in bringing this line back in house. This area will be addressed in the 03/04 period as it is recognised that this service is under resourced and as a result is under performing.
- 7.4 The Welfare Rights Initiative has, since its inception in November 2000, had a cumulative total of £4.64 million in previously unclaimed benefit payments. The total estimated cumulative benefit for this year 02/03 is £1.6 million. This exceeds the annual performance target of 1 million by 62%. This initiative, linked to the Corporate Strategy, is intended to address poverty and social exclusion.
- 7.5 A total of 4,846 comment cards were completed by customers, which is a decrease 1,725 on the previous year because customers no longer have to complete the card immediately. The card can be taken away and completed at a later date. Customer Satisfaction through the Comment Cards has increased marginally to 90.3% by 0.3% on 01/02. This is due to increases in the reported satisfaction of the Generic Line by 0.7% to 97%, 2% above the council standard. The satisfaction rate of the Shops remained at just above 90%.
- 7.6 There were 13 fully upheld complaints about the service and 12 partially upheld complaints, all bar 1 partially upheld were at Stage One. This represents an increase of 6 for each fully and partially upheld. The number of Stage two complaints has decreased from 4 in 01.02 down to 1.
- 7.7 Best Value Reviews and implementation plans (Customer Service, Brent Housing Partnership, Revenues and Benefits and Social Services) continue to drive service development and impact upon the service development.

8 Developmental Work

- 8.1 Kilburn OSS relocated to Dyne Road in January 2003, extended its opening hours and enlarged its reception from 1 to 2 staff. There has been an increase of enquiries at Kilburn overall but particularly those related to Housing issues such as rents and repairs.
- 8.2 The One Stop Shop has continued to build closer working relations with Social Services. These include: Social Services staff attending One Stop Shop team meetings to answer queries and providing training for new recruits; the joint development of pre-assessment forms, which take into account the requirements of Fair Access to Care Services; and quality monitoring initiatives that have seen a further improvement in the quality of the referrals taken.
- 8.3 The OSS launched a joint initiative with the Inland Revenue Service in September 2001. The Inland Revenue operates surgeries from the Willesden One Stop Shop with future plans to operate from the Brent House OSS as well.
- 8.4 The One Stop Shop continued to work closely with EDS (Revenue & Benefits Contractor), whose contract expired in April 2003 and the One Stop Shop was actively involved with Brent Financial Services in the contract negotiations pertaining to the letting of the new Revenues & IT Contract. OSS involvement ensured that an effective service level agreement was developed for Customer

Service and the negotiation of increased levels of empowerment for Customer Service officers.

- 8.5 The OSS will be developing a new partnership arrangement with the DWP (Department of Works & Pensions). The objective of this arrangement is to improve access for customers and reduce pensioner poverty.

9 Conclusions

The management issues raised by this report will be included in service planning for 2004/05. A summary of the challenges presented to management is as follows:

- 9.1 There has been a major change in One Stop Shop services in 02/03 due to the Revenues and Benefits Call Centre (handling 91,800 this year - 02/03) being bought back in house and with the impending changes in the Revenues and Benefits Contractor, from EDS to CAPITA. The Revenues and Benefits line is a priority within the OSS primarily because Council Tax and Housing Benefit are the most popular enquiry types. The combination of volume and interdependency of these calls, however, make this a complex area of work.
- 9.2 Despite these changes it is absolutely essential to maintain adequate staffing levels of fully trained, generic customer service officers in order to deliver our core business. The mandatory, comprehensive induction training programme takes considerable management, team leader and customer service officer time due to the amount of planning, co-ordinating, delivering and evaluation that is required. Increased demand has been managed by frontline team leaders spending more time on the advice counters working alongside customer service officers. This workload is taking frontline team leaders and staff away from the help desks and there is now a backlog of management work in relation to service level agreements, quality sampling and there have been delays and problems with performance information and statistics.
- 9.3 Increased staff turnover means that the service is continually at some stage in the process of recruiting, selecting and training staff. Every effort is made to utilize specialist agency temporary staff to bridge gaps however these people also need to be selected and trained. Exit interviews have assisted managers with staff retention and the feedback seems to show that many people are leaving to pursue personal career development opportunities.
- 9.4 The management team will be striving to ensure that there is a balance between the need to manage the day to day service effectiveness and safeguard standards whilst progressing key service development projects. We are continually engaged in a large number of these projects with partners, namely: Brent Housing Partnership, Social Services, Environmental Services and Revenues and Benefits.
- 9.5 The low response rate for Surveys and Comment Cards needs to be addressed within the 03/04 period - numbers have dramatically reduced from 01/02. These, along with Customer Focus Groups, are vital sources of information regarding customer perceptions and expectations. Enriched with the information captured from the new E-Shop system, this will help develop future service provision.

- 9.6 In coming years there will be changes in the way in which statistics are presented in performance reports. All statistical information was electronically recorded during 2002/03 and a sample reconciliation exercise was to be undertaken in July 2002 to compare the manual and electronic statistics. However due to technical issues the electronically recorded data could not be extracted from e-Shop for use and is not contained within this years Annual Performance Report, as planned. This electronic method of recording will go some way in eliminating human errors, but will not eradicate them completely. It will improve the quality, content and accuracy of management information regarding service performance and customer profiling.
- 9.7 The significantly increased demand for online and email enquiries represents an ongoing trend and E-Shop must be further utilised to accommodate this. The same is true for Extended hours which has experienced the fastest percentage increase above any other element of the service.

10 Background Information

Details of Documents

Available From

Quarterly Performance Reports 01/02
One Stop Shop Management Team Minutes 01/02
Customer Service Steering Group Minutes 01/02

Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact

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