

## Appendix B

### PFSC – Performance Task Force – Questions for Service Managers

#### 1. Please briefly describe the services your department provides?

The OSS Service provides local, phone and on-line access for customer enquiries. The local shops provide a drop-in service to provide information, advice, complaints and service request processing providing service front desk activities on behalf of other departments.

The Contact Centre comprises teams for switchboard, streetcare, housing benefit and council tax and generic services. Incoming calls can either be a request for general information or detailed service requests. The service deals with service requests one of two ways; they can either be activated by the Contact Centre officers or referred to the back office for specialist processing.

#### 2. What Performance Indicators do you use to monitor the service? Are they Local or National?

The One Stop Shop concept is not universal amongst all Local Authorities. Where it does exist you will find variations in approaches. It is thus difficult to compare on a 'like for like' basis and hence there are no nationally recognised PI's specifically for One Stop Shop services.

The indicators we use include:

Indicator	Local	National	Comment
• Waiting times in shop locations	X		
• Interview times in shop locations	X		
• Interview duration	X		
• Customer satisfaction		X	Feeds in to corporate performance mgt. measurement
• Call answering	X		
• Sickness Absence		X	BVPI measure
• Invoice Payments		X	BVPI measure
• Complaint Justification	X		
• Responses to on-line enquiries	X		
• Time taken to reply to complaints	X		

The Contact Centre Operation is part of a Local Government Benchmarking Club and regularly submits data on performance which is then used to compare against other club members.

Brent chairs the Customer Service for London Group which is also formulating and agreeing basic standards for the reception based services across London. This will enable future comparison as London authorities improve information sharing and best practice working.

### **3. What is the process of setting targets?**

Some performance targets are outside the control of management and being driven either corporately or nationally. Performance data is collected on a regular basis. The shop locations use a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software to record transactions. The Contact Centre uses an Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system to record and monitor performance.

Data from the two systems are reported at monthly senior management meetings. This also includes customer satisfaction data collected via comment/feedback cards and complaints data. During the monthly meetings, performance is monitored, tracked and discussed with particular emphasis on achievements against target.

We have local Service Development and Operational plans in place. These plans will outline future direction for the next 1-2 years and will also include outcome measurement and timeframes for each aspect of the plan. The plans are regularly reviewed during programmed senior management meetings.

Targets are set based on what customers believe to be reasonable and acceptable using historic consultation feedback and also calculation optimum performance levels in line with available resources. If targets are amended then as part of the management review process an assessment is made as to whether or not the current methods/resources can support achievement of the new targets. Where changes have to be made, improvement plans are agreed, implemented, monitored and reviewed.

The service has recently introduced intelligent queue management software at Brent House to address management information gaps but it is too early to use this information to improve service delivery standards at this point.

### **4. Are we meeting our Performance targets and if not what are we doing to meet those targets?**

For the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2005/06, waiting times and call answering times were not met in some teams.

#### Waiting Times

Target for waiting times is 80% seen within 20 minutes. The average for quarter 2, 2005/06 was 67% (in 20 minutes). There has been increased demand at our Town Hall location due to the closure of Brent House cashier facilities and reduced opening hours at our Kingsbury location which has impacted on the Town Hall team's ability to meet target. Also, the need for additional reference pcs took up further space which resulted in the loss of one advice desks. Due to the impact of these factors upon performance the lost desk is being replaced by the end of this financial year and close monitoring will continue to assess any improvements.

Following extensive refurbishment and integration of the Revenues and Benefit counter with the One Stop Shop service at Brent House, the increased volume and changed working practice has caused waiting times to rise. Processes are being reviewed as it is felt new processing methods maybe the cause for increases. This has only just come to light and managers are piloting reviewed working arrangements and monitoring the situation closely using the new queue management software to measure real time productivity.

#### Call Answering Times

Call answering for our Generic and Streetcare teams are 20 and 28 points respectively below the standard of 90% answered within 15 seconds. These standards are currently being reviewed as for quite a long period they have been unattainable, despite several improvement plans being implemented. Available resources obviously determine optimum performance a level, a new management structure is being piloted along with revised working arrangements using the new ACD system are being implemented.

#### **5. Please describe the actions that you have in place to improve our performance against the targets set?**

Various Improvement Plans exist to address underperformance and our Service Development & Service Operational Plans & Management Meeting Minutes record exception reports and action plans to maximise use of resources and allocate priority status. Some actions are referred to with the answers provided.

#### **6. Who do you report your performance to e.g. DMT/Executive etc?**

Performance is currently reported to the OSS MT monthly, to the DMT quarterly headed by Director of Housing and Community Care, CMT, Improvement Board, Customer Service Steering Group and Members receive annual reports.

#### **7. Please outline your procedure for dealing with complaints?**

Complaints are received via the Contact Centre or the Shops (and sometimes in writing to other teams across the organisation). The complaints are recorded (logged) centrally before being despatched to the relevant team for a

response. Progress of complaints is tracked and monitored by the OSS Performance & Standards Team.

Stage 1 complaints concerning the R&B Contact Centre Team, except ones about staff are investigated and drafted by an officer from that team before being quality checked by a Service Quality Manager within the OSS Performance & Standards Team. Due to the broad nature of the OSS service this sometimes requires a joint response working closely with other departments. Where this is the case, a paragraph is composed to address the Contact Centre aspect of the complaint which is then incorporated into a main response composed by for example, the Revenue and Benefits Service.

Stage 1 complaints concerning shop operations are investigated and responded to by the local shop team managers. These are checked before despatch, by the Shops Operations Manager.

Stage 2 complaints are investigated and drafted by the Service Quality Manager. Prior to despatch stage 2 responses are checked by the Assistant Director (Customer Services/Head of One Stop Shops) or a senior member of the OSS management team.

All complaint responses are supplemented by a monitoring sheet which highlights the outcome and actions taken to prevent any recurrence and ensure service improvement where possible.

**8. Please tell us how you deal with complaints that are more general in nature and affect other departments? How do you ensure a complainant in those circumstances is satisfied with the outcome?**

More general expressions of dissatisfaction are managed by trained OSS staff that will sensitively guide customers through an enquiry and assess the situation according to the individual's needs. Staff will pass on general dissatisfaction to the relevant department sometimes informally if the customer does not wish to pursue a complaint and also offer other opportunities for customers to raise concerns e.g. by raising awareness of suggestion schemes, ward working and area consultative forums, referral to external agencies etc. Customers sometimes do not wish to accept a decision made by the Council and OSS staff will explain policies and procedures and feedback to service units wherever possible. It is not always possible to measure whether a customer is satisfied with the outcome other than through lack of escalation or customer satisfaction measurement e.g. comment cards and snap shot surveys, focus groups.

**9. What is the volume of complaints about your service? What percentage of them is satisfactorily resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant? What are the escalation rates?**

During the last two years the One Stop Shop service has received a huge increase in complaints due to the fact that Revenues & Benefits customer service responsibility was brought in house to the One Stop Shop service.

For the period 2004/2005 there were 240 complaints (233 x Stage 1's and 7 x stage 2's). On the basis of these figures, the escalation rate would be 2.9%. The only system in place for measuring satisfaction is the escalation route. However, because a complaint is not escalated it does not automatically follow that the complainant is satisfied with the outcome.

Our records for the year just gone shows also that of the 240 complaints made, 111 were fully justified (46%), with 91 being partially justified (38%). It must however be pointed out that a large number of these complaints involved both the One Stop Shop Contact Centre and the Revenue & Benefits Service and because of the way complaints were recorded, it is difficult to measure and apportion justification to one or other service area.

Complaints for other departments are facilitated, receipted and forwarded for the respective department's complaints officer to respond to.

The Contact Centre Improvement Plan is being implemented to address service quality issues however available resources remain critical to performance improvement.

#### **10. How do you disseminate information about your performance and objectives and priorities to your staff?**

Dissemination is supported in a number of ways:

Supervisory, team, unit, division and service meetings are held regularly. Performance is a standard agenda item on all meetings.

Staff appraisals are conducted in accordance with corporate guidelines and closely linked to required performance outcomes.

Performance reports covering all measured aspects of the service are made available via a centrally managed database accessible by all staff via the Intranet.

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