

Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 30th July 2014

Electoral Division affected: All

Customer Access Performance Report

(Appendix 'A' refers)

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Executive Summary

The Customer Access Service's current performance target is:

Corporate Services Contact Centre – 90% calls answered

Social Care Contact Centre – 87.5% calls answered

Further information providing a more comprehensive measurement of service delivery is provided at Appendix A.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement are asked to note the contents of this report.

Background and Advice

Customer Access Service (CAS) is the first point of contact for 60% of all incoming telephony and e-mail enquiries to the County Council. CAS was established in 2005 with 16FTE and by 2014 this had risen to 200+FTE. Social Care telephony services were introduced into CAS in 2007 and since then the service has grown considerably, currently delivering twenty four County Council services and two West Lancashire Borough Council services.

Within the dedicated Social Care Centre a highly specialised and sensitive service is delivered offering information, advice and assistance on all matters relating to Adult & Children's social care, including Help Direct calls. CAS cover issues as simple as meals on wheels applications all the way through to complex child protection and safeguarding adult issues.

CAS advisors process all Social Care contacts and referrals using processes and procedures agreed with CYP and Ash&W checking systems and updating chronologies which enable social care professionals to focus on thresholds and decision making.

The Customer Contact Centre delivers twenty three services including; Highways, Libraries, NowCard, Registrars, Certificates, Waste, Welfare Rights. Staff are required to deliver both detailed transactional services and validated signposting to agencies across the public sector. This requires detailed training and ongoing professional development to ensure all manner of requests, from referral and signposting, to end to end resolution exceed customer expectations.

CAS advisors are the first line advice and support channel for County Council customers and contacts are often of a sensitive nature, requiring delicate handling. Each service deliver is governed by its own specific legislation, therefore, the CAS have to ensure that staff are fully trained and deliver accordingly.

CAS advisors are supported by a dedicated training team who provide bespoke training packages in line with the range of services provided. CAS deliver services with a focus on understanding the customer perspective. Each element of service is assessed against one question:

What does excellent customer service look, sound and most importantly *feel* like?

This means that we encourage behaviours so that:

- The customer experiences a natural conversation with CAS staff;
- Every customer is treated with respect, dignity and understanding ;
- Customer need is the cornerstone of service delivery;
- Quality and timeliness is emphasised;
- Customers are not passed around before their enquiry is answered;
- New technology ensuring access to services is easier for the public ;
- Knowledge of all local government services is readily available to all staff as their primary reference;
- A single customer record is used so that customers do not have to repeat what they have already told us and this is used to support case and service level decision making;
- We get it right first time

We measure performance so that:

- We can tell that enquiries are handled without undue delay;
- Set targets and objectives are consistently exceeded by making good use of workforce planning tools and management information;
- The customer experience is measured, assessed and services re-engineered to deliver the optimum experience

The CAS dedicated training team provide a rigorous induction programme for all staff. This covers:

- Customer Care and soft skills
- Technical service and systems knowledge
- Health and safety
- How the organisation is run
- Data protection legislation

- Best practice for telephony, e-mail and web access channels

This is structured so that staff receive:

- A 5 week training induction
- e-Learning modular programme
- Several weeks spent on our nursery bank for peer to peer coaching
- Intensive monitoring and coaching by team leaders
- Interim and probationary reviews

Longer term an ongoing timetable of development and refresher training is provided, utilising a mix of workshops, coaching, and job shadowing of delegates from all client services which has proved crucial to effective service delivery.

Staff have generic contracts and are offered a matrix framework of grades and accelerated progression to encourage development. This is driven from their Personal Development Plan which may include:

- Fast tracking based on relevant skill sets being achieved
- Customer Services qualification courses
- Aspiring team leader courses
- Aspiring management courses
- One to one feedback sessions
- Team building days/events
- Regular communication and feedback from senior managers

Before introducing any new service, CAS Business Performance Transformation Team (BTPP) scope and evaluate how the service is currently designed and delivered. This includes measuring call volumes, average handling times, processes, systems used and number of FTE required. CAS BPTT work closely with the new service to re-engineer processes from end to end, design and deliver suitable training packages and identify improvements, savings and consistent service delivery before the service is fully integrated within CAS.

The most recently integrated services within CAS are;

- Help Direct
- Care and Urgent Needs Support Scheme
- Libraries
- Procure 2 Pay
- West Lancashire Borough Council Revenues
- West Lancashire Borough Council Benefits

Our main stakeholders are members of the public and we undertake daily surveys to ensure customers are effectively represented and championed within the authority and with our partners. This data helps to improve the level of evidence based customer insight to better respond to the changing needs of our customers

We have agreed service level agreements for services located within the Customer Service Centre and we meet at regular intervals to review, amend, discuss and update as necessary.

Management and teams have taken collective responsibility to enhance our reputation with a customer focused approach that reflects our customer's diversity and needs.

Staff are empowered to take ownership of every enquiry. CAS has created an environment where staff see the needs of the customer as paramount and have adopted and enjoy exploring new ways of working.

We believe that listening to our staff is just as important as listening to our customers in order to develop leadership skills as a division and move the service forward. This has helped to create an innovative customer focussed team.

Consultations

Internal/external customers and service areas, including IT, HR and CAS staff

Performance and Transformation

Customer Access has worked on the following key projects during 2014:

- **0300 Telephony Project** - Following a successful go-live on 27th March, take up of the new 0300 numbers has exceeded all expectations. At the end of June uptake had increased to **60%**. The target for take up in the first year was **30%** which was exceeded in month one.
- **Highways On-line Reporting.** Introduced in January 2014, the number of faults reported on-line by end June has more than doubled, with **6,511** faults self-served. This is an excellent example of joined up working between Highway and Web teams, with Customer Access leading on the transformation. The potential benefits of this scheme are huge both in terms of improving access for customers, enabling them to report faults 24/7, 365 days a year. It has also reduced double-handling within CAS and Highway Teams.
- On 4th March 2014, CAS introduced the Children's ISSIS replacement system **Liquid Logic (LCS)** followed by the Adult's version on 2nd July. **112 CAS staff** attended both the e-learning and face to face training sessions. The Children's go-live was a huge success from a technical point of view and Customer Access staff very quickly became confident with navigation of the new system. The system is more user friendly and has reduced handling times. The Adult version is likely to impact on performance during a steep 'learning curve', but is expected to produce similar benefits in the near future.
- A new **Social Care Operating Manual** was developed and produced by CAS. The Operating Manual documents the major processes which are undertaken by Customer Service Advisors for **Children and Adult's Social Care**. The in-depth 652 page document details processes from an operational perspective specifying responsibility for actions end to end within Lancashire County Council. The document is the first of its kind for the County, and has proved essential to discuss reviews of key process with ACS and CYP.

- Customer Access staff were actively involved in the development of Adult Social Care County Wide **Screening and Initial Assessment Service (SIAS)**. The purpose of the service is to better manage and deal with incoming adult social care referrals and will :
 - Improve person centred response, ensuring that a request/referral is dealt with by the "right" person at the right time. This should mean less "hand offs" early decision making and timely responses.
 - Improve allocation of work for adult social care community teams.
 - Ensure a county wide consistent approach to adult community team workload management and decision making.

- The online **Registrars booking facility** continues to see an increase in self-service in line with the Customer Access call reduction strategy. Customers can arrange an appointment to register a Birth or a Death on-line and by end of June, **4,547** customers had opted to self-serve to register a birth or death. Customer feedback is excellent and a project is now underway to introduce a self-service for **Ceremonies and Marriage**. When implemented this will provide a full Registrar service 24/7.

- **Self-Serve Telephone Directory Amendments.** During this first quarter **2,108** updates and amendments have been made using the self-serve functionality, leading to a substantial reduction in the number of emails handled by Customer Service Advisers.

- **Signposting Phase 3 -Signposting IVR Phase 3. Two** additional redirection options have been added to **Highways** and **Social Care** contacts. This change has proven to be very successful with **8,334** redirected calls during this quarter. These contacts were previously doubled handled and the IVR options have freed up Customer Access Advisers time to handle more complex enquiries.

- **Multimedia CCAD.** Blended e-mail and telephony contact has been introduced within the Contact Centre. This was a major development intended to improve handling of e-mail contact. When no calls are queuing trained Advisors receive emails automatically between calls. The process is fully automated and it has further improved productivity, consistency and efficiency within the Contact Centre.

- A new **SMS channel** has been implemented. This additional access channel is particularly important when handling calls from sensory impaired customers.

- **The Schools Admission peak in April** went well. Customer Access changed the process this year, which resulted in advisors handling less repeat calls generated by system issues. A total of **25,105** customers applied for primary and secondary school places online. This represents an impressive **94.6%** of applications. Release of secondary results showed a **17.7%** decrease on calls compared to 2013. Release of primary results saw a **2.7%** increase in calls compared to 2013.

- A review of the **ACORN and Training review phase 1** has commenced with a redesign of the **NoW Card service**. The format and content has been replaced and the new slim line entry is easier to use and navigate. The training time has been reduced to 1 day and the training session is now more interactive. Initial feedback from the CSAs is very positive, and will be further reviewed by the new evaluation process.
- **Customer Access and BTLS and IT** senior managers are meeting on a regular basis to discuss ICT cover and working together in the future, specifically preparing for a new telephony platform within the next 24 months.
- A new **Call Transfer Protocol** for the whole of the Customer Access Service has been agreed and implemented consistently across all teams. This is expected to deliver the following benefits:-
 - Reduced call times for CSA's as they no longer hold on lines until a colleague is available.
 - Internal transfer numbers have been clarified and updated on the knowledge base to ensure consistency.
 - Reduced costs as external numbers are no longer used to transfer calls.
 - CSA's have increased awareness of all the services provided by Customer Access.
 - The customer journey is improved because customers are not given external numbers and advised to redial.
- Work continues on the **Blue Badge service improvement programme**. The service is more tailored to the customer's needs and customers who can use the online application form are encouraged to do so. Customers unable to use this access channel and who have no other support will receive a guided application service. Since the project started in January 2014, the average handling per call has reduced by over one minute. This equates to **600 call hours per year** that can be diverted to other services.
- **NoWcard - 80,000** concessionary travel cards expired in error during May. Customers were either refused travel or asked to pay standard fares. Customer Access worked closely with the NoWcard team to agree appropriate action and advice which was cascaded to customers and bus drivers in order to minimise disruption until a solution was in place. Call volumes were twice those expected, but proactive measures ensured our service level was achieved.
- CAS met with the **County's Countryside Service Team** to review and discuss service improvements. Alternative processes and recommendations to improve Web provision and self-service were presented.
- CAS attended a presentation held on 27th May for the **Highways Service Core system replacement programme**. This is a significant programme which is expected to bring benefits to both the customers and County technology users. Customer Access will play a lead role in the implementation of the new technology.

Improvements and self service

- Extended hours of operation within Social Care and Libraries Service
- Engagement with service areas to re-engineer existing process
- New self-service functionality within Registrar Service
- Transfer from ISSIS to Liquid Logic platform within Social Care
- Transfer to 0300 contact numbers
- Highways self-service fault finding.

Future Vision

CAS wish to generate further savings on behalf of the County Council by integrating additional County Council services, utilising our experience to scope and transform the 'as is' into a cost effective, efficient and consistent service delivery model. The progression of the CAS Roadmap will improve service level, first point resolution and realise cost savings.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

This report is for noting and therefore a risk analysis in relation to the content on this report has not been required.

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
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Nil

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A.