

Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 14 May 2019

Contact Centre Performance: January – March 2019

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	ALL
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee notes the:
 - 1.1.1 current performance trends within the Contact Centre; and
 - 1.1.2 ongoing service and performance improvement activities to ensure that Council services are easy to access, and citizen queries and complaints are dealt with effectively.

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Report

Contact Centre Performance: January – March 2019

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The report details Contact Centre performance for the period January – March 2019 and outlines associated service improvement activities.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee receives regular updates on Contact performance, trends, and ongoing service improvement activities. This report covers a 3-month period from January 2019 to March 2019 and the data is based on a call performance target of 60% of calls answered within 60 seconds, as agreed by Committee in August 2018. This change means a comparison with previous results (55% target) is not directly applicable, however, the previous data is included for completeness.

4. Main report

Overview

- 4.1 The Contact Team aims to maximise the number of queries resolved at the first point of contact, aligned with clear escalation routes where further input is required from other Council services. The Contact Team currently supports phone calls (inbound and outbound), e-mails, social media channels and web chat.

Current Trends and Service Performance

- 4.2 Regular management information is produced to monitor performance and inform future improvement activities. The current reporting period saw various Council projects impacting Contact Centre activities (both positively and negatively), including; further recovery action to support Council Tax collection rates, the third registration of Garden Waste and further online developments. The Council Tax and Scottish Welfare Fund services also experienced increased contact levels. Where possible Contact resource is reallocated to meet service demands and support essential services.

4.3 Key performance data and trends for the Contact Centre are detailed in Appendix 1, with the major themes highlighted in the following section:

- Total calls answered for January to March 2019 was 164,609, a reduction on the same period in 2018 (176,887 calls). This is predominately due to a milder winter.
- 32 of 36 (89%) service lines achieved the 60% of calls answered within 60 seconds service level target in the current reporting period. A further 3 lines achieved a 50% or higher service level.
- 35 of 36 lines were within the 10% call abandonment tolerance target with 33 lines achieving the 8% stretch tolerance target.
- 26 of 36 lines reported an improvement in average handling time (AHT). The AHT for all lines remained consistent at 347 seconds. This reflects the ongoing programme of support and up-skilling to develop service knowledge and call handling skills, with a wider focus on first touch resolution. This activity helps reduce the number of required outbound and follow up calls. This and other forecasting activities are being supported by a dedicated scheduling team.
- The quality of service provided by the Contact Centre is measured via an assessment of contact adviser performance against a series of set criteria covering both technical and soft skills. For the last 3 months the Contact Centre has scored 93%, against a target of 80%, demonstrating a consistency of performance and positive quality of service outcomes.
- Social Media (Twitter contact), saw a 9% percent increase with 24,035 tweets being received between January and March 2019, compared with 22,051 for the same period in 2018. This demonstrates citizen's appetite to use other contact channels for servicing enquiries and aligns with the Council's digital transformation goals.

4.4 The Council's telephony system enables citizen satisfaction levels to be monitored, with Team Leaders receiving real time alerts on low scoring satisfaction surveys. This allows for immediate intervention and remedial actions with citizens and staff. This tool is being further developed to ensure robust and accurate management information and the team is currently achieving the public-sector customer satisfaction standard of 75%. All feedback is reviewed and action taken to address service gaps, improve the overall experience and share existing best practice.

4.5 Formal complaints relating to contact activities are tracked, with 53 complaints received over the 3-month reporting period. Complaint levels remain comparatively low, equating to less than 1% of calls handled by the Contact Centre in the reporting period. The largest complaint theme related to service failure. The Contact team continues to work closely with relevant Council services to ensure that accurate service commitments and expectations are given to citizens.

Ongoing Projects & Improvement Activities

- 4.6 The Contact Centre's scheduling team is now using historic and real-time data to forecast service demand and model resource requirements. A Senior Quality & Planning Manager has recently been appointed to support this work.
- 4.7 The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF), Council Tax, and Non Domestic Rates (NDR) teams experienced service pressures during the first 3 months of 2019. To address these pressures additional resource has been recruited and advisors in this area continue to be multi skilled to ensure that the team is as flexible as possible to tackle emerging issues. Compared with the previous quarter Council Tax service levels improved from 48% to 56%, abandonment levels improved from 9.8% to 7.4% and wait time reduced from 3 minutes 58 seconds to 2 minutes 54 seconds. These activities helped ongoing collection tasks, which resulted in an in-year Council Tax collection of 97.03% for 2018/19, the highest level in two decades.
- 4.8 The NDR service level performance also improved from 50% to 58%, abandonment levels improved from 9.4% to 6.8% and wait time reduced from 3 minutes 9 seconds to 2 minutes 12 seconds. Again, these activities helped the wider NDR team achieve the Council's 2018/19 in-year collection target of 96.8%.
- 4.9 The Scottish Welfare Fund service level was largely static at 47%, however, the abandonment level improved from 11.3% to 8.5% and wait times reduced from 4 minutes 35 seconds to 3 minutes 24 seconds. The team received 4567 applications compared with 4376 applications received in the same reporting period in 2018. To support this critical service various initiatives are being assessed, including; reallocating resource, process amendments and freephone lines. The Council is also actively engaging with the Scottish Government regarding national adjustments to the scheme and any potential administrative and funding implications. Any changes will be reported in future Committee updates.
- 4.10 Performance in the Repairs Direct team has been a key focus for the Customer team with a joint service improvement action plan in place. Recent performance trends show month on month improvement in 2019, with a 36% service level improvement on the last reporting period. Reduced waiting times have been a major factor in the 20% decrease in the volume of calls to the Repairs Direct Team, when compared to the previous reporting period.
- 4.11 There has also been a corresponding increase in online Repairs Direct job requests, with a 25% increase compared with the last reporting period. To support this type of electronic contact the Contact Team has introduced structured forms, such as the non-emergency repairs online form. This ensures that all of the required information is captured and requests can be processed more efficiently. This approach has been discussed with the Edinburgh Tenant Federation and promoted through social media and via the self-help devices in the local offices.
- 4.12 Demand levels in the Repairs Team remain weather dependent and any sustained weather challenges result in increased service demands. This is being assessed as part of our evolving resource forecasting techniques and the Contact Team is engaging with service colleagues to ensure priority activities are targeted and processes are as efficient as possible.

- 4.13 Social Care Direct lines all exceeded the 60% target in the current reporting period with Children & Families Professional services achieving 81%, Children & Families Public services 76%, Professional Adult support at 77% and Public Adult support at 69%. These service lines continue to be monitored to ensure the correct resource balance between call handling and email performance.
- 4.14 The Contact Team continues to implement changes to improve the overall citizen experience. The use of technology continues to play an important role and following the successful introduction of webchat in waste services, it is now being rolled out in the Council Tax and Repairs Direct Teams. Changes to the Council website during 2019 will also create opportunities to improve the citizen experience. Another exciting use of technology is the webbot rollout planned for our social media channels. This will support appropriate automated engagements and will be piloted in Revenue & Benefit services in summer 2019, with further plans to extend to the waste & environmental services in autumn 2019. This will be supported by 'how to' videos for citizens that will focus on high volume online self-service activities.
- 4.15 Email engagements will be migrated to the Council's telephony platform in July 2019. This will allow for the effective routing of emails and deliver improved volumetric, forecasting and performance tracking.
- 4.16 Social media contact continues to grow and the Contact Centre Team is committed to adopting a citizen focused "one and done" approach. This 24/7 service is dependent on real time service updates and protocols are being introduced that will ensure responses and updates accurately reflect current service delivery standards.
- 4.17 The Contact Team continues to add online service forms and appropriate self-serve functionality. This includes a refresh of the self-service machines that are situated in the Council's local offices. These initiatives will ensure that resource is effectively allocated to those services and customers that require agent or face to face interaction and support.
- 4.18 These activities and the planned introduction of a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) in 2019 will be a vital component in the Contact Team delivering its targeted efficiencies of 15% in 2019/20.
- 4.19 The Contact teams in the local offices are also using technology and data analysis to ensure that resources are allocated to best meet service demand. In 2018 the Council supported 240k customers in the local offices, with High Street and Wester Hailes the busiest and Kirkliston, Drumbrae and Leith recording the lowest footfall. During 2019 we will be introducing alternative cash handling services, more structured service advice sessions and reduced opening times in a small number of offices to better reflect footfall trends. In addition, Customer colleagues will provide support, on a rotating basis, at locations out with the normal local office settings to assist citizens with online forms and service access. These changes have been developed in consultation with the Council's Locality Managers, key service teams including Housing, and external agencies such as the Edinburgh Tenant's Federation.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Performance will continue to be reviewed against target to ensure issues are addressed and service level improvements are achieved.
- 5.2 From 1 April 2019, a Senior Quality and Planning Manager will work with Team Leaders to monitor live performance information within the Contact Centre and use this to respond dynamically to demand. Daily, weekly, and monthly reports are produced and scrutinised by senior management.
- 5.3 We will be introducing alternative cash handling services, more structured service advice sessions and reduced opening times in a small number of offices to better reflect footfall trends.
- 5.4 The use of technology continues to play an important role and we will continue to implement technology and systems throughout 2019 to better improve the citizen experience and to help achieve further savings targets.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The Contact Team is projected to deliver a further 15% efficiency saving within 2019/20 and this will be achieved through greater self-service, a rationalised cash collection operation and improved call handling. Where appropriate and subject to impact assessments, a move to predominately online services will also be considered in appropriate areas, e.g. interaction with businesses.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The Council continues to progress a primarily digital by design approach to ensure that all citizens are supported, providing them with appropriate and accessible service options. This adopts the standard call centre and shared services methodology of providing a range of channels, including: self-service options, call based options and face to face interaction at local offices.
- 7.2 As the Council's online offering develops and matures, consideration will be given as how best to further encourage and improve uptake of both self-service and online transactional options, supported by automation where appropriate.
- 7.3 Changes to how we handle cash have been developed in consultation with the Council's Locality Managers, key service teams including Housing, and external agencies such as the Edinburgh Tenant's Federation.
- 7.4 The Customer team uses a broad range of feedback and citizen groups to support service development and improvement.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Customer Performance Update October - December 2018 - Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, February 2019](#)
- 8.2 [Customer Performance Update July – September 2018](#) - Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, December 2018
- 8.3 [Customer Performance Update January – June 2018](#) - Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, August 2018
- 8.4 [Customer Performance Update: July – December 2017](#) – Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, February 2018
- 8.5 [Contact Centre Performance Update: April to July 2017 - Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, October 2017](#)
- 8.6 [Minute of Council Meeting 24 August 2017](#) – Automated Service – Customer Journey, Motion by Councillor Johnston
- 8.7 Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 28 March 2017 – [Customer Contact Update](#)
- 8.8 Report to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 8 November 2016 – [General Switchboard and Website Enquiries](#)

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Customer Performance Data

Appendix 1 Contact Performance Data

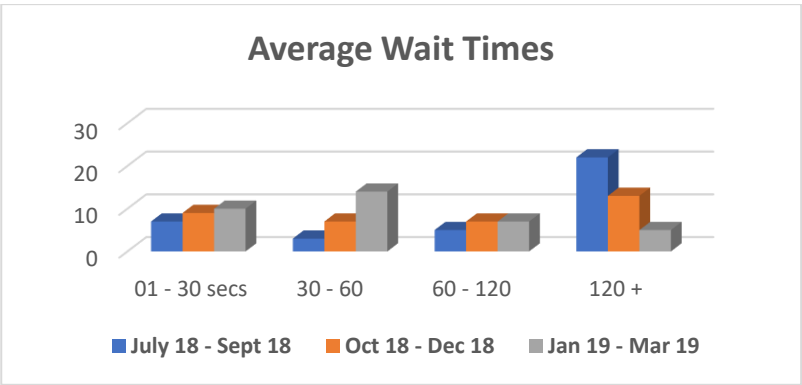
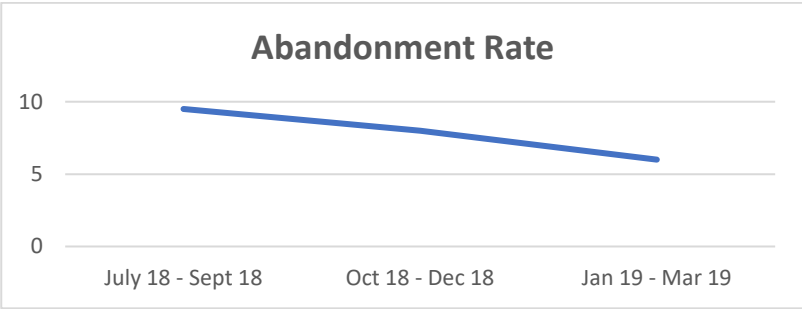
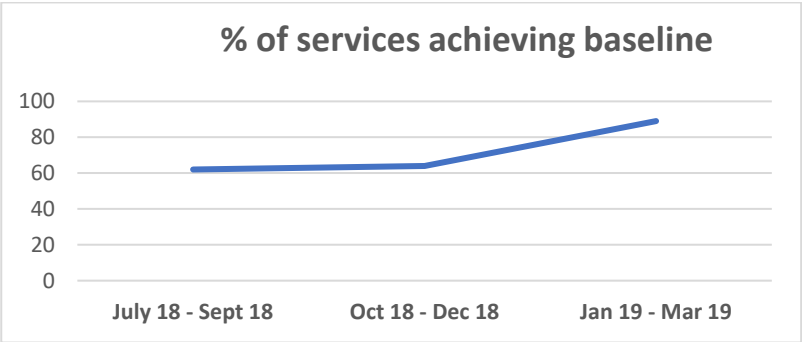
Contact Activity & Timescale	% Calls answered within 30 seconds SLA target of 55% (Jan – June 18 only) Jul onwards 60%			Trend Oct– Dec 18 / Jan – Mar 19	Abandonment target – not exceed 10%, with a stretch target of 8%					Average Wait Times			
	Jul – Sep 18	Oct – Dec 18	Jan – Mar 19		Jul – Sep 18	Oct – Dec 18	Jan – Mar 19	Total Calls Handled	Trend Oct– Dec 18 / Jan – Mar 19	Jul – Sept 18	Oct – Dec 18	Jan – Mar 19	Trend Oct– Dec 18 / Jan – Mar 19
Anti-Social Behaviour	94%	85%	98%	▲	2.1%	5.5%	1.1%	90	▼	00:15	00:36	00:08	▼
Central Emergency Serv	76%	73%	76%	▲	10.6%	7.4%	5.4%	6543	▼	01:16	01:04	00:58	▼
C & F Professional Child	87%	79%	81%	▲	3%	4.7%	4.2%	1774	▼	00:35	00:43	00:38	▼
C & F Public Child	88%	74%	76%	▲	4.8%	6.6%	4.7%	2000	▼	00:42	01:02	00:48	▼
Emergency Child	70%	88%	86%	▼	3.4%	3.1%	3.9%	195	▲	01:05	00:27	00:27	↔
Clarence	57%	57%	78%	▲	12.9%	12.4%	4.5%	2495	▼	02:03	01:43	00:41	▼
Council Tax	42%	48%	56%	▲	14.1%	9.8%	7.4%	23736	▼	04:49	03:58	02:54	▼
Benefits	63%	65%	65%	↔	4.8%	3.4%	3.9%	8294	▲	02:12	02:06	02:11	▲
NDR	52%	50%	58%	▲	10.9%	9.4%	6.8%	1104	▼	02:54	03:09	02:12	▼
Customer Care	93%	87%	94%	▲	1.5%	1.6%	0.6%	4355	▼	00:20	00:32	00:15	▼
Food Bank	66%	62%	67%	▲	14.1%	11.2%	9.6%	1722	▼	02:39	01:48	01:48	↔
Emergency Home Care	94%	91%	93%	▲	3.4%	3.7%	6.5%	286	▲	00:13	00:17	00:12	▼
Emergency Home Care	95%	89%	88%	▼	2.1%	4.1%	4.2%	1083	▲	00:14	00:19	00:25	▲
Emergency Social Work	93%	90%	91%	▲	2.9%	4.1%	3.3%	4885	▼	00:22	00:22	00:21	▼
Interpretation	78%	100%	100%	↔	0%	0%	0%	4	↔	03:17	00:07	00:05	▼
ITS Daytime	93%	91%	86%	▼	4.1%	2.9%	6.2%	859	▲	00:35	00:22	00:32	▲
1 Edinburgh	53%	56%	77%	▲	12.2%	11.3%	3.8%	5232	▼	02:21	01:55	00:46	▼
Repairs Direct	38%	16%	52%	▲	26.4%	43.8%	11.5%	20867	▼	05:15	11:39	02:36	▼
Repairs Planners	92%	87%	83%	▼	2.3%	3%	3.7%	11520	▲	00:18	00:24	00:35	▲
SCD Professional Adult	60%	83%	77%	▼	11%	7.3%	3.5%	653	▼	01:24	00:30	00:39	▲
SCD Public Adult	53%	71%	69%	▼	18.7%	8.2%	7.4%	10049	▼	03:07	01:17	01:18	▲
Welfare Fund Comm.	39%			▼	31%			10398	▼	07:06			▼
Welfare Fund Crisis	30%	48%	47%		4.1%	11.3%	8.5%			09:24	04:35	03:24	
Repairs - Tradesman	51%	52%	64%	▲	14.7%	12.1%	8%	8541	▼	02:08	02:14	01:23	▼
Repairs - Quality Care	43%	38%	60%	▲	13.8%	8.9%	4.2%	1025	▼	02:20	03:18	01:51	▼
Special Waste Uplifts	43%	42%	69%	▲	12.2%	8.9%	3%	3286	▼	03:57	04:00	01:17	▼
Waste	55%	67%	90%	▲	13.7%	5.5%	1%	3679	▼	03:42	01:53	00:20	▼
Environment	42%	45%	78%	▲	16.9%	9.9%	2%	2192	▼	03:58	03:23	00:44	▼
Missed Collections	57%	63%	86%	▲	10.2%	6.5%	2.2%	1984	▼	02:42	02:29	00:23	▼
FM Helpdesk	93%	93%	97%	▲	3.3%	2.6%	1.4%	4322	▼	00:14	00:12	00:08	▼
Building Standards	69%	47%	64%	▲	7.4%	14.2%	5%	1928	▼	01:21	02:35	01:22	▼
Planning	70%	49%	67%	▲	7.4%	15.1%	5.4%	1566	▼	01:21	02:22	01:21	▼
PBS Building Payments	75%	56%	80%	▲	7.7%	13.7%	4.3%	1336	▼	01:10	02:11	00:36	▼
North East Locality	62%	78%	82%	▲	9.1%	4.1%	3.3%	3767	▼	01:20	00:39	00:32	▼
North West Locality	61%	79%	81%	▲	9.2%	4.4%	3.3%	4796	▼	01:23	00:37	00:33	▼
South East Locality	62%	78%	81%	▲	10.4%	4.6%	4%	4026	▼	01:19	00:39	00:33	▼
South West Locality	61%	78%	81%	▲	8.6%	4.2%	3.7%	4017	▼	01:22	00:38	00:33	▼

Commentary

- Inbound calls handled over the reporting period reporting Jan to Mar 19 is 164,609.

Contact Centre Performance Overview

Performance Measures



Commentary

- 32 lines achieved 60% service level (a further 3 lines achieved 50% or above service level).
 - 27 lines showed an improved trend and plans in place to further improve
 - Total calls answered for Jan - Mar 19 was 164,609
 - Improving Trend: Jul – Sept 18 (62%), Oct – Dec 18 (64%), Jan – Mar 19 (69%)
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- Overall Call abandonment rate dropped to 6% over the 3-month period exceeding our stretched target. The Contact Centre is answering 94% of all calls received.
 - 35 lines are achieving the 10% or below calls abandonment threshold target with 33 lines achieving the 8% stretch target. 29 lines show an improved trend
 - Improving Trends: Jul – Sept 18 (9.5%), Oct – Dec 18 (8%), Jan – Mar 19 (6%)
-
- 28 lines show an improving trend seeing a reduction in average wait times.
 - Online/self-service continues to be promoted to allow customers to self-serve where they can without the need to call.
 - Continued focus on code handling to ensure we have maximum staff capacity available to take calls and new shift patterns being introduced to cover periods of higher demand e.g. 10-2 shift.