

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 17 January 2017

General Switchboard and Website Enquiries - referral from the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

Item number	8.6
Report number	
Wards	All

Executive summary

Arising from a motion by Councillor Mowat, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 8 November 2016 considered a report which provided details on performance information and service design for the Council's online and telephone channels. The report has been referred to the Transport and Environment Committee for information.

Links

Coalition pledges	See attached report
Council outcomes	See attached report
Single Outcome Agreement	See attached report
Appendices	Appendix 1 – report by the Acting Executive Director of Resources

Terms of Referral

General Switchboard and Website Enquiries

Terms of referral

- 1.1 On 8 November 2016, arising from a motion by Councillor Mowat, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee considered a report which provided details on performance information and service design for the Council's online and telephone channels.
- 1.2 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee agreed:
 - 1.2.1 To note the current performance reporting for Customer Contact.
 - 1.2.2 To note potential future improvements to customer experience and performance reporting.
 - 1.2.3 To adjust the Rolling Actions Log to reflect that the motion by Councillor Mowat had not been discharged.
 - 1.2.4 To agree that a full progress report be submitted to Committee in quarter one of 2017.

For Decision/Action

- 2.1 The Transport and Environment Committee is asked to note the report.

Background reading / external references

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 8 November 2016

Kirsty-Louise Campbell

Interim Head of Strategy and Insight

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Links

Coalition pledges	See attached report
Council outcomes	See attached report
Single Outcome Agreement	See attached report
Appendices	Appendix 1 - report by the Acting Executive Director of Resources

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 8 November 2016

General Switchboard and Website Enquiries

Item number 7.9
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive Summary

On 6 September 2016, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee passed a motion raising questions about performance information and service design for the Council's online and telephone channels. This report addresses these queries and provides information on ongoing improvement activities for both services.

Links

Coalition Pledges [P30](#)
Council Priorities [CP11](#), [CP13](#)
Single Outcome Agreement

General Switchboard & Website Enquiries

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 note current performance reporting for Customer Contact;
 - 1.1.2 note future improvements to customer experience and performance reporting;
 - 1.1.3 agree to discharge the motion by Councillor Mowat;
 - 1.1.4 agree that a progress report will be provided back to Committee in quarter one of 2017; and
 - 1.1.5 refer the report to the Transport and Environment Committee for information.

2. Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on 6 September 2016 the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee requested further information on a range of customer contact issues.
- 2.2 This report provides detailed answers to the questions raised in the motion:
 - What is the design of the user experience for telephone and online channels?
 - What performance reporting is produced?
 - Who receives performance information?
 - How many abandoned calls have been recorded?
 - How many calls have been received, broken down by length?

3. Main Report

Overview & Customer Experience: Telephones

- 3.1 The Council is committed to providing excellent service to all constituents, supported by simple and easy to access contact channels. As part of the Council's ongoing transformation programme a new structure has been introduced in the Customer Contact Centre, supported by a refocused performance framework.
- 3.2 The new structure has been designed to focus on first touch resolution, supported by closer working relationships between customer contact and service delivery.

These ongoing activities will ultimately deliver a flexible, cross skilled staff group that can effectively address telephone and electronic/social media contact at the initial point of contact.

- 3.3 A recent performance review has resulted in some staff turnover. This activity will benefit the service in the longer term. In the short term staff are being reallocated to tackle specific contact pressures and an internal recruitment exercise is ongoing, to ensure the service operates at the agreed post transformation staffing levels.
- 3.4 The Customer Contact Centre deals with a wide range of service calls. A 7 month snapshot of calls answered by the Contact Centre is detailed in Appendix 1.
- 3.5 When customers phone the Contact Centre, they will generally be presented with an automated menu system (IVR). These provide some self-service information, e.g. Council Tax banding information. Where appropriate, they also provide text messages with links to online forms. At present this is limited to Council Tax and Benefits, but the Council is working to extend this text message approach to more service areas.
- 3.6 The IVR systems will put the customer through to an agent, where appropriate. The IVR system ensures we direct the customer's call to an agent who has the correct skill set to deal with the call.
- 3.7 When a customer is put through to an agent, the agent will attempt to resolve the customer's enquiry in full at the point of contact, e.g. telling the customer when they will receive their next benefit payment. In some cases this will require a referral to another team, e.g. for a bin to be collected or a benefit claim to be processed.
- 3.8 Finally, the agent informs the customer what will happen next e.g. you will receive an updated Council Tax demand bill within the agreed service level.
- 3.9 The handling time for a phone call, i.e. how long the customer is speaking to the agent, varies based on the nature of the call. Appendix 2 shows average call times, broken down by service area. Performance is reviewed regularly by Team Leaders to ensure that calls are handled in the most efficient manner. It is, however, important that requests are resolved as far as possible and this balance is continually under review to ensure effective first touch resolution and call efficiency. The long term effect of this efficiency management approach will reduce call volumes as failure demand is driven from the system.
- 3.10 Work is being undertaken to profile service demand and allocate resources. This is an area under constant review to ensure that resources are best allocated to meet essential service demand. As call volumes reduce our capacity will come more in line with demand.
- 3.11 Appendix 3 details average waiting times and improvement groups have been put in place to address specific challenges such as Repairs, Waste, Council Tax and Benefits. Key actions include better contact/service coordination through co-location, cross skilled teams, improved systems and resource reallocation to meet demand. As part of this activity the service is progressing a dedicated workforce

management tool that will improve demand forecasting and scheduling and more effectively manage telephony and back office volumes.

- 3.12 The current target for call abandonment is less than 10% and recent performance is detailed in Appendix 4. The abandoned calls indicator is calculated using the number of customer calls terminated before it was answered. The majority of services are within the agreed target, however the abandoned call rate is significantly higher for Repairs Direct and this has been prioritised in the above work analysis and a specific improvement group has been put in place. The recent organisational review has also seen resource levels increased in key areas (including Repairs Direct) and once staff are fully trained it is anticipated that performance targets will be achieved.
- 3.13 At peak times, such as following annual Council Tax billing, this target is under significant pressure. To address this on an ongoing basis, closer co-ordination and cross skilling with appropriate transactional teams (processing) is being introduced. This will create a larger pool to tackle short term demand spikes.
- 3.14 The historical service level target for the Contact Centre has focused on calls answered within 30 seconds. The current target for this PI is 55% as detailed in Appendix 5. In many areas this is being met and as detailed above work is ongoing to improve areas where this is below target. However, the current PI suite does not reflect current industry best practice. Consequently, changes will be implemented and the 4 key PIs going forward will become – First Touch Resolution, Staff Satisfaction, Customer Satisfaction & Complaint statistics.
- 3.15 As part of the service's wider improvement activities a detailed analysis of call data is being undertaken to better establish the types of call received e.g. service failure, service request and simple requests for information. This data is essential in informing the end to end service delivery and also assisting the Council to develop and promote other channels such as self-service forms and improved online service information. Other improvements include the use of call backs, messages which give customers greater information about their status in the queue and text links. These activities will assist the Council to better manage call volume types.
- 3.16 A number of services that have recently transferred into the Customer Contact Centre have no call routing technology e.g. FM services. These services are currently being assessed and appropriate IVR systems are being adopted to effectively direct the customer to the correct channel to deal with their inquiry. These developments are being delivered in conjunction with the planned CGI upgrade of the telephony system, which will provide improved management information and is planned for the first quarter of 2017. In addition, work is being scheduled to add the Council's switchboard to the solidus system. This will deliver improved call management.
- 3.17 A pilot is also being progressed that will enhance our post call satisfaction measures with the introduction of a fully automated system of post call satisfaction

surveys. This will assist the Council to further develop its customer contact strategy.

Customer Experience – Online Report It

- 3.18 The Council's website was redesigned in 2014 to streamline the user experience and ensure it worked on mobile devices such as phones and tablets. The website has a maximum 4 star rating in Socitm's annual survey of local government websites. Once on the website, customers can use the search box, the subject based menus, or the "pay it", "report it" or "request it" links to access our online transactions.
- 3.19 Depending on the transaction, the customer may be asked to sign in. This is based on how much information we need about the customer to effectively complete the transaction. Sign on is provided via the Scottish Government's MyGovScot MyAccount service and once registered this enables a proportion of the form to be pre-populated to improve the online experience. The online forms are designed to be user friendly and have help text or guidance where appropriate.
- 3.20 For those forms that require sign on, or for which the customer has opted to sign on, the customer sees a history of their transactions in their online account. We are working to improve this facility further so there is more detailed information on the progress of the customer's enquiry.
- 3.21 The Council's forms are subject to varying degrees of automation. For example, some income and benefits forms are loaded directly into our business database systems, e.g. the direct debit payment form. Others are partially automated, then referred to an officer to finalise the assessment, e.g. the housing benefit form. Some are not automated at all and are referred to an officer for assessment, e.g. student discount form. The customer will receive confirmation, usually system generated, once the transaction has been finalised.
- 3.22 Processing times vary depending on the transaction. For example, 90% of Direct Debit forms are significantly automated and are processed within 1 working day, with the customer receiving a revised bill via second class post.
- 3.23 Some of these transactions, e.g. Income and Benefits, are administered entirely within Customer. Others, such as missed bins or dog fouling, are referred to the relevant service area to resolve. Where possible, the request is raised directly in the service area's system.
- 3.24 The Council is working with CGI and Agilisys to improve our online transactions as part of the channel shift programme and a wide range of services will be launched in the remainder of 2016/17.

Performance Information

- 3.25 The Council is committed to delivering excellent customer service, via a range of channels, including online, telephony, and face-to-face. A comprehensive suite of performance information is regularly updated, broken down by service area, e.g. Waste, Repairs Direct, and Council Tax and performance metrics include:
- Calls volumes (Appendix 1)
 - Average handling time (time spent with the agent) (Appendix 2)
 - Waiting time (Appendix 3)
 - Calls abandoned (Appendix 4)
 - Service level (percentage of calls answered within 30 seconds – Appendix 5)
- 3.26 These reports are received by team leaders, contact centre management, and Resources senior managers as part of normal operational management. In addition key statistics are included in Directorate and Council dashboards. Targets are based on the current resource profile and benchmarked against similar organisations
- 3.27 Reports are produced with different frequency. Team leaders monitor live performance information within the Contact Centre and use this to respond dynamically to demand. Daily, weekly and monthly reports are also produced.
- 3.28 The service is currently reviewing its management information reports. The objective is to simplify what is reported to give an accurate picture of the service whilst also driving the right performance and putting the customer first. Building on existing measures this will focus on:
- Contact successfully resolved at the point of first contact (online/calls)
 - Staff satisfaction
 - Customer satisfaction
 - Complaints volumes & themes
- 3.29 Traditional measures, such as average handling time, will continue to be monitored. These, however, could be impacted as a result of a greater focus on first touch resolution. This performance change will be managed, however, best practice suggests that prioritising contact resolution yields a better overall service and fewer calls as we focus on more value related interactions and drive out failure demand. In time this will allow the service to function fully with current headcount levels.

4. Financial impact

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 5.1 The delivery of high performing customer services, via both the online and telephone channel, is a key target for Customer. Performance against target is regularly reviewed by senior managers to ensure issues are addressed and a service level improvement is achieved.

6. Equalities impact

- 6.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. The Council remains committed to a digital by desire approach and maintaining customer choice in terms of channel access.

7. Sustainability impact

- 7.1 There is no direct relevance of the report's contents to impacts on carbon, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable development.

8. Consultation and engagement

- 8.1 None.

9. Background reading/external references

- 9.1 Minute of Corporate, Policy and Strategy Committee, [6 September 2016](#)

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10. Links

Coalition Pledges	P30 – Continue to maintain a sound financial position including long term financial planning
Council Priorities	CP13 – Deliver lean and agile council services
Single Outcome	
Appendices	Appendix 1 – Calls Received Appendix 2 – Average Handling Time Appendix 3 – Average Waiting Time Appendix 4 – Calls Abandoned

Call Volumes Overview

Overall volumes of calls received monitored through regular performance information reports. This is broken down by service area.

Call Volumes (Offered)	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16
Anti Social Behaviour	45	66	61	62	69	55	33
Central Emergency Service	3540	2763	2892	2737	2653	2192	2839
Children & Families Prof Child	717	806	845	585	781	865	518
Children & Families Public Child	447	556	535	501	501	623	491
Emergency Child	75	90	82	81	121	88	9
Clarence	2740	2864	2000	1762	1577	1606	1522
Council Tax	7008	6343	8111	9276	7993	7428	6784
Benefits	5230	6367	6727	6115	5881	5860	5043
Non Domestic Rates	688	784	1017	1111	1149	1369	1711
Customer Care	757	964	792	690	740	742	648
Emergency Home Care Worker	3151	2649	3205	2957	3222	2621	3032
Emergency Home Care	516	454	485	528	533	410	554
Emergency Social Work Service	2257	1885	2175	1894	1847	1684	1857
1Edinburgh	1416	1403	1446	1338	1386	1560	1159
Repairs Direct	9864	11881	10622	12260	10383	8972	9324
Planners	4078	4713	3929	3888	4080	4007	3299
Social Care Direct Prof Adult	131	147	129	134	156	168	108
Social Care Direct Public Adult	4044	4183	3871	4012	4033	4212	3746
Tradesman	2422	2579	2439	2609	2530	2454	2466
Quality Control; Officers	672	614	629	589	605	606	364
Uplifts	1411	1660	1680	1579	1685	1656	1985
Waste	10796	8689	6887	6282	6357	6893	6055
Environment	6942	6018	5506	5181	5597	5794	5928
Missed Collections	7759	5659	4299	4011	4198	4655	3976
TOTAL	76706	74137	70364	70182	68077	66520	63451

Average Handling Times

Average call handling times are monitored through regular performance information reports. This is broken down by service area. Average handling time is the average time an agent spends with the customer to deal with the query. As noted in the main report we are currently reviewing our performance to prioritise first touch resolution over handling time.

Average Handling Time (Seconds)	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16
Anti Social Behaviour	412	376	339	295	359	307	321
Central Emergency Service	318	320	331	325	308	328	325
Children & Families Prof Child	571	608	619	586	631	589	548
Children & Families Public Child	509	494	526	508	537	523	464
Emergency Child	417	409	396	403	428	419	403
Clarence	244	246	208	194	184	175	186
Council Tax	427	435	425	438	451	450	448
Benefits	388	372	382	405	450	398	415
Non Domestic Rates	430	380	409	413	348	334	339
Customer Care	332	348	301	257	300	289	335
Emergency Home Care Worker	280	287	291	291	286	312	302
Emergency Home Care	339	318	327	334	318	336	302
Emergency Social Work Service	334	338	354	368	377	370	409
1Edinburgh	151	158	152	156	114	165	148
Repairs Direct	328	323	340	327	312	324	395
Planners	187	188	194	188	187	187	191
Social Care Direct Prof Adult	568	573	582	623	537	513	526
Social Care Direct Public Adult	664	669	663	658	642	627	593
Tradesman	302	309	314	324	332	350	360
Quality Control; Officers	448	429	472	458	453	478	515
Uplifts	326	319	297	287	273	267	268
Waste	328	234	242	246	235	234	242
Environment	246	249	253	257	242	247	249
Missed Collections	251	264	262	251	249	237	249
Average Handling Times (All services)	333	337	346	349	343	343	355

Average Wait Times

Average Queue Time (Min:secs)	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16
Anti Social Behaviour	00:11	00:23	00:23	00:20	00:48	00:44	00:53	00:37
Central Emergency Service	00:48	00:46	00:49	00:52	00:33	00:26	00:41	00:35
Children & Families Prof Child	00:21	00:23	00:29	00:23	00:17	00:29	00:13	00:16
Children & Families Public Child	00:20	00:21	00:27	00:21	00:24	00:33	00:16	00:15
Emergency Child	00:19	00:17	00:07	00:11	00:16	00:12	00:14	00:08
Clarence	00:31	00:32	00:33	00:27	00:32	00:32	00:33	00:33
Council Tax	01:26	02:27	03:18	05:15	03:45	04:34	05:11	04:53
Benefits	01:12	02:00	03:09	03:58	03:32	03:21	03:37	04:49
Non Domestic Rates	01:33	01:41	01:49	03:37	02:59	03:08	04:22	05:33
Customer Care	00:23	00:35	00:31	00:19	00:37	00:56	00:47	00:33
Emergency Home Care Worker	00:18	00:15	00:20	00:20	00:19	00:15	00:15	00:14
Emergency Home Care	00:20	00:20	00:20	00:19	00:24	00:14	00:15	00:11
Emergency Social Work Service	00:16	00:09	00:18	00:17	00:18	00:14	00:13	00:12
1Edinburgh	00:31	00:32	00:33	00:35	00:31	00:33	00:32	00:35
Repairs Direct	02:13	05:45	07:08	15:49	11:00	03:55	09:26	04:36
Planners	00:22	00:34	00:32	00:32	00:29	00:26	00:20	00:37
Social Care Direct Prof Adult	00:26	00:12	00:22	00:28	00:19	00:30	00:20	00:11
Social Care Direct Public Adult	00:21	00:19	00:19	00:25	00:16	00:31	00:21	00:21
Tradesman	00:40	01:02	00:54	01:01	00:39	00:42	01:11	01:20
Quality Control; Officers	00:42	01:13	01:06	01:16	00:43	00:50	01:34	01:44
Uplifts	01:33	01:07	02:17	00:51	00:45	01:20	01:48	01:07
Waste	03:04	02:12	02:40	02:13	02:29	03:51	04:13	06:26
Environment	03:09	02:14	02:33	03:07	02:17	03:32	03:57	05:48
Missed Collections	03:07	02:11	02:37	02:12	02:33	03:47	04:16	06:16

Abandoned Calls

Level of call abandonment monitored through regular performance reports. Agreed target, based on resource profile, is that the abandonment rate does not exceed 10%. This is generally being achieved for all services with the exception of Repairs Direct. As noted in the main report additional resource has been recruited in this area, with the recent downward trend, impacted by summer leave.

Calls Abandoned	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16
Anti Social Behaviour	0.06%	0.03%	0.05%	0.02%	0.10%	0.08%	0.01%
Central Emergency Service	5.18%	2.92%	2.75%	2.52%	2.75%	2.03%	3.08%
Children & Families Prof Child	0.18%	0.25%	0.26%	0.17%	0.30%	0.68%	0.03%
Children & Families Public Child	0.23%	0.12%	0.19%	0.19%	0.20%	0.42%	0.16%
Emergency Child	0.01%	0.03%	0.03%	0.01%	0.06%	0.09%	0.00%
Clarence	1.57%	1.33%	0.96%	0.79%	1.28%	1.67%	1.26%
Council Tax	3.47%	4.65%	10.53%	14.79%	11.20%	11.25%	9.47%
Benefits	2.65%	4.40%	7.89%	5.62%	7.79%	6.60%	4.89%
Non Domestic Rates	0.42%	0.72%	0.83%	1.18%	1.53%	1.62%	2.46%
Customer Care	0.34%	0.71%	0.45%	0.35%	0.48%	0.71%	0.36%
Emergency Home Care Worker	2.18%	1.30%	1.58%	1.47%	2.71%	1.70%	1.76%
Emergency Home Care	1.24%	0.95%	0.77%	0.71%	1.31%	0.95%	0.81%
Emergency Social Work Service	3.47%	1.45%	1.69%	0.96%	1.29%	1.27%	1.59%
1Edinburgh	0.75%	0.63%	0.77%	0.40%	0.91%	1.15%	0.64%
Repairs Direct	23.20%	49.44%	39.54%	46.37%	31.41%	22.09%	32.58%
Planners	3.02%	3.85%	2.50%	2.28%	3.82%	3.66%	2.51%
Social Care Direct Prof Adult	0.10%	0.02%	0.04%	0.09%	0.06%	0.12%	0.02%
Social Care Direct Public Adult	1.74%	1.04%	1.11%	1.05%	1.23%	3.17%	1.49%
Tradesman	2.37%	2.71%	2.16%	1.77%	2.17%	2.98%	3.69%
Quality Control; Officers	0.00%	0.00%	0.34%	0.38%	0.62%	0.60%	0.63%
Uplifts	1.11%	0.88%	1.49%	0.55%	0.74%	1.33%	4.32%
Waste	4.83%	2.77%	2.95%	1.91%	3.64%	3.72%	2.89%
Environment	15.57%	7.33%	7.42%	5.23%	9.16%	11.89%	9.88%
Missed Collections	16.70%	5.88%	5.80%	3.42%	6.70%	7.59%	5.70%

Service levels

Service level: % of calls answered within 30 seconds which is monitored through regular performance information reports. Current target is 55% based on resource profile and recent bench-making activity with similar organisations.

Average Queue Time	Jan-16	Feb-16	Mar-16	Apr-16	May-16	Jun-16	Jul-16	Aug-16
Anti Social Behaviour	88.10%	83.33%	80.33%	90.00%	74.63%	70.91%	84.38%	79.31%
Central Emergency Service	68.30%	68.88%	69.07%	69.12%	73.39%	75.70%	68.30%	71.65%
Children & Families Prof Child	82.24%	79.40%	80.19%	82.74%	86.17%	76.36%	88.16%	83.06%
Children & Families Public Child	80.04%	80.32%	80.41%	82.16%	81.64%	72.96%	87.45%	82.99%
Emergency Child	86.67%	80.00%	77.78%	86.42%	92.56%	84.71%	100.00%	100.00%
Clarence	72.80%	71.25%	72.10%	70.91%	72.45%	69.77%	70.18%	66.26%
Council Tax	59.21%	56.28%	33.25%	25.34%	35.07%	31.19%	32.54%	31.35%
Benefits	67.13%	55.19%	35.83%	35.32%	38.48%	41.22%	37.29%	32.88%
Non Domestic Rates	64.18%	66.58%	51.53%	37.67%	42.72%	39.28%	33.45%	26.87%
Customer Care	86.32%	81.32%	80.28%	84.64%	82.22%	74.93%	80.28%	82.38%
Emergency Home Care Worker	82.55%	84.27%	81.46%	81.81%	80.06%	83.09%	82.41%	84.65%
Emergency Home Care	83.60%	80.15%	83.58%	83.88%	78.57%	83.88%	83.26%	86.94%
Emergency Social Work Service	80.27%	86.78%	81.08%	83.74%	82.78%	83.86%	81.43%	84.96%
1Edinburgh	71.71%	70.14%	71.14%	69.36%	72.27%	68.94%	71.91%	64.79%
Repairs Direct	40.02%	17.46%	16.55%	9.58%	34.84%	32.27%	14.72%	17.73%
Planners	78.77%	71.50%	74.22%	73.72%	74.38%	74.25%	76.90%	67.44%
Social Care Direct Prof Adult	73.28%	87.25%	79.07%	75.37%	83.33%	74.70%	81.48%	86.67%
Social Care Direct Public Adult	80.31%	82.23%	81.99%	80.46%	85.42%	75.40%	80.43%	81.08%
Tradesman	58.56%	44.69%	50.19%	43.04%	58.88%	54.15%	38.95%	37.39%
Quality Control; Officers	53.95%	38.85%	39.43%	31.63%	52.89%	50.33%	27.47%	31.91%
Uplifts	58.87%	63.55%	52.83%	69.65%	74.75%	61.45%	53.54%	61.90%
Waste	28.22%	38.35%	38.60%	39.92%	39.95%	31.08%	26.43%	14.40%
Environment	24.91%	35.80%	35.92%	40.36%	40.99%	32.29%	26.86%	16.26%
Missed Collections	26.90%	39.43%	39.47%	40.70%	39.95%	32.05%	26.65%	17.45%

Improvement projects for key areas ongoing – Waste/Environment, Repairs and Council Tax/NDR/Benefits.