

Policy and Sustainability Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 26 November 2019

Contact Centre Performance: July - September 2019

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Item number | |
| Routine | |
| Wards | ALL |
| Council Commitments | |

1. Recommendations

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

Stephen S. Moir

Executive Director of Resources

Contact: Nicola Harvey, Head of Customer and Digital Services,

Customer and Digital Services Division, Resources Directorate

E-mail: nicola.harvey@edinburgh.gov.uk | Tel: 0131 469 5006

Report

Contact Centre Performance: July - September 2019

2. Executive Summary

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

3. Background

- 3.1 Committee receives regular updates on Contact Centre performance, trends, and ongoing service improvement activities. This report covers a 3-month period from July 2019 to September 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.
- 3.2 The performance figures in this reporting period have been amended to reflect new lines of business in the Contact Centre, management information relating to footfall in our Local Offices and volume data on our digital channels.

4. Main report

Overview

- 4.1 The Contact Centre 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 Centre team currently supports phone calls (inbound and outbound), e-mails, social media channels, web chat and chat bots.

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; staff training in preparation for the roll out of Total Mobile and Verint CRM, Garden Waste registration, further developments on our online offering and support for corporate improvement programmes. Where possible Contact Centre resource was reallocated to meet service demands and support key 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 July - September 2019 was 185,193 a 9% increase on the same period in 2018 (169,844 calls handled).
- 24 of 35 (69%) service lines achieved the 60% of calls answered within 60 seconds service level target in the current reporting period. A further 4 lines achieved a 50% or higher service level.
- 27 of 35 lines were within the 10% call abandonment tolerance target with 25 lines achieving the 8% stretch tolerance target.
- 23 of 35 lines reported an improvement in average handling time (AHT). The overall AHT for all lines has reduced to 323 seconds. This reflects the continued 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 supported by a dedicated Workforce Planning 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 95%, against a target of 80%, demonstrating a consistency of performance and positive quality of service outcomes.
- Social Media (Twitter contact), saw an 80% percent increase with 33,972 tweets received between July – September 2019, compared with 18,899 for the same period in 2018. This demonstrates citizen's appetite to use other contact channels for service enquiries and aligns with the Council's digital transformation goals.
- Two incidents had an impact on services across the Contact Centre in the reporting period. The Waverley Court Evacuation on 25 July resulted in a successful decant of our out of hours services to our resilience site and provided a live test of our resilience plans. Services were adversely impacted following the flash flooding on 7 August. Repairs Direct saw a 30% increase and Clarence 72% increase in the days following the floods. Resource was reallocated to best meet this spike in demand.

4.4 The Mitel 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. Customer satisfaction for the reporting period is 75% (public-sector industry customer satisfaction standard is 75%) and all feedback is reviewed, and action taken to address service gaps, improve the overall experience and share existing best practice.

4.5 Complaint levels remain comparatively low, with complaints recorded against contact centre activity 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 Centre team continues to work closely with relevant Council services to ensure that accurate service commitments and expectations are given to citizens.

Ongoing Projects and Improvement Activities

- 4.6 The Scottish Welfare Fund, Council Tax, and NDR lines have all demonstrated a steady improvement in performance, with consistently higher performance reported for August and September. The internal Workforce Planning team has worked with these services in recent months to drive service improvement. Activities like multi-skilling and call trend analysis has enabled the service to allocate resource to more effectively manage demand and proactively manage queues. This has resulted in sustained performance improvement.
- 4.7 The NDR SLA performance improved from 69% to 81%, abandonment levels improved from 3.8% to 1.1% and wait time reduced from 1 minute 36 seconds to 37 seconds, despite a slight increase in call volumes.
- 4.8 The Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) service level has improved from the last reporting period from 46% to 72%. Abandonment rates dropped from 8.8% to 2.3% with call volumes remaining consistent. During this reporting period the team received 4830 applications compared with 4,536 applications in the last reporting period. A detailed analysis of contact volumes was undertaken between May and June 2019 and improvement initiatives were successfully piloted in June and these became business as usual activities during this reporting period.
- 4.9 The current reporting period covered the latest garden waste registration activities, with an additional 12,106 calls received during the registration window. Temporary resource supported some of this contact spike, however, all elements of the Council's environmental contact service were impacted. To mitigate pressures relating to any future registration period, work is ongoing to assess the possibility of automatic renewals supported by direct debit functionality. This work is linked to the phase 2 developments of the new CRM system, considered in section 4.13 of this report
- 4.10 Changes were made to the call handling process for Community Care Grants applications from 1 September 2019. Previously, citizens who were unable to use our online service, called to apply for a Community Care Grant and were offered a call back within 5 working days to complete an application over the phone. We have now replaced this activity with a voicemail, where citizens are asked to leave their contact information. This results in more effective resource management with a call back to citizens in 3 working days rather than 5 working days. The teams improved performance in recent months has been supported by this change.
- 4.11 Performance in the Repairs Direct team is currently a material area of focus as service levels have dropped from 71% to 35% in the current reporting period. Volumes have increased by 7,631 compared to the last reporting period which has had an adverse impact on the overall performance of the team. Volumes have increased in this area due to flash flooding, the change in weather and repeat contact. This impact was compounded by several of the Repairs Direct team being temporarily reassigned to the Housing Improvement Programme and the implementation of the new Total mobile system. Staff were involved in user acceptance testing, service working groups and delivering training for Contact Centre staff and Housing Property operatives. Although this impacted on the

overall performance, the longer-term benefits of these projects will be seen in the coming months and will be detailed in the next Committee update.

- 4.12 Planning and Building Standards and 1Edinburgh lines are reporting a lower service than the last reporting period. Services were impacted by the additional Garden Waste calls that are all handled by the same staff group. Service levels were all achieved in September, showing an improved performance trend moving into the October – December 2019 reporting period.
- 4.13 The use of technology continues to play an important role in improving the overall citizen and service user experience and following the successful introduction of webchat in waste services, Repairs Direct is now live providing tenants with another channel to make contact.
- 4.14 The Council has also launched Chatbot functionality which is now live for Council Tax, Waste and Environmental services. This offers citizens another contact channel to access key services and Edinburgh is one of the first councils in Scotland to deliver this digital channel. In the first month following the launch the chatbot held 1110 digital self-service conversations with citizens. The system also includes an analytical portal and as the level of interactions grows the team will have statistically relevant data to identify citizens top reasons for contact and escalation. This information will be used to further shape service delivery.
- 4.15 Other initiatives that will launch in the near future include ‘how to videos’ for Council Tax that will offer guidance and self-help advice to citizens regarding some of our frequently asked questions.
- 4.16 We continue to develop online forms in conjunction with the rollout of a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) system. Significant work was completed for the inhouse go live in September, with citizen go live successfully implemented on 9 October 2019. The introduction of our CRM simplifies the citizen and service user experience by making it easier to log and track service requests. Initial feedback to the launch has been very positive and a more detailed analysis will be included in future reports. Planning activities are now underway to identify and prioritise phase 2 initiatives for the CRM that will ensure the online capabilities and customer experience benefits of the system are fully utilised.
- 4.17 Following the removal of cash handling services at some local offices in June 2019 and the associated adjustments to opening hours footfall levels are continuing to be tracked. This data will be used to assess the viability of further operational adjustments. Citizens are now making use of alternative payment methods, with staff supporting citizens setting up Direct Debits or signposting local Pay Point venues.
- 4.18 During the last reporting period the Contact Centre took responsibility for the Debt Recovery contact lines. The lines sit within the wider Customer Care and Localities Team who achieved a service level of 52% in their first reporting period. Multiskilling across the team is already delivering positive results, with a steady improvement and lines exceeding service level in September 2019.

- 4.19 This report also includes the first dedicated performance data on the School Supply line. This is a critical service that sources temporary cover for educational establishments across Edinburgh. The team process over 450 requests per month, via phone or electronically, with a 71% fulfilment rate.

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 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 saving targets.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The Contact Centre 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 a comprehensive integrated impact assessment, predominately online services will also be considered in 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, face to face interaction at a customer hub or locality office.
- 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 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 April - June 2019 - Report to Policy and Sustainability Committee, August 2019](#)
- 8.2 [Customer Performance Update January – March 2019 - Report to Corporate, Policy and Strategy, May 2019](#)

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

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Customer Centre Performance Data

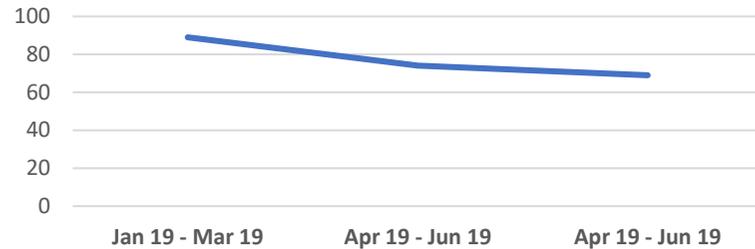
Contact Centre - Performance Data

| Contact Activity & Timescale | % Calls answered within 30 seconds SLA target of 60% | | | Trend Apr – Jun 19 / Jul – Sep 19 | Abandonment target – not exceed 10%, with a stretch target of 8% | | | | Average Wait Times | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--------------------|-----------------|---|---|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| | Jan – Mar 19 | Apr – Jun 19 | Jul – Sep 19 | | Jan – Mar 19 | Apr – Jun 19 | Jul – Sep 19 | Total Calls Handled | Trend Apr – Jun 19 / Jul – Sep 19 | Jan – Mar 19 | Apr – Jun 19 | Jul – Sep 19 | Trend Apr – Jun 19 / Jul – Sep 19 |
| Anti-Social Behaviour | 98% | 95% | 88% | ▼ | 1.1% | 0% | 4.8% | 80 | ▲ | 00:08 | 00:23 | 00:21 | ▼ |
| Central Emergency Serv | 76% | 74% | 74% | ▼ | 5.4% | 7% | 5.4% | 6506 | ▲ | 00:58 | 01:19 | 01:13 | ▼ |
| C & F Professional Child | 81% | 82% | 76% | ▼ | 4.2% | 3.7% | 5.0% | 1414 | ▲ | 00:38 | 00:37 | 00:52 | ▲ |
| C & F Public Child | 76% | 78% | 71% | ▼ | 4.7% | 3.9% | 8.0% | 2002 | ▲ | 00:48 | 00:42 | 01:00 | ▲ |
| SCD Emergency | 86% | 80% | 72% | ▼ | 3.9% | 3.6% | 4.0% | 168 | ▲ | 00:27 | 00:36 | 00:52 | ▲ |
| Clarence | 78% | 52% | 42% | ▼ | 4.5% | 13.6% | 17.7% | 3223 | ▲ | 00:41 | 02:06 | 03:15 | ▲ |
| Council Tax | 56% | 42% | 58% | ▲ | 7.4% | 10.5% | 5.9% | 25680 | ▼ | 02:54 | 04:09 | 02:44 | ▼ |
| Benefits | 65% | 61% | 67% | ▲ | 3.9% | 4.7% | 2.6% | 7070 | ▼ | 02:11 | 02:26 | 01:54 | ▼ |
| NDR | 58% | 69% | 81% | ▲ | 6.8% | 3.8% | 1.1% | 1575 | ▼ | 02:12 | 01:36 | 00:37 | ▼ |
| Customer Care | 94% | 94% | 91% | ▼ | 0.6% | 0.9% | 1.2% | 4755 | ▲ | 00:15 | 00:16 | 00:21 | ▲ |
| Food Bank | 67% | 63% | 73% | ▲ | 9.6% | 10.1% | 5.2% | 1603 | ▼ | 01:48 | 01:58 | 01:21 | ▼ |
| Emergency Home Care | 93% | 85% | 86% | ▲ | 6.5% | 11.4% | 5.7% | 7164 | ▼ | 00:12 | 00:28 | 00:25 | ▼ |
| Emergency Home Care | 88% | 87% | 86% | ▼ | 4.2% | 3.2% | 4.3% | 1124 | ▲ | 00:25 | 00:26 | 00:28 | ▲ |
| Emergency Social Work | 91% | 88% | 86% | ▼ | 3.3% | 5.1% | 3.9% | 4964 | ▼ | 00:21 | 00:30 | 00:33 | ▲ |
| Interpretation | 100% | 43% | | ▼ | 0% | 42.9% | | 627 | ▼ | 00:05 | 01:54 | | ▼ |
| ITS Daytime | 86% | 94% | 90% | | 6.2% | 3.3% | 4.1% | | | 00:32 | 00:17 | 00:23 | |
| 1 Edinburgh | 77% | 55% | 42% | ▼ | 3.8% | 9.7% | 16.1% | 5138 | ▲ | 00:46 | 02:00 | 03:19 | ▲ |
| Repairs Direct | 52% | 71% | 35% | ▼ | 11.5% | 4.3% | 14.6% | 19746 | ▲ | 02:36 | 01:09 | 04:15 | ▲ |
| Repairs Planners | 83% | 91% | 87% | ▼ | 3.7% | 1.7% | 2.8% | 11322 | ▲ | 00:35 | 00:20 | 00:25 | ▲ |
| SCD Professional Adult | 77% | 76% | 67% | ▼ | 3.5% | 4.6% | 6.1% | 642 | ▲ | 00:39 | 00:46 | 01:03 | ▲ |
| SCD Public Adult | 69% | 69% | 55% | ▼ | 7.4% | 8.1% | 13.9% | 10472 | ▲ | 01:18 | 01:24 | 02:30 | ▲ |
| Scottish Welfare Fund | 47% | 46% | 77% | ▲ | 8.5% | 8.8% | 2.3% | 10001 | ▼ | 03:24 | 04:05 | 01:12 | ▼ |
| Repairs - Tradesman | 64% | | | ▼ | 8% | | | 9388 | ▲ | 01:23 | | | ▲ |
| Repairs - Quality Care | 60% | 73% | 62% | | 4.2% | 5.3% | 8.4% | | | 01:51 | 01:02 | 01:36 | |
| Waste Special Uplifts | 69% | 50% | 48% | ▼ | 3% | 5.8% | 7.2% | 3389 | ▲ | 01:17 | 02:45 | 03:36 | ▲ |
| Waste | 90% | 75% | 65% | ▼ | 1% | 2% | 5.2% | 17092 | ▲ | 00:20 | 01:00 | 02:07 | ▲ |
| Environment | 78% | 56% | 46% | ▼ | 2% | 5.8% | 9.8% | 3001 | ▲ | 00:44 | 02:01 | 03:54 | ▲ |
| FM Helpdesk | 97% | 88% | 87% | ▼ | 1.4% | 4.2% | 4.5% | 4158 | ▲ | 00:08 | 00:21 | 00:22 | ▲ |
| Building Standards | 64% | 44% | 49% | ▲ | 5% | 11.5% | 13.4% | 1585 | ▲ | 01:22 | 02:56 | 02:33 | ▼ |
| Planning | 67% | 48% | 45% | ▼ | 5.4% | 10.6% | 13.7% | 1452 | ▲ | 01:21 | 02:35 | 02:50 | ▲ |
| PBS Building Payments | 80% | 72% | 57% | ▼ | 4.3% | 5.7% | 10.9% | 1632 | ▲ | 00:36 | 01:02 | 02:02 | ▲ |
| North East Locality | 82% | 75% | 69% | ▼ | 3.3% | 4.9% | 5.7% | 4337 | ▲ | 00:32 | 00:44 | 00:49 | ▲ |
| North West Locality | 81% | 75% | 69% | ▼ | 3.3% | 4.2% | 5.5% | 5986 | ▲ | 00:33 | 00:43 | 00:52 | ▲ |
| South East Locality | 81% | 75% | 70% | ▼ | 4% | 4.4% | 5.7% | 4849 | ▲ | 00:33 | 00:44 | 00:51 | ▲ |
| South West Locality | 81% | 76% | 68% | ▼ | 3.7% | 4.1% | 5.7% | 4214 | ▲ | 00:33 | 00:44 | 00:52 | ▲ |
| Supply Hub | | | 76% | | | | 17.1% | 491 | | | | 00:44 | |
| Debt Services | | | 52% | | | | 6.8% | 3896 | | | | 01:11 | |

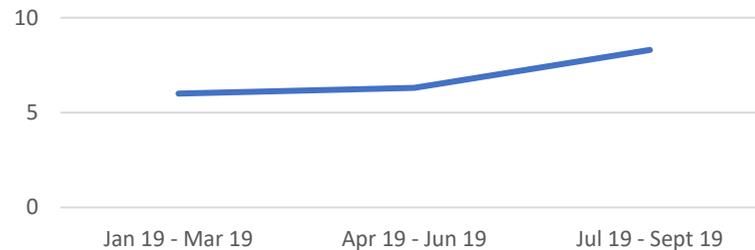
Contact Centre Performance Overview

Performance Measures

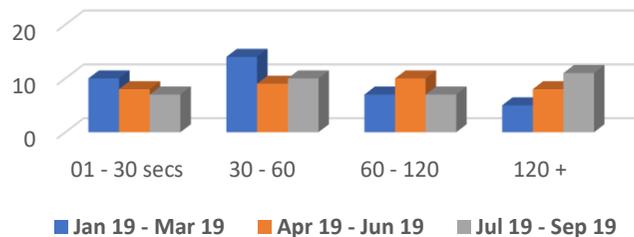
% of services achieving baseline



Abandonment Rate

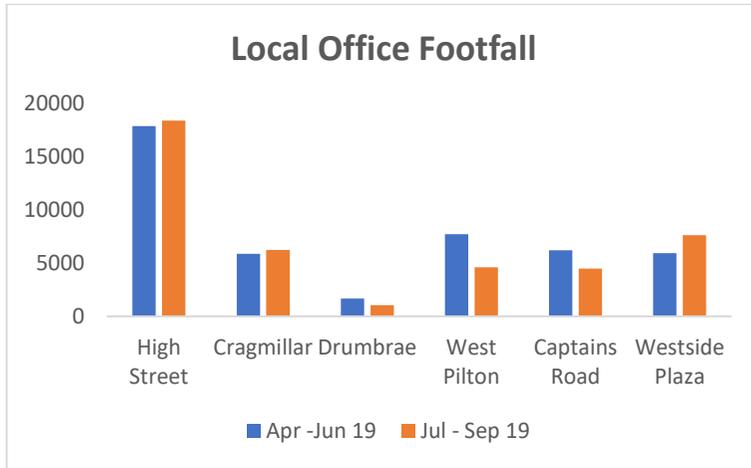


Average Wait Times



Commentary

- 24 lines achieved 60% service level (a further 4 lines achieved 50% or above service level).
 - Total calls answered for July - September 2019 was 185,193
 - Performance impacted from increased contact during the reporting period from Garden Waste registration plus support to the successful launch of Total Mobile and Verint CRM.
-
- Overall Call abandonment rate increased slightly to 8.3% this reporting period, however remaining within the 10% target. The Contact Centre is answering 91.7% of all calls received.
 - 27 lines are achieving the 10% or below calls abandonment threshold target with 25 lines achieving the 8% stretch target.
-
- 8 lines show an improving trend seeing a reduction in average wait times (based on lines reported in previous report).
 - 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.



- The higher footfall in High Street and Westside Plaza highlights the offices where cash is handled
- The current reporting period also highlights the impact of the change of opening hours.
- Reporting of payments processed commenced in August 2019, with 13,718 payments handled in August and September across the High Street and Westside Plaza.
- Across all Local Offices the main reasons citizens present are for Housing or Homelessness Assessments