

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Assessment details	
Assessment area	Customer Services, which includes the Civic Centre, Contact Centre, Reception, Post Room, Payments, Caretaker & Cleaning Services
Date of assessment	July 2016
Directorate and Service	Strategic (Internal Services) – Customer Services
Manager	Carol Russell
Officer conducting assessment	Carol Russell
Step 1: Scoping the assessment	
1	<p>What are the aims and objectives of the activity or proposal?</p> <p>To ensure that the services provided meets customer requirements. The aims and objectives are set out in the Customer Charter:</p> <p>Providing an equal service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We believe in promoting equal opportunities for all, irrespective of race, religious belief, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation. • We aim to produce all documents in plain English. • We aim to provide the means for anyone to contact us regardless of their needs. • We provide information in various formats and languages so access to and understanding of our services is available to all. • We will not discriminate nor tolerate discrimination against anyone. • We will record and follow up on any discriminatory incident reported to us.
2	<p>Who will be affected?</p> <p>The general public and staff of Dartford Borough Council.</p>
3	<p>How does the activity or proposal contribute to:</p> <p>a) any key performance indicators? b) policies, values or objectives of Dartford Borough Council?</p> <p>a) We aim to answer 65% of telephone calls within 20 seconds. After requesting service, we will aim to see face-to-face visitors within 15 minutes of their arrival.</p> <p>b) Customer Services as a whole supports the main vision of the Council by delivering high quality services, offering value for money and demonstrating customer satisfaction and a culture of continuous improvement.</p>
4	<p>Which aspects of the activity or proposal are dictated by legislation/regulation and where do we have discretion in how they are delivered?</p> <p>The service is not dictated by legislation and there is complete discretion in how it is delivered (inside the governance arrangements of the Council). The Council has over the past 10 years chosen to benchmark its Customer Services using the International Organisation of Standardisation and as a result the service has reached ISO 9001 Quality Standard.</p>

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Step 2: Information collection

Note: Equality and Diversity information for Dartford can be found at <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/equality-and-diversity-data>

<p>5</p>	<p>What do you know about the groups of people who will be affected? i.e. demographic information in relation to the protected characteristic groups (age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, race, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment)</p>	<p>According to the 2014 Mid-Year Population Estimates provided by the KCC Analysis Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of Dartford is 102,200; this is the lowest population of Kent authorities and is an increase from the 2009 estimates of 9,200. • There is no change in the gender make up of 51% females and 49% males. • People aged 30-34 make up the highest proportion of the population with 7.7% of all people. This is a change from the 2009 estimates where the highest proportion of the population was 40-44 year olds. • The 85 plus age group make up the smallest proportion of 1.3% of all people. This is a reduction 0.5% from the 2009 estimates. • According to the 2011 Census 88% of Dartford population are white, 12% are from a BME community. There is no change from the 2009 estimates, whereas Dartford still has the 2nd highest number of people from a BME in Kent. • At the time of the 2011 Census 15.1% of the total population of Dartford considered themselves to have a health problem or disability which limited their day-to-day activity and this is slightly lower than the national average of 17.9%. <p>For the last financial year (April 2015 – March 2016) Customer Services handled approximately:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>122,000 telephone enquiries</td> <td>(86%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17,000 face-to-face enquiries</td> <td>(12%)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9,000 customer emails</td> <td>(2%)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Whilst we do not collect information related to the protected characteristic groups, the Contact Centre collects, name, full address, contact details and the enquiry details of the customer who is accessing the majority of the Councils services. Each customer contact is recorded against their own personal record in order to build up a personal customer profile.</p> <p>The Contact Centre does not record the number of customers who require information in other languages or who are blind/deaf/illiterate. However, this</p>	122,000 telephone enquiries	(86%)	17,000 face-to-face enquiries	(12%)	9,000 customer emails	(2%)
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Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

		information can be collected when we access Language Shop Services or NGT Relay or translating documents and/or providing face to face or telephone translations.
6	What consultation has taken place with affected groups? Please describe who was consulted and the key findings	<p>It has been some years since satisfaction monitoring was undertaken directly by Customer Services. However, some of the services we represent may undertake this as part of their own service.</p> <p>Consultation with the public was sought following the decision to close the cash office and replace with a cash kiosk.</p> <p>Customer Services record any customer feedback that they receive. These comments, compliments or complaints are forwarded to the relevant service manager for action or consideration, where appropriate. Any feedback received is regularly debriefed as part of regular Service & Monitoring Review meetings, Quality Group meetings and Customer Services Team meetings and will be acted upon to enhance service delivery and customer expectation if appropriate and budget constraints allow.</p>
7	Are there any gaps in information? If so, what additional research and/or consultation is needed to ensure that affected groups needs and views are taken into account?	<p>We do not believe that we have any gaps in information we currently collect or have access to.</p> <p>As part of the Councils Equality Action Plan it was agreed that a database should be created to record details of customers who have requested information in other languages or alternate formats.</p>
Step 3: Assessing the equality impact		
8	<p>Consider whether the activity or proposal has or will have any positive or negative equality impacts on the protected characteristic groups in relation to the following aims of the General Equality Duty:</p> <p>a) tackling unlawful discrimination b) promoting equality of opportunity c) promoting good relations</p> <p><u>NOTES:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Initial Screening will have identified which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty are relevant to the activity or proposal for consideration • For existing activities, consider how they are working in practice for each relevant protected group • For new proposals, consider whether there is anything that could give rise to positive and negative equality impacts for each relevant protected group 	

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is no identified equality impact, please tick the 'No Impact' box and explain why in question 9 • If the equality impact is unclear, please tick the 'Unknown' box and explain why in question 9 					
		POSITIVE IMPACTS	NEGATIVE IMPACTS	NO IMPACT	UNKNOWN
a	Age	<p>There is a vast array of different contact channels i.e. face-to-face, telephone, online, email and written requests to suit all customer requirements. Our services can be accessed by all. However, if on a rare occasion, a service is online only i.e. parking consultation or assistance is required using the automated cash kiosk, Customer Services will act as the customer's representative or advocate and will facilitate the transaction to conclusion.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b	Disability	<p>The Civic Centre is wheelchair accessible and offers disabled parking bays for both members of the public and employees. Services are signposted and are available from lower reception and service desks that are wheelchair accessible. All service desks are fitted with induction hearing loops. The Civic Centre offers a larger private interview room that is wheelchair accessible. The Civic Centre has fully compliant DDA customer and staff toilets. The automated kiosk is both visible and audible. The customer queuing system is both visible and audible. Customer Services Advisors are able to offer advocacy services.</p>	<p>Customer Services previously had a number of Advisors who had basic understanding of British Sign Language. However, due to lack of use, these skills have not been retained. Our records indicate that there are two deaf customers who regularly access our service. Customer Services are able to communicate as the customers are able to lip read or we engage via written communication.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

		NGT Relay is available as another means of communication. The Customer Services Charter offers Braille, audio tape and large print versions of documents.			
c	Gender (including reassignment)	Customers can request to speak with either a male or female advisor should they require. We have the ability to amend customer contact details on CRM (to reflect any gender reassignment) Single public customer toilet cubicle – available to all.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d	Race	Other than the Customer Service Charter leaflet, it is the responsibility of the individual departments that we represent to produce documentation in other languages. The Customer Services Charter is also available on the DBC website. This Charter includes the Council's most recent strapline that offers the six most commonly used languages available as a dedicated telephone line. Any requests made to these lines are actioned by Customer Services and passed to Medway's Community Interpreting Service for translation before passing to the relevant service department. If required, the Council and Customer Services also use Language Shop Services to verbally interpret face-to-face or telephone services.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

e	Religion/Belief	In some faiths a customer may wish to speak to a male advisor or vice-versa and this option can be requested. Customer Services do not collect/ask for customer's religion or belief. When taking customers details they will ask for surname and first name.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f	Sexual Orientation	We do not collect this information.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g	Pregnancy/Maternity	We do not collect this information. The customer toilet cubicle does have custom baby changing facilities. Whilst we do not have a separate baby feeding facility, we are able to act upon requests for private facilities depending on availability.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	If 'no impact' or 'unknown' was selected, please explain				
10	If Dartford Borough Council works with partners to deliver the activity or proposal, please describe any circumstances that could give rise to positive or negative equality impacts between different groups				
11	Any other comments	Customer Services is a single service that manages front line customer enquiries on behalf of several service departments within Dartford Borough Council. The nature of Customer Services enables a good and up to date insight and an awareness of current trends, customers and their needs.			

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Step 4: Action plan					
11. Based on the information in Steps 1 to 3, please list the actions that will be taken to address:					
a) any gaps in information and consultation b) how any negative impacts on equality will be mitigated or eradicated					
a) If additional information and/or consultation is required or the impact is still unclear, what actions will you put in place to gather the information you need?					
Information needs	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Use of services	Monitor the use of services to ensure that all our communities are able to benefit from Council services	Assurance that the Council is providing services fairly and to identify any barriers faced by particular communities	Ongoing	Equality Action Plan	Carol Russell
Alternate language format	Create a database of customers who have requested information in other languages and alternate formats	Assurance that future contact with our customers is consistent with their communication needs	September 2016	Equality Action Plan	Carol Russell
b) If any negative impacts on equality were found, what actions will you put in place to mitigate or eradicate these impacts?					
Identified impacts (and who is affected)	Action	Intended outcome	Date for completion	How this will be monitored	Responsible officer
Hearing impaired customers	Provide Policy & Projects Officer with a list of Customer Services Advisors who have basic understanding of British Sign Language	Maximising the ability for the Council to provide services to all of its community	September 2016	Equality Action Plan	Policy & Projects Officer

Customer Access Review – Full Assessment

Step 5: Decision making and future monitoring		
13	Which decision making process does this Customer Access Review need to go through? i.e. who does this need to be approved by?	Richard James – ICT Manager Sarah Martin – Strategic Director (Internal)
14	How will you continue to monitor the impact of the activity or proposal on the equality groups?	Customer feedback, compliments and complaints
15	When will you review this Customer Access Review?	Annually
Step 6: Final steps		
16	Once this Customer Access Review has been approved, send this assessment to the Policy & Projects Officer	
17	If the subject of the Customer Access Review is going to committee, summarise your findings in the committee report	
18	Implement the actions identified from this Customer Access Review and ensure progress is monitored and recorded	