
Report To:	Policy & Resources Committee	Date:	20 September 2016
Report By:	Chief Financial Officer	Report No:	FIN/86/16/AP/FM
Contact Officer:	Fiona Maciver	Contact No:	01475 712904
Subject:	Customer Services Performance – Annual Update		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update of Customer Service Centre (CSC) performance for 2015/16.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following the opening of the Customer Service Centre in the summer of 2012 the Policy & Resources Committee approved its first Customer Services Strategy in November 2012. This Strategy was refreshed in September 2015. It was agreed an annual update on CSC performance would be presented to Committee.

- 2.2 Appendix 1 contains the updated Action Plan which shows:-

- 2 x Blue (Complete) actions
- 8 x Green (On Track) actions
- 3 x Amber (Delayed) actions

More detail is provided on progress in the report.

- 2.3 Appendix 3 provides detailed information on 2015/16 v 2014/15 performance in terms of volumes and throughput. Overall the movement has been positive with fewer abandoned calls and evidence of channel shift from calls to emails.
- 2.4 Section 7 of the report identifies targets for 2016/17 and provides information on the positive outcomes achieved by Modern Apprentices who have worked in the CSC.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the positive progress made in delivering the CSC action plan and the plans for further improvement in 2016/17.

Alan Puckrin
Chief Financial Officer

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Policy & Resources Committee approved its first Customer Services Strategy in November 2012 following the opening of the Customer Service Centre in Clyde Square. This Strategy was refreshed for 2015-2018.
- 4.2 When the CSC first opened in June 2012, Performance Information was basic and unreliable. A temporary Development Officer, funded from the Modernisation Fund for 2 years, developed a series of performance reports which provided more robust information on performance in the CSC.
- 4.3 Analysis of this Management Information (MI) identified that there was an issue with response times for Revenues and Benefits (R&B) enquires, as around 50% of telephone calls were abandoned. The MI also identified that the wait time for R&B face to face interviews could be up to 45 minutes.
- 4.4 General telephone calls which include switchboard calls and enquires for all services within the CSC remit other than R&B at this time were on the whole being answered consistently on an acceptable level with around 10% of calls being abandoned. However there were problems trying to deliver training and quality monitoring due to the volumes of calls and interviews.
- 4.5 A report was presented to the September 2015 Policy & Resources Committee which sought to address these matters supported by the Action Plan. Specific action approved by Committee included:
 - A Customer Services Support Office to be created by means of an internal restructure, filling the post from the existing Senior Customer Services Representatives.
 - Those Customer Service Representatives who deal with Revenues & Benefits enquires to be made a separate role from the general enquires by creating new job descriptions and person specifications.
 - Change the opening hours so that on Wednesdays, the Centre would open at 11.00 rather than 08.45 to allow for team meetings, training and awareness sessions.
 - Temporary extra resource agreed.
- 4.6 The revised Strategy with resultant Action Plan was approved by the Policy and Resources Committee. The Committee agreed that a report on Customer Service Centre performance would be presented on an annual basis after the summer recess commencing in September.

5.0 PERFORMANANCE AGAINST THE ACTION PLAN

- 5.1 The Action Plan which can be seen at appendix 1 shows that 2 of the actions are complete and that the majority are on track. The main successes delivered from the action plan to date are:
 - Identifying training needs within the CSC team and developing a programme of ongoing training. 9 CSC staff have also completed or are working towards completing their Customer Service Professional Qualification.
 - Implemented the late opening on Wednesday mornings. This has proven to be a productive use of time, allowing CSC staff to communicate, generate ideas as well as receive a raft of training and awareness sessions. The general public have adapted to the later opening hours well. Appendix 2 details the types of activities that have taken place since the late openings commenced in October 2015.

- Delivering the amended structure including recruitment of new temporary staff and creating the new team of R&B advisers has been completed albeit took longer than envisaged due to the time involved in recruitment and selection plus awaiting disclosures and notice periods to be worked for new employees.
 - Internal SLAs drawn up and regular meetings are now embedded.
- 5.2 The action on corporate complaints review has slipped in terms of its anticipated delivery date. This has been due to unforeseen technical issues with the target date for completion now September 2016.
- 5.3 The action on reviewing opportunities for Single Assessment is marked as Amber as, whilst a substantial piece of work has been carried out in this area, the National Roll Out of Universal Credit means the planned process is no longer viable. The work carried out however, can be used to identify improvements in processes. It is proposed that this action is changed to “Re-engineering Education processes to become more streamlined and customer friendly”.
- 5.4 The other actions are all on track and in progress with regular updates on the Channel Shift projects being presented via an ICT update to every second meeting of the Committee.

6.0 PERFORMANCE INFORMATION – REVENUES AND BENEFITS

- 6.1 Appendix 3 contains a comparison of performance for Revenues & Benefits for April 2015 to March 2016 against the same period for 2014/15 for telephony, customers interviewed and incoming emails. The Management Information illustrates a positive picture in that 77% of R&B presented telephone calls were answered in 2015/16 when compared to 53% for the same period in 2014/15. A number of factors have contributed to this such as the volume of R&B calls presented have reduced by 12% due to the volume of Welfare Reform calls relating to issues such as the Social Sector Size Criteria reducing as well as the fact that the Benefit Service is up to date with processing new claims which has an impact on incoming telephone calls. Email intake has also increased by 6% which will also have an effect on call volumes.
- 6.2 There is no doubt that re-structure and extra resource has played a significant part in this increase in the number of calls answered. It is accepted that more still requires to be done in this area but reflects well on the work of the team and effective planning and management by the Customer Services Supervisor. Whilst telephone traffic and the number of interviews have decreased, it should be noted that as Universal Credit rolls out to couples and families from November this year an increase in demand is expected due to customers looking for advice and signposting information.
- 6.3 Appendix 3 also contains a comparison of performance for Other Services for April 2014 to March 2015 against that for the same period for 2015/16 for telephony, customers interviewed and incoming emails. The Management Information illustrates a positive picture in that 92% of non R&B presented telephone calls were answered in 2015/16 comparison to 89% for the same period in 2014/15.
- 6.4 It can also be seen that whilst the total contacts for Other Services have decreased by 5%, which is mainly due to the reduction in telephone calls presented, the number of interviews has increased by 56%. This is predominately due to the fact that Education Services customers who formerly called at the old premises in William Street now call at the CSC. Interview waiting time has increased from 05.59 minutes to 07.28 minutes which can be explained by the fact that some of the Education interviews contain an element of complexity.
- 6.5 Email contact has increased by 40% which helps explain the reduction in telephone traffic and is a good outcome in terms of channel shift albeit numbers are still relatively small.

7.0 FUTURE PERFORMANCE/OTHER ISSUES

- 7.1 The CSC is now at the stage where the restructure approved by CMT in April 2015 is fully in place and most of the training complete. Whilst improvements have been made, it is anticipated that telephone response times for R&B customers will further improve. The Customer Services Manager and Customer Services Supervisor have set a target of reducing the number of abandoned calls to 20% or below by the end of the calendar year.
- 7.2 For the non R&B telephone calls the aim is to maintain current performance albeit continuous improvement is always the goal.
- 7.3 The CSC has enjoyed successful outcomes through the placement of Modern Apprentices (MA's). Working in the CSC gives young adults a wealth of experience as well as confidence through dealing with different types of customers on the telephone and face to face. It has been satisfying to see MA's progress to gain jobs both within and outwith the Council. There are currently three MA's working in the CSC, all are positive and hardworking and are a great support to the team as well as contributing towards the improvement in service delivery.
- 7.4 It was agreed in April 2015 that the CSC could purchase a Quality Monitoring System which would allow telephone calls to not only be recorded but also to allow senior CSR's to target different staff groups for monitoring and development. The implementation of this system has proven to be challenging but it is expected that the module will go live in September and that once a pattern of quality monitoring is established, further improvements will be made to the rate of abandoned calls.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

Financial Implications:

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

8.2 Legal

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8.3 Human Resources

There no direct implications arising from this report.

8.4 Equalities

There was a full equalities impact assessment carried out with the initial Strategy and as such an equalities impact assessment is not required at this time.

8.5 Repopulation

The provision of quality Customer Services to existing residents and potential residents plays an important part in the retention and attraction of people to Inverclyde.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

9.1 None

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None

Customer Services Action Plan as at 10th August 2016

Appendix 1

Action	Issue	Action	Success Criteria	Target Date	Responsibility	Current Position	Status
PEOPLE	Develop & Deliver a comprehensive training plan	Training needs will be identified from quality checking and appraisals	Training programme in place Better trained and confident staff. Better customer satisfaction Completion of CSPQ Staff understand expectations allowing resources to be correctly targeted. Service delivery meets management expectations Customer Service visions and outcomes are agreed	On-going	CS Supervisor/CS Support Officer	9 CSC staff have completed or are in the process of completing their CSPQ Training sessions started in October 2015 and are ongoing	GREEN
	Improve Communications with CSC team	Implement late opening. Regular staff meetings to take place.	Staff feel consulted and able to contribute to improvements through team meetings and feedback opportunities.	October/November 2015	Revenues & Customer Service Manager/CS Supervisor	Complete	BLUE
	Deliver amended structure	Complete recruitment and creation of new teams.	New team in place. Improved customer performance.	June '15 - August '15	CS Supervisor	complete	BLUE
PERFORMANCE	Report performance annually to committee.	Annual Report to be produced and passed to senior management	Improved focus on key tasks and improved performance.	April '16	Revenues & Customer Service Manager	slight slippage - report now going to September P&R. Report delayed to allow approved changes to bed in.	AMBER
	Internal customers	Review SLA's on an annual basis & conduct quarterly meetings.	Documents signed off by each service and higher levels of internal customer satisfaction.	On Going	Revenues & Customer Service Manager/CS Supervisor	SLA's have been agreed with the services and annual reviews take place. Quarterly meetings have through experience been deemed as not required but frequent	GREEN
	Performance Management framework is in place	Agree targets reflecting service vision and based on performance information. Agree areas to be reported and frequency. Analyse data/stats/feedback/customer surveys to identify and prioritise improvements.	Staff have clarity/clear objectives. Targets are achieved Performance reports, KPI's Performance meetings/benchmarking Changes implemented and improvements made	From Jan '16	Revenues & Customer Service Manager & CS Supervisor	Customer Services supervisor sends out regular performance information to the Revenues and Customer Services Manager as well as circulating to the whole team. Discussions are ongoing regarding setting meaningful targets - these are planned to be in place by the end of September 2016	GREEN
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT	Increased customer involvement in service development	Develop consultation approach and select areas to be consulted upon.	Survey completed and action plan developed incorporating the needs of our customers	April '17 (Survey 2016)	CS Supervisor	A survey directed at customers who have actually used the CSC will be completed by the due date of April 2017	GREEN
	External Communication	Use the website to communicate meaningful information to our citizens	Customer satisfaction improvements - customer expectations are managed better when targets are understood	On-going	Revenues & Customer Service Manager/Corporate Communications	On Going	GREEN
	Corporate Complaints review	Develop configuration of Lagan system to ensure the relevant information is captured for the Corporate complaints process and statistical returns	Accurate and regular MI is provided. Employees can confidently use the CRM system to log complaints and can obtain updates on progress. Complaints dealt with in a corporate manner and customer kept better informed.	Sep-16	CFO, Revenues & Customer Services Manager & ICT Operations Manager	Working with ICT to assist with the implementation of the revised corporate complaints module	AMBER
	Update & improve core CRM systems	Develop Kana system, implementation of web self service portal, mobile applications for citizens and staff, mapping integration for location based fault reporting with corporate GIS system.	Reduced workload for customer services. Streamlined process. Migration of Web-Labs eforms to Kana eforms. Quicker service notification of new/updates to cases. Aligns to digital strategy allowing leverage of potential benefits.	2015 - 2018	Revenues & Customer Services Manager & ICT	Kana training taking place 26-29 July 2016. Regular updates are provided through the digital access group which is chaired by the Chief Financial Officer	GREEN

SERVICE DEVELOPMENT	Channel Shift Projects to be progressed.	Develop online mapping and on-line payments.	Increased achievement of efficiencies through a reduction in direct customer traffic to the Council and more resolution through lower cost channels. Wider range of funds available for on-line payments.	2015 - 2018	Digital Access group	11 additional services can now be paid for on line. Others such as citizens mobile and web self service will follow when the Kana self service module is live	GREEN
	Review Opportunities for Single Assessment	Review use of Seemis. Review Northgate (NG) education module to see if fit for purpose. Visit Angus Council to understand savings to be made using NG module. "To be" process still to be determined.	Review complete and recommendations reported to CMT/Committee.	June '16	Revenue & Customer Services Manager	A paper has been completed on the subject, however the rollout of universal Credit will likely change the feasibility of single assessment in terms of delivering education services such as free school meals and clothing	AMBER
	Local Support services (Universal Credit-Welfare Reform impact)	Report to Committee via MBWG by December 2015.	CSC staff well informed to provide the necessary advice to customers	From 2016	Revenues & Customer Services Manager/Principal Officer	ongoing	GREEN

Customer Service Training

E-Learning

- Working in teams
- Team Building Course
- Dementia Basic Awareness
- Active Listening
- Caring for your customers

Delivered by 3rd party or Service

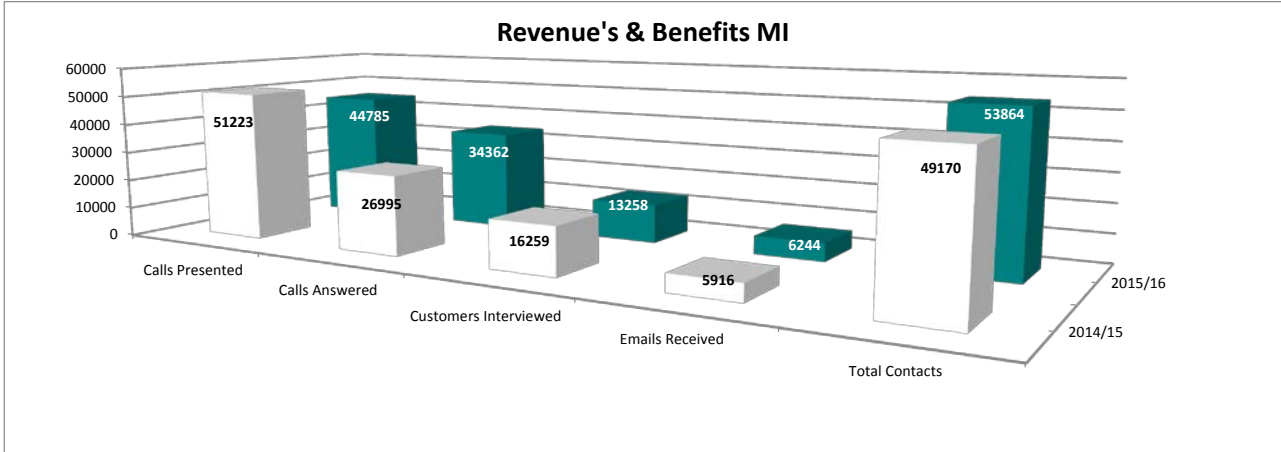
- Disability awareness
- Veterans refresher
- Equality & Diversity
- Complaint Handling
- Conflict Management
- Mental Health Training
- Awareness of Adult Literacies
- Universal Credit training
- Advice First Overview
- April '16 HB changes (overview)
- Discount/Exemptions –Revenues overview
- Train the trainers
- Data Protection overviews

Service Specific training – delivered by senior staff/CSSO/CSS

- Winter Planning over view
- Logging I-Heat referrals
- Education overview of FSM/CG & EMA
- Overgrown trees, hedges and vegetation
- Indexing Refresher
- Benefit emails refresher
- Environmental
- Reception duties and VF training
- Parking Restrictions overview
- Batching & Scanning mail

Team meetings have also taken place during the late opening mornings which are very useful and welcome by the team for discussing performance, issues, emerging trends as well as allowing staff the opportunity to give opinions and ideas.

	2014/15	2015/16
Calls Presented	51223	44785
Calls Answered	26995	34362
Customers Interviewed	16259	13258
Emails Received	5916	6244
Total Contacts	49170	53864



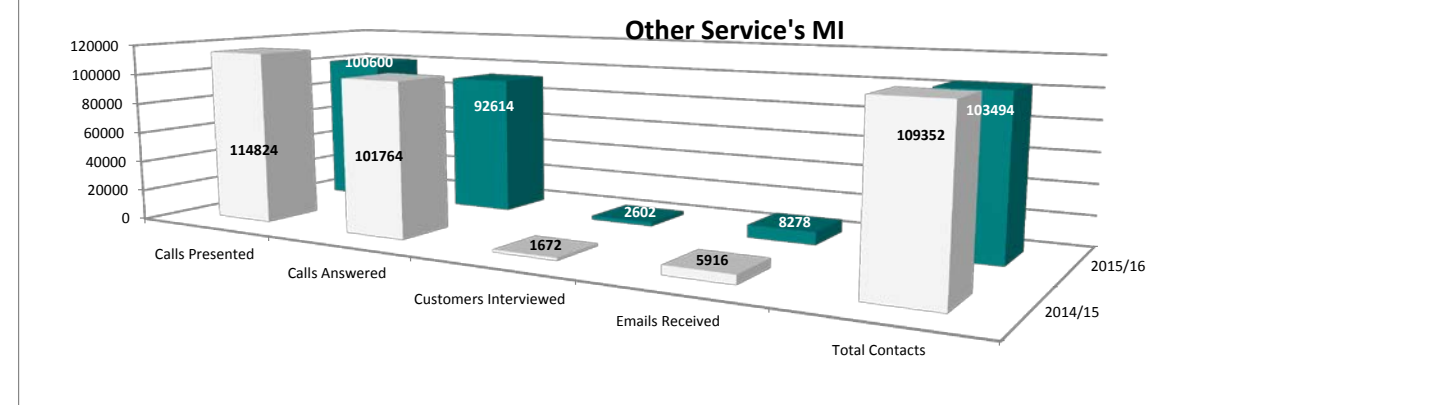
What does the MI show (annual)?

- * Calls presented has decreased by 12%
- * Calls handed has increased by 27%
- * 77% of R&B calls are answered compared to 53% last year
- * Customers interviewed have decreased by 23%
- * Emails received have increased by 6%
- * Total contacts have increased by 10%
- * The outstanding work position for Reveunes & Benefits back office processing has been consistently up-to-date - this has contributed towards thd drop in calls.

Average Queue time of handled calls has reduced by 30 seconds

Average abandoned call times have reduced by 18 seconds

	2014/15	2015/16
Calls Presented	114824	100600
Calls Answered	101764	92614
Customers Interviewed	1672	2602
Emails Received	5916	8278
Total Contacts	109352	103494



What does the MI show?

- * Calls presented for all other non R&B services has decreased by 12%
- * 92% of calls are answered compared to 89% last year
- * Interviews has increased by 56%
- * Emails has increased by 40%
- * Total contacts has decreased by 5%