City and County of Swansea

Minutes of the Scrutiny Working Group - Customer Contact

Multi-Location Meeting - Gloucester Room, Guildhall / MS Teams

Friday, 23 February 2024 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor P M Black (Chair) Presided

Councillor(s)	**Councillor(s)**	**Councillor(s)**
D H Jenkins	M W Locke	M S Tribe
L V Walton		

Officer(s)
Sarah Lackenby	Head of Digital and Customer Services
Liz Shellard	Web Development Manager
Rachel Percival	Scrutiny Officer

Apologies for Absence
Councillor(s): C A Holley and L R Jones

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1 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

There were no disclosures of personal and prejudicial interests.

2 Prohibition of Whipped Votes and Declaration of Party Whips

None.

3 Public Questions

No public questions were submitted.

4 Customer Contact Report

Sarah Lackenby and Liz Shellard attended to give an overview of their briefing and to answer questions from group members. The following items were discussed:

- Officers gave an overview of the Councils performance and future plans for developing customer contact channels, an update on customer contact transformation projects and the new Customer Contact Strategic Framework.
- Call handing data was provided including abandoned calls and information on face to face contact.

- Abandoned calls were discussed and members shared the experience of being unable to get through to the relevant department once transferred.
- The Improving Customer Access Programme includes an upgraded telephony system, automation of processes and routine transactions and further expansion of the Swansea Account. These are being rolled out over the next 18 months.
- 23% of calls through the automated switchboard containing grammar unknown. Each one is listened to for further improvements with the option of speaking to someone also available.
- Formal complaints on call handling systems are relatively low, however Members have received complaints and requests for help with making contact.
- Despite some outages in 2022/2023 the Jabber system continues to work well.
- The Tackling Poverty and Prevention Team are supporting digital inclusion through the Digital Inclusion Action Plan but also contact centre staff can help fill out forms in person or over the phone or provide a paper copy if one is available, this service is also offered in libraries.
- The Customer Charter and Service Standards will go live on 1 April with communication with staff prior to this and monitoring will follow once systems and processes are in place.

5   Discussions and Conclusions

From their discussions the Working Group Members made the following conclusions and recommendations:
1. Members request that contact and reminders continue to be made with departments to maintain accurate contact details.
2. Improvements to out of office messages.
3. Awareness of those with hearing impairments struggling to differentiate between "two" and "three" on automated messages.
4. Further roll out and monitoring of a phone queue system.
5. Implementation of a call back system.
6. All staff to be made aware of the Customer Charter and Standards, and checks are put in place to ensure that it is being adhered to.
7. Automated response messages following a resident enquiry via email or web to include how long a response may take, in line with the new service standards.
8. Members request more information on customer contact services sickness rates.
9. Members request information on face to face usage of local housing offices.
10. Members would like to receive an update from the Tackling Poverty and Prevention Team regarding progress on the digital inclusion strategic framework and the new tackling poverty strategy.
11. The use of the word "residents" when appropriate rather than "customer" was preferred by members.

Following on from this meeting a letter will be written from the Convener of the Working Group to the Cabinet Member, summarising the discussion and outlining the Working Group's conclusions and recommendations.

The meeting ended at 10.44 am
                          Chair