

2014 Benefits Customer Survey Headline Report

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1. Introduction

During December 2014, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit claimants were contacted by telephone and invited to take part in a short customer satisfaction survey to help us to continue to improve our services. 195 service users took this opportunity to tell us about their experiences of using our services and discuss how we could improve them further.

2. Benefits Customer Survey Results

Q1. Have you had any reason to contact the Benefits Service within the past 12 months? (*please indicate all that apply*)

This was a multiple choice, multiple answer question.

Have you had any reason to contact the Benefits Service within the past 12 months?		
	No.	%
Base	192	100.0%
No	111	57.8%
To make a new claim	12	6.3%
To tell us about a change in your circumstances or address	50	26.0%
To query a benefit payment	17	8.9%
To query a benefit overpayment	5	2.6%
To make a complaint or comment	6	3.1%

The following other reasons were given by respondents:

- *Notification of rent increase*
- *To bring in proofs (x4)*
- *To hand in wage slips (3)*
- *Bring in docs to be scanned*
- *To renew stuff*
- *To query benefit letters*
- *To update us on info*
- *To bring in bank statements*

Q2. How did you contact us? (please indicate all that apply)

This was a multiple choice, multiple answer question.

How did you contact us? (please indicate all that apply)		
	No.	%
Base	84	100.0%
Telephone	47	56.0%
Visit the Revenues Hall / Customer Service Centre	47	56.0%
Write a letter	3	3.6%
Send an e-mail	1	1.2%

The following other reasons were given by respondents:

- *Had a visit to her house*

Q3. Was your query solved without you having to contact us again?

Was your query solved without you having to contact us again?		
	No.	%
Base	83	100.0%
Yes	61	73.5%
No	22	26.5%

Q4. About your last phone call to us - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents were given five statements and asked whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. There was also a 'don't know' option.

		Q4: About your last phone call to us - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
		Base	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
	No.	151	149	455	50	28	6	66
	%	20.0%	19.8%	60.3%	6.6%	3.7%	0.8%	8.8%
The call was answered quickly	No.	151	24	89	12	10	4	12
It was easy to get to the right person to deal with my enquiry	%	20.0%	15.9%	58.9%	7.9%	6.6%	2.6%	7.9%
	No.	151	23	93	14	8	1	12
	%	20.0%	15.2%	61.6%	9.3%	5.3%	0.7%	7.9%
My query was dealt with quickly	No.	151	20	99	8	10	1	13
The person I spoke to knew what they were doing	%	20.0%	13.2%	65.6%	5.3%	6.6%	0.7%	8.6%
	No.	151	31	93	12	0	0	15
The person I spoke to was polite and helpful	%	20.0%	20.5%	61.6%	7.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.9%
	No.	150	31	99	6	0	0	14
	%	20.7%	20.7%	66.0%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.3%
I was treated fairly								

Q5. About your last visit to the Customer Service Centre - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents were given five statements and asked whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statements. There was also a 'don't know' option.

Q5: About your last visit to the Customer Service Centre - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I didn't wait long to be seen	No.	11	87	14	13	1	41
	%	6.6%	52.1%	8.4%	7.8%	0.6%	24.6%
I could talk in a private place if I wanted	No.	11	88	12	6	0	49
	%	6.6%	53.0%	7.2%	3.6%	0.0%	29.5%
Things were explained in a way I could understand	No.	22	91	7	3	0	42
	%	13.3%	55.2%	4.2%	1.8%	0.0%	25.5%
Staff were friendly and polite	No.	33	81	9	1	0	42
	%	19.9%	48.8%	5.4%	0.6%	0.0%	25.3%
The office was clean and tidy	No.	18	99	6	0	0	42
	%	10.9%	60.0%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	25.5%
I was treated fairly	No.	34	87	4	0	0	42
	%	20.4%	52.1%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	25.1%

Q6. About your last letter or email - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents were given three statements and asked whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. There was also a 'don't know' option.

Q6: About your last letter or email - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?								
		Base	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I received a quick response	No.	65	2	10	3	1	1	48
	%	33.3%	3.1%	15.4%	4.6%	1.5%	1.5%	73.8%
My query was resolved fully	No.	65	2	11	1	1	1	49
	%	33.3%	3.1%	16.9%	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	75.4%
Things were explained in a way I could understand	No.	65	2	8	2	0	1	52
	%	33.3%	3.1%	12.3%	3.1%	0.0%	1.5%	80.0%

Q7. How easy or difficult is it to understand the following?

Respondents were given three examples and asked how easy or difficult it is to understand each. There was also a 'have not seen' option.

Q7: How easy or difficult is it to understand the following?								
		Base	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	Have not seen
Our benefits leaflets	No.	194	14	429	81	85	18	149
	%	25.0%	1.8%	55.3%	10.4%	11.0%	2.3%	19.2%
Our benefits claim form	No.	194	4	128	21	18	4	19
	%	25.0%	2.1%	66.0%	10.8%	9.3%	2.1%	9.8%
Our letters	No.	194	4	105	33	39	7	6
	%	25.0%	2.1%	54.1%	17.0%	20.1%	3.6%	3.1%
Our website	No.	194	4	132	20	24	6	8
	%	25.0%	2.1%	68.0%	10.3%	12.4%	3.1%	4.1%

Q8. Have you visited our website for benefits in the last 12 months?

Was your query solved without you having to contact us again?		
	No.	%
Base	194	100.0%
Yes	36	18.6%
No	158	81.4%

Q9. If you have visited our website for benefits, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Respondents were given three statements and asked whether they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. There was also a 'don't know' option.

	Q9: If you have visited our website for benefits, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?							
	Base	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
It was easy to find my way around	No.	37	9	67	7	2	1	25
	%	33.3%	8.1%	60.4%	6.3%	1.8%	0.9%	22.5%
I was able to find the information I wanted	No.	37	3	30	1	2	0	1
	%	33.3%	8.1%	81.1%	2.7%	5.4%	0.0%	2.7%
The benefits calculator is easy to use and understand	No.	37	2	28	4	0	1	2
	%	33.3%	5.4%	75.7%	10.8%	0.0%	2.7%	5.4%

Q10. Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the Benefits Service overall?

Q10: Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the Benefits Service overall?		
	No.	Percentage of respondents
Very satisfied	82	42.1%
Fairly satisfied	97	49.7%
Neither	10	5.1%
Fairly dissatisfied	5	2.6%
Very dissatisfied	0	0.0%
Don't know	1	0.50%

Q11. What would you change about the Benefits Service to make it better (please indicate all that apply)

Respondents were given a list of six areas, and an 'other please specify' option, and asked to indicate all that apply.

Q11: What would you change about the Benefits Service to make it better		
	No.	% of respondents
Our letters	22	37.9%
The Housing and Council Tax Support claim form	8	13.8%
The time we take to deal with claims and changes of circumstances	31	53.4%
The quality of our phone service	7	12.1%
The quality of our face-to-face service	2	3.4%
The availability of information on the Council's website	3	5.2%

The following other comments were given by respondents:

Compliments

- *None/nothing (x10)*
- *It's great*
- *Haven't had any problems*
- *Very happy*
- *The person was very nice and helpful*
- *Very helpful*

Contact with employees

- *Have more people on the counter on a busy day (x2)*
- *More staff on counters (x2)*
- *More people on reception*
- *More staff*

Other comments

- *Unaware money was being paid to landlord*
- *less scary in the building when there's loads of people*
- *More money?*
- *More money to assist with private rented properties. Difficulty in making plans or going out due to lack of funds*
- *Make it fairer for private rented tenants.*
- *Hasn't been sent info asked for*
- *Has to chase up letters*

Waiting time

- *Takes a long time to get through and then got passed from pillar to post*
- *Time it takes to process details*
- *Quicker answering phones*
- *Time taken to sort new claim*
- *Waiting times on both the phones and in the CSC could be better*
- *Waiting times a bit long*
- *Deal with enquiries faster, creates debts because it takes so long, not treated fairly as everyone else, and feels like I am being judged.*

Wording/understanding of information

- *Forms and letters need to be more user friendly (x8)*
- *Easier and simpler language in the letters (x4)*
- *Reduce amount of pages in the letters (x2)*
- *Make leaflets easier for less literate people*
- *Things need explaining in an easier way*
- *Using plain English in the letters and forms, they are difficult to understand*
- *Needs to be more communication, more user friendly*
- *It doesn't feel a friendly atmosphere and feels like I am being judged.*
- *Confused with options on phone lines and waiting to speak to someone*
- *Some staff talk down to you.*
- *Too much paperwork, should be more straight forward*
- *Easier systems*

Q12. It is becoming commonplace to receive important documents by email and this is something we plan to introduce for benefits communications. Would you like to receive your benefits letters by email in the future?

Q12: Would you like to receive your benefits letters by email in the future?		
	No.	%
Base	195	100.0%
Yes	26	13.3%
No	169	86.7%

Q13. We plan to offer more options for claiming benefits. Which of the following ways would you prefer to make your claim?

Q13: We plan to offer more options for claiming benefits. Which of the following ways would you prefer to make your claim?		
	No.	% of respondents
Base	26	100.0%
Online through our website	11	42.3%
Online at a Council office or Housing Association office	0	0.0%
On a paper form through the post	4	15.4%
By phone	2	7.7%
With an advisor by appointment at a Council office	9	34.6%

Q14. Are you aware that you have to notify us of changes in circumstances?

Q14: Are you aware that you have to notify us of changes in circumstances?		
	No.	%
Base	26	100.0%
Yes	26	100.0%
No	0	0.0%

Q15. How would you like to tell us if something has changed? (please indicate all that apply)

Q15: How would you like to tell us if something has changed?		
	No.	% of respondents
Base	26	100.0%
Telephone	15	57.7%
Visit the Customer Service Centre	10	38.5%
Write a letter	0	0.0%
Send an email	2	7.7%
Online via the Council's website	4	15.4%

3. Equalities Monitoring

Q16. Would you be willing to answer a few questions about yourself to help us ensure we are providing a fair service to all customers? All the questions are optional but answering them will help us ensure our services meet the needs of all our communities. Happy to answer equalities questions?

Q16: Are you happy to answer equalities questions?	
Base	26
Yes	0
No	26

Q17. What is your gender?

Q17: What is your gender?	
Base	0
Male	0
Female	0
Transgender	0
Prefer not to say	0

Q18. How old are you?

Q18: How old are you?	
Base	0
Under 16 years	0
16 to 17 years	0
18 to 24 years	0
25 to 34 years	0
35 to 44 years	0
45 to 54 years	0
55 to 64 years	0
65 to 74 years	0
75 years and over	0
Prefer not to say	0

Q19. The Equality Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Q19: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?	
Base	99
No	1
Yes - affecting mobility	0
Yes - affecting hearing	0
Yes - affecting vision	2
Yes - a learning disability	1
Yes - affecting mental health	1
Prefer not to say	94

Q20. What is your ethnicity?

Q20: What is your ethnicity?	
Base	94
White British	2
White Irish	0
White and Black Caribbean	0
White and Black African	0

White and Asian	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Black Caribbean	0
Black African	0
Chinese	0
Gypsy	0
Traveller	0
Prefer not to say	92

Q21. Which of the following best describes your religion?

Q21: Which of the following best describes your religion?	
Base	
Buddhist	
Christian	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
None	
Prefer not to say	

Q22. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Q22: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	
Base	
Heterosexual	
Bisexual	
Lesbian	
Gay Man	
Prefer not to say	