

# 2013 Benefits Customer Survey Headline Report

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## **1. Introduction**

During December 2013 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. 301 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.

<b>Have you had any reason to contact the Benefits Service within the past 12 months?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Base</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
No	154	51.5%
To make a new claim	19	6.4%
To tell us about a change in your circumstances or address	101	33.8%
To query a benefit payment	33	11.0%
To query a benefit overpayment	6	2.0%
To make a complaint or comment	3	1.0%

The following other reasons were given by respondents:

- Wasn't entitled to anything
- Chasing up claim
- Now Claiming ESA
- Son Started Work
- Moved onto ESA

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

This was a multiple choice, multiple answer question.

<b>How did you contact us? (please indicate all that apply)</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Base</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Telephone	77	54.2%
Visit the Revenues Hall / Customer Service Centre	92	64.8%
Write a letter	2	1.4%
Send an e-mail	2	1.4%

The following other reasons were given by respondents:

- DWP automatically told us
- Filled in form and sent back
- Direct from DWP - benefits notified us of the change
- We sent a review form

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

<b>Was your query solved without you having to contact us again?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Base</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Yes	113	78.5%
No	31	21.5%

**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.

<b>Q4: About your last phone call to us - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>								
		<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>The call was answered quickly</b>	No.	266	20	109	8	14	3	112
	%	100%	7.5%	41.0%	3.0%	5.3%	1.1%	42.1%
<b>It was easy to get to the right person to deal with my enquiry</b>	No.	266	36	108	7	2	2	111
	%	100%	13.5%	40.6%	2.6%	0.8%	0.8%	41.7%
<b>My query was dealt with quickly</b>	No.	261	46	76	11	17	2	109
	%	100%	17.6%	29.1%	4.2%	6.5%	0.8%	41.8%
<b>The person I spoke to knew what they were doing</b>	No.	260	56	86	6	2	1	109
	%	100%	21.5%	33.1%	2.3%	0.8%	0.4%	41.9%
<b>The person I spoke to was polite and helpful</b>	No.	264	76	71	4	1	0	112
	%	100%	28.8%	26.9%	1.5%	0.4%	0.0%	42.4%

**Q5. About your last visit to the Revenues Hall / 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.

<b>Q5: About your last visit to the Revenues Hall / Customer Service Centre - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>								
		<b>Base</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>I didn't wait long to be seen</b>	No.	275	37	117	10	24	1	86
	%	100%	13.5%	42.5%	3.6%	8.7%	0.4%	31.3%
<b>I could talk in a private place if I wanted</b>	No.	272	23	77	10	16	18	128
	%	100%	8.5%	28.3%	3.7%	5.9%	6.6%	47.1%
<b>Things were explained in a way I</b>	No.	274	64	117	5	2	1	85

<b>could understand</b>	%	100%	23.4%	42.7%	1.8%	0.7%	0.4%	31.0%
<b>Staff were friendly and polite</b>	No.	273	105	80	3	0	0	85
	%	100%	38.5%	29.3%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%	31.1%
<b>The office was clean and tidy</b>	No.	274	116	72	1	0	1	84
	%	100%	42.3%	26.3%	0.4%	0.0%	0.4%	30.7%

**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.

<b>Q6: About your last letter or email - please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>								
		Base	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
<b>I received a quick response</b>	No.	254	21	61	9	9	1	153
	%	100%	8.3%	24.0%	3.5%	3.5%	0.4%	60.2%
<b>My query was resolved fully</b>	No.	250	26	64	6	6	0	148
	%	100%	10.4%	25.6%	2.4%	2.4%	0.0%	59.2%
<b>Things were explained in a way I could understand</b>	No.	254	24	67	7	3	0	153
	%	100%	9.4%	26.4%	2.8%	1.2%	0.0%	60.2%

**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.

<b>Q7: How easy or difficult is it to understand the following?</b>								
		Base	Very easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very difficult	Have not seen
<b>Our benefits leaflets</b>	No.	300	55	144	4	41	6	50
	%	100%	18.3%	48.0%	1.3%	13.7%	2.0%	16.7%
<b>Our benefits claim form</b>	No.	300	44	130	21	25	6	74
	%	100%	14.7%	43.3%	7.0%	8.3%	2.0%	24.7%

<b>Our letters</b>	No.	300	28	135	27	84	19	7
	%	100%	9.3%	45.0%	9.0%	28.0%	6.3%	2.3%
<b>Our website</b>	No.	295	16	58	2	1	1	217
	%	100%	5.4%	19.7%	0.7%	0.3%	0.3%	73.6%

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

<b>Was your query solved without you having to contact us again?</b>			
		No.	%
<b>Base</b>		<b>299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Yes		53	17.7%
No		246	82.3%

**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.

<b>Q9: If you have visited our website for benefits, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?</b>								
		Base	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
It was easy to find my way around	No.	54	8	40	4	1	0	1
	%		14.8%	74.1%	7.4%	1.9%	0.0%	1.9%
I was able to find the information I wanted	No.	54	10	37	4	2	0	1
	%		18.5%	68.5%	7.4%	3.7%	0.0%	1.9%
The benefits calculator is easy to use and understand	No.	54	1	10	3	1	0	39
	%		1.9%	18.5%	5.6%	1.9%	0.0%	72.2%

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

<b>Q10: Taking everything into account, how satisfied are you with the Benefits Service overall?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>Percentage of respondents</b>
Very satisfied	81	27.0%
Fairly satisfied	171	57.0%
Neither	30	10.0%
Fairly dissatisfied	12	4.0%
Very dissatisfied	3	1.0%
Don't know	3	1.0%

**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.

<b>Q11: What would you change about the Benefits Service to make it better</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
Our letters	97	66.0%
The Housing and Council Tax Support claim form	7	4.8%
The time we take to deal with claims and changes of circumstances	70	47.6%
The quality of our phone service	9	6.1%
The quality of our face-to-face service	3	2.0%
The availability of information on the Council's website	2	1.4%

The following other comments were given by respondents:

Contact with employees

- Would prefer to take payment with someone in Revenues Hall, or someone be there to help
- Would like to speak to proper assessors when phone up - more professional service on phone rather than speaking to call centre operative
- Opportunity to speak to Benefits Advisor – need to talk to someone. Better letters, less complicated. Getting through to an Advisor quicker.
- Let know if want to talk in private
- Inform about change of payment as wasn't aware
- More staffing to deal with customers entering the Revenues Hall
- No need for auto phone system - calling to phone Council Tax and take up credit and sometimes get cut off. Waste of money. Need more staff. Would change everything - make things more human, less automated, less call centre, speak to actual benefits assessor.
- Not happy that Staveley has closed - difficult to get to the Revenues Hall to bring wage slips in.

### Wording/understanding of information

- Print on letters could be bigger
- Change wording on letters / not been on website
- Clearer explanation as to why her benefits stopped
- Doesn't like the threatening letters. Would prefer to get a call to see what his circumstances are
- Forms can be over complicated/ misleading – it needs to be simpler.
- Layout and wording / make simpler
- Make simpler
- When getting older, would like more help understanding the forms and leaflets. Need more signposting for the different benefits. Government are changing benefits a lot - getting very complicated
- A bit clearer / don't use website
- More explanation for short term change in circumstances relating to signing on / off for JSA and HB
- More of a description when asked for 'more information'
- Adding charges automatically without giving customer chance to sort things out
- Website could be improved
- Want a rent book again, as don't like keeping all the receipts, no running record
- Change of address at the front of the claim form would stop people from filling the form in when not needed.
- Claim form so long

### Waiting time

- Claim took a few weeks, is a long time when needing to pay Rent
- Length of wait to connect to an advisor
- Length of waiting to speak to someone
- Very lengthy process to apply
- Very long winded process for benefits
- Wishes he would've been made aware of the overpayment sooner
- Takes a while to get through to someone
- The form takes so long to fill out
- Time taken to deal with and process new claims
- Too long/ complicated
- Took 2 months to sort out benefits, takes too long
- Took 4 weeks to get a response if I were entitled to anything
- Took a while for benefits to be sorted when stopped
- Took a while to amend benefits
- Took about 4 weeks for claim to be accepted, very long time to wait when needing to pay rent
- Took ages for an answer to see if was entitled, when called through to call centre couldn't speak to a Benefits Assessor as can only request call back. Very long process.
- Took so long
- Took way too long to sort out claim, resulting in waiting for money for weeks
- Took a very long time for a decision

- Length of time benefit claim form reviewed. Can take a long time to do changes / update.
- Process appealing for the bedroom tax, and more forms available.

Compliments

- Brilliant service
- Great service
- quite happy nothing to change
- Very pleased with the service
- Don't change anything - quite happy
- No changes. Happy with service so far

Other comments

- Don't like the atmosphere in the new revenues hall.
- Got a bit of help, but used higher Christmas wages to base benefits on.
- More Benefits
- Satisfied so far, but will see how we deal with this Benefit Review. Not seen website and not been into new Revenues Hall, so can't comment.

**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?**

<b>Q12: Would you like to receive your benefits letters by email in the future?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Base</b>	299	100.0%
Yes	76	25.4%
No	223	74.6%

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

<b>Q13: We plan to offer more options for claiming benefits. Which of the following ways would you prefer to make your claim?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
<b>Base</b>	77	100.0%
Online through our website	20	26.0%
Online at a Council office or Housing Association office	1	1.3%
On a paper form through the post	7	9.1%
By phone	33	42.9%
With an advisor by appointment at a Council office	16	20.8%

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

<b>Q14: Are you aware that you have to notify us of changes in circumstances?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>



<b>Base</b>	77	100.0%
Yes	76	98.7%
No	1	1.3%

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

<b>Q15: How would you like to tell us if something has changed?</b>		
	<b>No.</b>	<b>% of respondents</b>
<b>Base</b>	76	100.0%
Telephone	53	69.7%
Visit the Customer Service Centre	37	48.7%
Write a letter	1	1.3%
Send an email	4	5.3%
Online via the Council's website	4	5.3%

### 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?**

<b>Q16: Are you happy to answer equalities questions?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	76
Yes	78.9%
No	21.1%

**Q17. What is your gender?**

<b>Q17: What is your gender?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	60
Male	48.3%
Female	51.7%
Transgender	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0.0%

**Q18. How old are you?**

<b>Q18: How old are you?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	60
Under 16 years	0.0%
16 to 17 years	0.0%
18 to 24 years	1.7%
25 to 34 years	41.7%
35 to 44 years	33.3%

45 to 54 years	11.7%
55 to 64 years	8.3%
65 to 74 years	1.7%
75 years and over	0.0%
Prefer not to say	1.7%

**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?**

<b>Q19: Do you consider yourself to have a disability?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	279
No	65.2%
Yes - affecting mobility	18.6%
Yes - affecting hearing	1.4%
Yes - affecting vision	0.0%
Yes - a learning disability	0.7%
Yes - affecting mental health	4.7%
Prefer not to say	9.3%

**Q20. What is your ethnicity?**

<b>Q20: What is your ethnicity?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	272
White British	89.3%
White Irish	0.4%
White and Black Caribbean	0.4%
White and Black African	0.0%
White and Asian	0.0%
Indian	0.4%
Pakistani	0.0%
Bangladeshi	0.0%
Black Caribbean	0.4%
Black African	0.0%
Chinese	0.0%
Gypsy	0.0%
Traveller	0.0%
Prefer not to say	9.2%

**Q21. Which of the following best describes your religion?**

<b>Q21: Which of the following best describes your religion?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	266
Buddhist	0.0%
Christian	15.4%
Hindu	0.0%
Jewish	0.0%
Muslim	0.0%
Sikh	0.0%
None	72.2%
Prefer not to say	12.4%

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

<b>Q22: Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?</b>	
<b>Base</b>	277
Heterosexual	78.0%
Bisexual	0.7%
Lesbian	0.4%
Gay Man	1.1%
Prefer not to say	19.9%