

2012 Benefits Survey Headline Report

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

During September 2012 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. 90 service users took this opportunity to tell us about their experiences of using our services and discuss how we could improve them further.

2.0 BENEFITS CUSTOMER SURVEY RESULTS

Q 1. Have you had any reason to contact the Benefits Service within the past 12 months?

This was a multiple choice question.

Reason	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
No	44	48.9%
To make a new claim	17	18.9%
To tell us about a change in your circumstances or address	20	22.2
To query a benefit payment	3	3.3%
To query a benefit overpayment	1	1.1%
To make a complaint or comment	1	1.1%
Other	6	6.6%

Six other reasons for contacting the service were given:

- Requesting a rebate x2
- To pay Council Tax Bill x2

- Pension is increasing
- Enquire about housing

Q 2. If you contacted us, did you?

This was a multiple choice question.

47 people responded to this question.

Method of Contact	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Telephone	24	51%
Call into the Revenues Hall	24	51%
Write a letter	5	10.6%
Send an e-mail	0	

Q 3. Was your query resolved without you having to contact us again?

51 respondents answered this question.

68.6% of respondents (35) indicated that their query was resolved without having to contact us again. 31.4% (16) did have to contact us again.

Q 4. About your last phone call, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
The call was answered quickly	27.7% (13)	38.3% (18)	0% (0)	4.2% (2)	0% (0)	29.8% (14)
It was easy to get to the right person to deal with my enquiry	25.5% (12)	36.1% (17)	2.1% (1)	6.4% (3)	2.1% (1)	27.7% (13)
My query was dealt with quickly	26.1% (12)	34.8% (16)	2.1% (1)	6.5% (3)	2.1% (1)	28.3% (13)
The person I spoke to knew what they were doing	28.9% (13)	42.2% (19)	0% (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	28.9% (13)
The person I spoke to was polite and helpful	33.3% (15)	37.8% (17)	0 % (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	28.9% (13)

Q 5. About your last visit to the Revenues Hall, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
I didn't wait long to be seen	24.2% (16)	47% (31)	6% (4)	12.1% (8)	3% (2)	7.6% (5)
I could talk in a private place if I wanted	29.2% (19)	55.4% (36)	1.5% (1)	3% (2)	1.5% (1)	9.2% (6)
Things were explained in a way I could understand	32.2% (20)	56.9% (37)	4.6% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.7% (5)
Staff were friendly and polite	36.5% (23)	55.6% (35)	0 % (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	7.9% (5)
The office was clean and tidy	29.7% (19)	56.2% (36)	0 % (0)	0% (0)	0% (0)	14% (9)

Q 6. About your last letter or e-mail, please state if you agree or disagree with the following statements?

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

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
I received a quick response	18.6% (8)	30.2% (13)	0% (0)	7% (3)	0% (0)	44.1% (19)
My query was resolved fully	16.6% (7)	33.3% (14)	2.3% (1)	2.3% (1)	0% (0)	45.2% (19)
Things were explained in a way I could understand	21% (8)	28.9% (11)	2.6% (1)	0% (0)	0% (0)	47.4% (18)

Q 7. How easy or difficult is it to understand the following?

Respondents were asked about three documents and the website and asked whether or not they found them very easy, easy, neither easy nor difficult, difficult or very difficult to understand. There was also a have not seen option.

Document/Website	Very Easy	Easy	Neither	Difficult	Very Difficult	Have not seen
Our Benefits leaflets	11.6% (10)	41.9% (36)	2.3% (2)	11.6% (10)	2.3% (2)	30.2% (26)
Our Benefits claim form	9.1% (8)	37.9% (33)	5.7% (5)	14.9% (13)	1.1% (1)	31% (27)
Our letters	8% (7)	54% (47)	2.3% (2)	6.9% (6)	1.1% (1)	27.6% (24)
Our website	3.4% (3)	11.5% (10)	1.1% (1)	1.1% (1)	0% (0)	82.8% (72)

Q 8. Have you visited our website for Benefits in the last 12 months?

8.8% (8) of respondents had visited the website, 91.2% (83) had not.

Q 9. 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 or not they strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree with the statements. There was also a don't know option.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
It was easy to find my way around	13.3% (4)	13.3% (4)	3.3% (1)	3.3% (1)	0 (0%)	66.7(20)
I was able to find the information I wanted	6.9% (2)	13.8% (4)	3.4% (1)	6.9% (2)	0% (0)	69% (20)
The benefits calculator is easy to use and understand	7.4% (2)	7.4% (2)	3.7% (1)	11.1% (3)	0% (0)	70.3% (19)

Q 10. Taking everything into account how satisfied are you with the Benefits Service overall?

67.4% (60) of respondents chose very satisfied, 27% (24) fairly satisfied, 0% (0) neither, 4.5% (4) fairly dissatisfied and 0% (0) very dissatisfied. 1.1% (1) chose the don't know option.

Q 11. What would you change about the Benefits Service to make it better?

This was a multiple choice question.

Improvement	Number of respondents
Our letters	6
The Housing and Council Tax Benefits claim form	1
The time we take to deal with claims and changes of circumstances	3
The quality of our phone service	1
The quality of our face to face service	0
The availability of information on the Council's website	0

A number of other areas for improvement were raised:

- Change nothing x65
- Everything is good x4
- Happy with the service x2
- Appeals system takes a long time and is scary for people not receiving any money
- Took longer than I thought it would

- Forms could be worded better
- Make the forms easier to follow
- More explanation needed about benefits

Q 12. It is becoming commonplace to receive important documents by e-mail and this is something we plan to introduce for Benefits communications. Would you like to receive your Benefits letters by e-mail in the future?

11.4% (43) respondents said that they would like to receive their letters by e-mail and 88.6% (78) said no.

Q 13. We plan to offer more options for claiming benefits. Which of the following options would you prefer?

Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Make your claim online through our website	5	5.7%
Make your claim online at a Council office or Housing Association office	2	2.3%
Make your claim on a paper form through the post	33	37.9%
Make your claim by phone	24	27.6%
Make your claim with an advisor by appointment at a Council office	23	26.4%

Q 14. Are you aware that you have to notify us of changes in circumstances?

98.9% (38) stated that they were aware of the need to notify and 1.1% (1) said no.

Q 15. How would you like to tell us that something has changed?

This was a multiple choice question.

Notification method	Number of respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Telephone	45	53.6%
Call into the Revenues Hall	43	50.6%
Write a letter	21	24.7%
Send an e-mail	3	3.5%
Online via the Council's website	2	2.4%
Other: Would like a ring back service	1	1.2%

3.0 EQUALITIES MONITORING

3.1 Participants in this research were asked if they would be willing to answer some questions about themselves to help us to ensure we are providing a fair service to all customers. It was clearly stated that all questions after this point were optional. 75 respondents agreed to answer some or all of these questions.

3.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Number of respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Gender:		
Male	26	35.6%
Female	46	63%
Transgender	1	1.4%
Age Group:		
18 - 24	0	0%
25 – 34	4	5.5%
35 – 44	13	17.8%
45 – 54	14	19.1%
55 – 64	13	17.8%
65 – 74	19	26%
75 years and over	10	13.7%
Disability: Multiple choice		
No	30	41%
Yes – affecting mobility	27	37%
Yes – affecting hearing	3	4.1%
Yes – affecting vision	1	1.4%
Yes – a learning disability	5	6.8%
Yes – Other	2	2.7
Ethnic Group:		
White British	70	98.6%
Mixed – White and Asian	1	1.4%
Religion:		
None	24	46.1%
Christian	28	53.9%
Sexual Orientation:		
Heterosexual	65	97%
Lesbian	1	1.5%
Gay man	1	1.5%