

Equalities Monitoring Customer Services

Annual Report
April 2022 - March 2023



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1. Introduction

Customer Services provides a first point of contact for the public with the Council, via several communication channels - telephone, email, website providing online forms, webchat, social media, and face to face at the reception desk in the Time Square office. The service deals with many different types of enquiries from the public for information and service requests, for example, waste and recycling, street cleaning and grounds maintenance, parks and countryside and highways.

2. Public sector equality duty

The purpose of equalities monitoring is to ensure that in providing our services we think about how to promote equality in every aspect the day-to-day business by providing an **accountable, fair, and equitable** service to all residents.

To ensure the service is **accountable, fair, and equitable** within Customer Services, monitoring has been undertaken in terms of:

1. Access and inclusivity ensuring equality of opportunity to access the service.
2. Satisfaction with the service to eliminate discrimination faced in accessing our services.

It has been analysed by the following equality groups:

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Disability
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

The data below has been taken from:

- The Customer Satisfaction Survey 2022/23.
- The data covers the period commencing 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 inclusive.

3. Access and inclusivity to the service

Access to the service is open to all members of the public via several communication channels: telephone calls, email, online forms, webchat, social media and by visiting the reception at the Council's Time Square office.

Customer Services provides a central point of contact for customers who need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with the Council:

- Not all users of the Council's customers will have English as their first language, however, staff make every effort to meet the needs of individuals. There may be occasions when an interpreter or translator is required and the Council has several volunteer members of staff who speak other languages, and access to several specialist companies if needed to provide translation or interpretation services.

- There are also access support arrangements for people who are deaf to aid communication, for example, induction loops. Phones automatically identify and connect to a service user hearing aid.
- Documents and publications can be provided in alternative formats for people who have difficulty with accessing text information, including people with learning difficulties, partially sighted people, and blind people.
- Visitors can access toilets that are gender neutral and appropriate for persons with a hidden and or unhidden disability, computers set to high contrast and enlarged font to aid those with visual impairments and dyslexia. The glass booths are all deemed accessible and one of them can be looped for hearing, has a large screen phone offering privacy and a safe space and reception area clock designed to aid persons with visual impairment.

4. Satisfaction with the service

The information on satisfaction below has been taken from the Customer Services satisfaction survey for 2022/23, covering the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 inclusive. An email link to the survey is sent to customers who have made a service request, following an interaction with Customer Services. A total of 270 customers returned surveys.

The data has been analysed to see if there is any difference in satisfaction rates in terms of the person's gender, age, race, disability, religion/belief, sexual orientation. The definition for satisfied has been set at all respondents who reported satisfaction of excellent or good. The definition for not satisfied has been set at all respondents who reported satisfaction of fair or poor.

Age

There were 259 people who responded to the survey and included their age, (11 did not state their age). The table below shows the satisfaction results by age from the people who responded.

Table 1: Satisfaction by Age

Age Group	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
<18	0	1	1 (0.25%)
18-34	0	2 (100%)	2 (0.75%)
35-49	18 (75%)	6 (25%)	24 (9%)
50-64	45 (62%)	28 (38%)	73 (27%)
65-79	99 (76%)	31 (24%)	130 (48%)
80+	21 (72%)	8 (28%)	29 (11%)
Total Answered	183 (71%)	76 (29%)	259
Not Answered			11 (4%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

Satisfaction levels by age group are relatively high for most groups. People aged 65 to 79 had the highest satisfaction levels at 76%, with those aged 35 to 49 following closely behind at 75%. People aged 18 to 34 had the highest dissatisfaction rate, although the sample size consisted of just 2 people. People aged 50 to 64 years had the next highest dissatisfaction rate, with 38% being dissatisfied.

Gender

The table below shows satisfaction rates for men and women, 257 customers responded to this question.

Table 2: Satisfaction rates by gender

Gender	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total
Male	86 (70%)	36 (30%)	122 (45%)
Female	95 (70%)	40 (30%)	135 (50%)
Total Answered	181 (70%)	76 (30%)	257
Not Answered			13 (5%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

The data shows that whilst there were slightly more female respondents than male respondents, the satisfaction rates were consistent across both groups with 70% of males and females satisfied, compared with 30% dissatisfied for both groups.

Disability

The table below shows the satisfaction rates in terms of whether the customer has a disability, 243 customers responded to this question.

Table 3: Satisfaction rates by disability

Disability?	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total
Yes	69 (83%)	14 (17%)	83 (31%)
No	108 (68%)	52 (32%)	160 (59%)
Total Answered	177 (73%)	66 (27%)	243
Not Answered			27 (10%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

The data shows that 83 (31%) of the overall respondents advised that they had a disability. A large proportion of these customers were satisfied with the service they received (83%). The satisfaction rate for customers without a disability, was 68%, which is lower in comparison to those customers with a disability, however, the numbers of customers in this group is much higher.

Ethnicity

The table below shows the satisfaction rates in terms of the customers' ethnicity, 253 customers responded to this question.

Table 4: Satisfaction rates by race

Race	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Total
White	172 (74%)	62 (26%)	234 (87%)
Black & Minority Ethnic groups	12 (63%)	7 (37%)	19 (7%)
Total Answered	184 (73%)	69 (27%)	253
Not Answered			17 (6%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

The table shows that the satisfaction rate for the White Ethnic group is 74% compared with 63% for the Black & Minority Ethnic groups. However, the total number of customers who responded to this question in the Black & Minority Ethnic groups is relatively small at 19 (7% of total respondents.)

Religion or Belief

The table below shows the satisfaction rates in terms of the customers' religion or belief, 245 customers responded to this question.

Table 5: Satisfaction rates by religion/belief

Religion/Belief	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
None	47 (68%)	22 (32%)	69 (26%)
Christian	125 (77%)	37 (23%)	162 (60%)
Buddhist	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2 (0.75%)
Hindu	2 (100%)	0	2 (0.75%)
Muslim	0	1 (100%)	1 (0.25%)
Sikh	4 (100%)	0	4 (1.5%)
Jewish	0	0	0
Other	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	5 (1.75%)
Total Answered	181 (74%)	64 (26%)	245
Not Answered			25 (9%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

The table above shows that the majority of customer's answering this question are Christian (60%), with 77% satisfied with the service they had received.

69 (26%) respondents advised that they had no religion or belief and a further 25 (9%) of respondents did not answer the question. The number of people stating their religion as Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish or Other is very small, therefore any differences in levels of satisfaction should not be viewed as statistically significant.

Sexual Orientation

The table below shows the satisfaction rates in terms of the customers' sexual orientation, 245 customers responded to this question.

Table 6: Satisfaction rates by sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	Satisfied	Not satisfied	Total
Heterosexual/Straight	159 (77%)	48 (23%)	207 (77%)
Gay Man	2 (100%)	0	2 (0.75%)
Lesbian/Gay Women	0	0	0
Bisexual	1 (100%)	0	1 (0.25%)
Prefer not to say	19 (54%)	16 (46%)	35 (13%)
Total Answered	181 (74%)	64 (26%)	245
Not Answered			25 (9%)
Overall Total			270

Comment

The table shows that most customers' answering this question were heterosexual/straight (77%), with 77% of this group satisfied with the service they had received. 13% of customers preferred not to share information about their sexual orientation and a further 9% did not answer the question. The numbers for other groups are so small that any differences in levels of satisfaction should not be viewed as statistically significant.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, overall satisfaction is quite high and there are no major differences relating to the various equality groups. However, the survey returns are low, which has been a trend over the past few years: 270 responses received in 2022-23, 399 responses received for 2021-22 and 486 responses received for 2020-21.

Customers have a choice in the communication channel best suited to their needs, with access to telephone, email, online forms, webchat, social media and by visiting the reception at the Council's Time Square office. Customer Services also provides a central point of contact for customers who need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with the Council.

The service actively seeks to remove or reduce the disadvantage that people with protected characteristics face and takes steps to meet the specific needs of people with protected characteristics.

6. Recommendations

1. Continue efforts to increase the take-up of customer satisfaction surveys to help provide more meaningful data.

2. Implement the Quality Assurance management tool, which will be available in the customer contact management system currently used by Customer Services, to help provide more information on customer satisfaction.
3. Continue to proactively promote, offer and provide reasonable adjustments to customers to communicate with the Council who may require additional support.