



**Report To:** Scrutiny and Overview Committee 10 February 2015  
**Lead Officer:** Alex Colyer -Executive Director Corporate Services

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## **Contact Centre Annual Performance 2014 – Performance Review**

### **Purpose**

1. To present the Scrutiny and Overview Committee with an update on the contact centre performance, and annual performance for 2014 (**Appendix A**) for information and comment.

### **Recommendations**

2. It is recommended that the report be noted.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

3. The report provides a review of the contact centre operation through from 28 January 2013 until 24 January 2015 and a review of the annual performance for 2014.

### **Background**

4. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee conducted a half year review of the contact centre operation in September 2014, followed by an interim review in November 2014.
5. The contact centre was launched in December 2012 and, whilst performance in terms of volume of calls answered at first point of contact has been good (achieving or exceeding the 80% target) the service has not met its call wait target and has a higher than desirable abandoned call rate.
6. There is an improvement plan which is being implemented within the service to improve the performance of the service, reduce waiting times and the number of abandoned calls. This improvement plan has a number of elements which means the performance of the team will improve incrementally as each part of the project is completed.
7. The introduction of support from back office teams from September 2014 during periods of high demand, has improved the performance of the contact centre team with the number of abandoned calls reduced.

### **Considerations**

8. Since the last meeting, a number of the actions from the improvement plan have been implemented:-
  - 1) Additional back office support - 14 members of the benefits team have been trained to assist with calls during peak demand .This is in addition to the 10

members of the revenues team who are already trained to provide support to the contact centre.

- 2) Reorganisation of the contact centre is now completed and we are currently recruiting to 2 vacancies which have resulted from this reorganisation.
  - 3) Customer Contact Centre Advisors are now providing the reception service.
  - 4) New staffing rotas have been implemented to manage the peaks and troughs in calls.
  - 5) Review of high call volume management to enable effective management of calls including using back office teams to provide support for periods of high call demand.
  - 6) Improved information is available on the website as well as an electronic form for residents to report missed waste collection.
  - 7) Migration to the latest version of the contact centre software has improved the reliability of the software and user experience of the product. Continuing monitoring of the performance is being undertaken to enable assessment of the improvements.
  - 8) Active call monitoring has been completed, which has enabled service areas to reduce unnecessary calls being taken. There will be continued active monitoring of calls on a quarterly basis to ensure that unnecessary calls are not being taken.
  - 9) Call coaching has been provided to contact centre agents to improve call handling times; call coaching is a continuous process which looks to build on the improvement in performance.
9. There are a number of actions from the improvement plan which will enable further improvements to be made:
- 1) Digital by Default project is an integral part of the contact centre improvement plan; there is a significant amount of work to be undertaken to enable residents to access self- service options.
  - 2) Electronic forms are being developed on a service by service basis, focusing on the forms which are considered to have most benefit for residents and the contact service.
  - 3) Improvements to the website are being looked at by the Web Officer Working (WOW) Group, and individual service areas will be looking at their individual service area web pages and making the necessary changes.
  - 4) Implementation of service area training/shadowing to improve the knowledge of team members and reduce call lengths. The focus will be on service areas where call lengths are the longest and where the most gain can be achieved with reductions in call length.

- 5) Extending the back office support for the contact centre by expanding the teams who are able to provide staff to answer calls during periods of peak demand.
- 6) Implementation of a solution to offer residents options on both general and revenues telephones lines, to opt to make a payment directly without the need to speak to an advisor. The current data suggests that around 500 calls are taken monthly by the contact centre which relate to payment which could be transferred to the automated line

10. The contact centre performance is improving, which can be seen at **Appendix A** where it can be seen that performance for periods 24,25,26 improved. The percentage and number of calls which are abandoned has decreased:-

Period 24-	88% Calls answered	(Calls abandoned 1546)
Period 25-	91% Calls answered	(Calls Abandoned 920)
Period 26-	89% Calls answered	(Calls Abandoned 1355)

**Average percentage of calls answered in 2014 was 77%**

Average call answer times:

Period 24-	00:01:38
Period 25-	00:01:05
Period 26-	00:01:29

**Average call answer time in 2014 was 00:03:04**

11. The improvement in performance is significant but this is only the start of the journey. Whilst a number of measures have already been implemented, the effect of these measures will be more gradual. The introduction of back office support during periods of peak call demand has been a key element in the noticeable improvements in the contact centre's performance which is shown in the data provided at **Appendix A**.
12. The data which can be extracted from the system is dictated by the reports which are integrated as part of the system; a full set of data is not currently available.

**Appendix A** includes available additional information with regard to:-

**Abandoned Calls**

- repeat callers
- average abandoned time
- longest call abandoned data
- standard deviation

**Answered Calls**

- Longest time to answer call

13. The current call wrap times are high but this reflects the additional information which is taken to update the back office systems. A review of business processes for service areas will be undertaken, with the implicit aim to reduce wrap time and streamline the processes.

## **Implications**

14. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

### **Financial**

15. There could be some budget pressures if the savings from staff vacancies do not cover the additional 2 full time customer contact advisors.

### **Effect on Strategic Aims**

#### **Aim 1 – We Listen and engage with residents, parishes and businesses to ensure that we deliver first class service and value for money.**

16. The contact centre is providing a service to residents at substantially reduced cost; the current changes to the contact centre and reception are providing an improving service to residents, with an increase in the percentage of calls being handled. The service will look to build on this improvement to reduce call wait times for residents with promotion of self service options.

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