

Scrutiny Report: Customer Services Progress and Performance Overview



Executive Summary

The Customer Service function of SBC transferred to arvato on the 1st December 2013. The objective of this report is to provide an overview on performance and service improvement initiatives post transfer and going forwards.

One of the key benefits of including customer services in the recent partnership extension was to leverage arvato's expertise in making sustainable performance improvements whilst still recognising the need to deliver a cost effective service working within tight financial constraints.

In the initial months of the partnership we have been able to draw upon experiences of our other sites to identify some immediate changes which have resulted in direct and visible improvements against what was widely accepted to be an area of concern in terms of previous performance levels. In particular the speed of dealing with customers has improved, reducing the waiting time for members of the public.

In conjunction with the immediate changes, we have also been using our SIP mechanism to progress plans on solutions such as the move to the new telephony solution and the planned 2015 implementation of a new CRM system to achieve the long term improvements the council were looking for.

Whilst we all agree there is still room for significant improvement, it was always known it would take time to deliver a real step change, however, we believe the latest performance is an encouraging indication that the team is on the right track to delivering better services to the Slough public.

Kevin Hales
Head of Operations - Slough

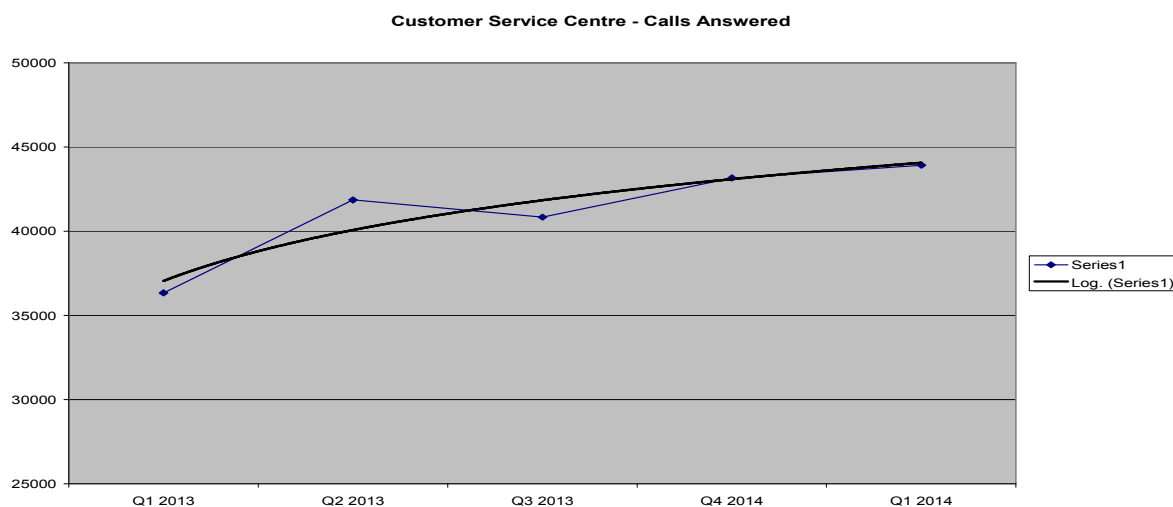
Performance

We have continued to see an improvement in the KPI performance throughout this quarter both in the % of customers responded to within the SLA and also a reduction in the % of calls/tickets abandoned. The exception to this was an increase in the % of tickets abandoned in May which was attributed to a failure of Qmatic the contact mgmt. system.

Measurement	This Quarter (Q1 2014/15)	Last Quarter (Q4 2013/14)	Same period last year (Q1 2013/14)
Call Centre			
Number of Calls Offered	59,731	60,134	58,783
Number of Calls Answered	43,918	43,164	36,340
% of Calls Answered	73.00%	71.00%	61.00%
% Answered in SLA	40.80%	38.40%	26.10%
% Abandoned Not in SLA	21.80%	23.20%	33.90%
Front of House			
Number of tickets issued	15,602	11,112	17,777
Number of Customers Served	14,780	10,973	17,345
% of Customer Served	95.00%	98.00%	97.00%
% of Customers Served within SLA	61.90%	58.40%	44.80%
% of Tickets Abandoned	5.30%	1.30%	2.40%

Service Activity

The service activity start of Q1 is predominately related to year end activity in a number of the service areas supported by the Customer Service Centre including; Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Rent Account. In addition we saw an increase in activity for Schools Admissions with 1800 primary school offer letters dispatched. Despite the increase activity the performance for the quarter was improved from the same period last year with the exception of the % of tickets abandoned as mentioned above.



The above graph further demonstrates the improvement in Q4 and Q1 with the higher volumes of calls answered.

Service Improvements

The Customer Service Management Team has continued to work closely with Kurt Goldman as the arvato Customer Service Solution Lead on implementing service improvements within the Customer Service Centre. Listed below are a number of projects that are currently being supported.

Reporting – We are now in a position to report on the full range of KPI'S, the latest additions are PI1a and PI1b Complaints, CS2 Electronic contact, CS5 Blue Badge and Bus Passes. Further improvements are being made to provide additional resilience as we forge closer links with our reporting team within arvato.

Change of service delivery FOH – We have adopted a new customer flow after piloting the scheme in the previous quarter and have increased the number of staff available to support a variety of queries, this has been further supported with the introduction of a new contact management system, IVLog which was implemented and went live mid June, producing it's first full month reports in July.

Centre Split – In preparation of the relocation of the Call Centre to arvato's Head Quarter's at Phoenix House, there was a requirement to change the structure of the Customer Service Centre to support service delivery across two main sites and three local access points. A three month pilot was agreed, necessary training needs identified and supported with a number of training sessions held throughout May and June which to date has supported improved service delivery during the pilot period.

ACD – The project to replace the current ACD with a new solution is well underway and anticipated to be in place in time for the relocation of the Call Centre to Phoenix House towards the end of the summer. The functionality of the new system exceeds that of the current system providing integrated call recording and key management and performance information that is not readily available through the existing system.

Training – An annual training and induction plan have been written in line with the service improvement and delivery plan project. See attached project close report. In addition and in preparation of the impending relocation of the Call Centre and support of the new structure, we have continued to deliver cross training to staff promoting a multi skilled flexible workforce. In June 21 training sessions were run supporting 65 members of staff. In addition we are working closely with our colleagues in Revenues and Benefits, having attended training for the new paperless direct debit scheme which is due to go live this month (August)

Email – Improved response time on emails. The process review identified the required resource to support sustained improvement and reporting capabilities. The new process was developed and implemented within the Call Centre. KPI targets are now being met. See attached project end report.

Local Welfare Provision (LWP)

Whilst the number of applicants for support through the LWP scheme has remained fairly static the value of awards has increased. We have organised and run an internal promotion within Slough Borough Council and are further supporting this through attendance at Departmental Management meetings within the council. The objective being to increase uptake of service, and extend our support of vulnerable customers within the borough. We have also engaged with Argos and the British Heart Foundation to supply goods, both new and donated to LWP applicants.

Election Support

arvato are supporting SBC with the imminent changes to Elector Registration process. Whilst this is not in scope of the contract we have made a commitment to support first point of contact queries through the Customer Service Centre. As such we expect to see increased contact volumes across all sites and communication channels in response to the high volumes of letters being posted out to residents. The CSC has been working closely with Melanie Dark-Gale the Electoral Services Manager to ensure staff are well briefed on the changes in order to support first contact resolution where possible. Having spoken to our Colleagues in Chesterfield and also other Local Authorities we are expecting somewhere in the region of 10% response rate to the Invitation to Register Letters (20,000 are being sent). In addition we do expect a response to the 80,000 Letter of Confirmation, although changes have been made to the letter to mitigate. We have restricted leave and made adjustments to our resource to give us the best opportunity to support these changes, although all parties acknowledge this will have an impact on both service and KPI's during this period.

Channel Shift

Kurt Goldman and Tina Hancock attend the clients Customer Service Programme Board project meetings and have recently met with Vijay McGuire, Sanjay Dhuna and Pippa Hopkins to share the service taxonomy method we are using to capture customer contact channels against service type. The document has been shared with the Council with an aim of being cascaded out to other service areas to assist in capturing access methods to service as a starting point for channel shift.

Client Support

arvato have continue to support projects run by the Council, namely the Customer Service Programme Board and Open for Business projects. Through our attendance within the Customer Service Programme Board, we have further undertaken an exercise to capture the contact methods in relation to service activity for the services supported by the Customer Service Centre.

Service Summary

The Customer Service team has continued its journey of change and is progressing with both the Service Improvement and Delivery Plans. There are a number of projects that we are recommending are closed due to being complete with standard business practice adopted. We have continued to see improvement in performance against the KPI's and also in the percentage of contacts responded to, as demonstrated above.