

TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires by Tayside Valuation Joint Board

Year 2017-18

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INTRODUCTION

1 GENERAL

This is the twelfth, twelve-month period during which users of our services have been asked to provide feedback on the service they received.

The decision was taken to issue customer satisfaction questionnaires as a result of Tayside Valuation Joint Board's commitment to Best Value and creating a customer focus. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as an Appendix to this report.

2 QUESTIONNAIRES WERE ISSUED TO THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 Customers who have telephoned the office.
- 2 Customers who have visited the office.
- 3 Customers who have received a visit from a member of staff.
- 4 Customers who have made contact with the office by letter, E-mail or Fax.
- 5 Customers who have settled an appeal/proposal.

It was accepted that customers may have had contact by one or more of the above and this is reflected in the results.

The questionnaire was issued to a random sample of customers on a regular basis over a period of one year i.e. July 2017 – June 2018.

Total number of questionnaires issued	=	216
Total number of questionnaires returned	=	55

This gives an overall return of 25.5% which is a reduction on the 30% which was experienced in 2016-17. By way of comparison, 328 questionnaires were issued last year, 96 of which were returned.

The number of customers who stated which service their contact with the office related to is as follows:

Electoral Registration	Council Tax	Valuation for Non-Domestic Rates	Other/More than one
2	27	15	11

This report analyses the data returned by customers, lists comments made and offers recommendations as a result of this data.

Results of Questionnaires Returned

If you have phoned the office	Number of Responses 2017-18	
2A Did you get through to a person who could deal with your query? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	39	100%
Total:	39	
2B Were you aware of the name of the person who spoke to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	34	85%
	6	15%
If No , would knowing the name have been helpful to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	40	
	4	67%
	2	33%
Total:	6	
If you have visited the office	Number of Responses 2017-18	
3A How convenient did you find the opening hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very convenient • Fairly convenient • Not very convenient • Not at all convenient 	2	40%
	2	40%
	1	20%
Total:	5	
3B Was there ease of access to the building? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	5	100%
Total:	5	
3C Was there sufficient provision of facilities and information about our services available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	4	80%
	1	20%
Total:	5	

If you have received a visit from a member of our staff	Number of Responses 2017-18	
<p>4A Did we make an appointment for a visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> <p>If Yes, were we punctual?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> <p>If No, would an appointment been preferred?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>31</p> <p>16</p> <hr/> <p>47</p>	<p>66%</p> <p>34%</p> <hr/> <p>100%</p> <hr/> <p>63%</p> <p>37%</p>
<p>4B Was the time of our visit convenient to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>39</p> <p>4</p> <hr/> <p>43</p>	<p>91%</p> <p>9%</p>
<p>4C Did we properly identify ourselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>42</p> <p>3</p> <hr/> <p>45</p>	<p>93%</p> <p>7%</p>
<p>4D Was the purpose of the visit clearly explained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>44</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>45</p>	<p>98%</p> <p>2%</p>

Comment: It has not historically been our normal practice to make appointments for carrying out routine survey work. However, the making of an appointment is now expected by some customers as the statistics above bear out.

If your contact with the office was by letter, E-mail or Fax	Number of Responses 2017-18	
5A Was it acknowledged in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-5 days • 6-10 days • Longer than 10 days <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">79%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">21%</p>
	14	
5B Was this time acceptable to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	12	100%
	12	

Comment: In some cases staff may respond to a written enquiry by telephone which may delay a formal written acknowledgement. A mail logging system is in operation which allows monitoring of response times.

Appeal/Proposal	Number of Responses 2017-18	
6A How long did it take to settle your appeal/proposal from the time you made it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 3 months • 3 to 6 months • 6 to 12 months • 12 to 18 months • 18 months + • Don't know/Can't remember 	6 2 <hr/> 8	75% 25%
6B Was this time acceptable to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	6 1 <hr/> 7	86% 14%
6C When dealing with the office did we undertake to contact you within a specified period? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	5 1 <hr/> 6	83% 17%
6D Did the office do so? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always • Usually • Rarely • Never 	2 3 1 <hr/> 6	33% 50% 17%
6E Do you feel a sufficient, clear and understandable explanation was given during your appeal discussions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	6 <hr/> 6	100%
6F Following your appeal/proposal, was it upheld? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	6 <hr/> 6	100%

Overall Impression		Number of Responses 2017-18	
7A How would you assess the helpfulness and friendliness of the people you dealt with? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Good • Fair • Poor <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		39	73.6%
		12	22.6%
		1	1.9%
		1	1.9%
	53		
7B How would you assess the competence and efficiency of the people you dealt with? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Good • Fair • Poor <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		38	73%
		13	25%
		1	2%
		52	
7C How satisfied were you with the time taken to deal with your enquiry? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		35	70%
		15	30%
		50	
7D If you were unhappy about the service you received, did you complain? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		3	30%
		7	70%
		10	
7E If you complained, how satisfied were you with the way we dealt with your complaint? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		1	33%
		2	67%
		3	
7F Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from us? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>			
		33	72%
		12	26%
		1	2%
		46	

Comments from Customer Questionnaires

The following are the comments noted in the comments and suggestions box, including any that expressed criticism or dissatisfaction of the Assessor's service.

Most of the feedback is provided anonymously, therefore there has been no follow up possible. Where customers provided their name and address in relation to a critical comment a full written response to the comments was made.

Where the member of staff was identified in the comments the appropriate line manager was informed in order that the staff member could be complimented, or otherwise, on the service provided. Staff names have been blanked out of the comments listed below.

LIST OF COMMENTS

- This survey comes so long after the visit that it is difficult to remember the facts. The member of staff was very affable and efficient.
- Very happy with the service. Seemed to take a bit of time for valuation notice to arrive - about 2 weeks after valuation award was listed on SAA Website.
- My query was dealt with and explained logically & quickly.
- Initially first contact was by an unannounced visit. This was very inconvenient as it was unable to inspect the whole building as customers would have been disturbed. Another time was agreed for early the next day before the arrival of customers. They visited on time, were very pleasant and helpful. Visit took under an hour & I was happy with the service.
- Excellent service. XXXXXXXX was great.
- Very prompt and efficient service easily made an appointment time convenient to me.
- To date awaiting outcome of appeal, so difficult to complete questionnaire.
- No Comments, the process was efficiently handled, Thank you.
- Did not explain what he was really here for. Came into the lobby. Measured 1 wall, barely glanced in any other room, and then declared we were a Band C for Council Tax. How can that be, when our neighbours are only Band B. Will be going to the council to see about this. Not good service at all, especially when you are an elderly couple. Did not complain to you as we did not know where we came from. Thanks we will also be seeing the council about this.
- I had my domestic council Tax changed over to business use - commercial self catering. The staff when I call are always helpful and polite. The Assessor who came out to value the property for Domestic rates - XXXXXXXX was particular helpful and pleasant, he was very informative and helped me to understand the new rates.
- We are a museum and do not think that this does not apply to us.
- All staff who we dealt with were very pleasant and efficient. They were all very helpful as well. We were very happy with the way we were dealt with.
- My query/contact with Angus Council was in relation to registration for payment of Council tax at the Downs (Park Homes/Caravan), Barry Road, Barry, Carnoustie DD7 7SA. I am now registered & Paying Council Tax which if feel is the correct & lawful thing to do. I am, however, aware of many residents who DO NOT pay Council Tax - either as a sole or secondary property. I would hope that Angus Council is pursuing these residents in light of the financial position in which it finds itself of the approx. 240 properties only 5 are vacant in excess of 230 should be paying Council Tax.
- The Electoral Registration system isn't joined up (starting at gov.uk) or at least isn't ?? To the use and the person contacted couldn't explain how the system works. It resolved itself in the end but left us not knowing what was going on.
- Although I find most if your staff helpful I am very disappointed that any form filling, payment making has to be "on line". I am disabled and find all this upsetting and tiring and too difficult, and speaking to other in a similar situation have also said the same,

we don't all have a computer or debit card. Elderly feel the same, It would be good to have at least one person on your offices or a day that this one person could be on duty to help.

- The initial problem would not have occurred if I could have spoken initially with someone over the phone to fill the form online was counter procedure.

Conclusions

For 2017-18 the number of questionnaires issued has reduced to 216 compared with 328 the previous year. The response rate of 25.5% is slightly below the average response rate expected from surveys such as this.

On this occasion 27 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 15 with Non-Domestic Rates, 2 relate to Electoral Registration and 11 cover more than one category. The return pattern mirrors proportionately the numbers issued to customers under the three headings.

Section 7F continues to generate predominantly favourable responses. Although some dissatisfaction was expressed this did not prevent 72% of customers stating that they were “very satisfied” and 26% were “satisfied” with the service. This is a very encouraging response.

15 out of 55 customers took the opportunity to make comments. The majority of the comments were positive and it is gratifying to note that most people have a very positive experience when dealing with our staff. Where dissatisfaction regarding final outcome is noted or a request is made for information, these matters are followed up if possible. However, because the return can be made anonymously, it is not always possible to do so. The completed questionnaires are returned to the Assistant Assessors responsible for the administration of the Divisional offices so that feedback can be given to staff and improvements made to the service where required.

The comments received are reproduced as part of this report. Where comments were lengthy only the main statements of satisfaction/dissatisfaction have been noted.

It is very encouraging to note that the overall level of satisfaction that customers have with the services we provide remains high.

It should be noted that, in addition to the opportunity to comment via the customer questionnaires, our customers can also make use of the Board’s Complaints Procedure to express dissatisfaction with any aspects of our service. During the period covered by this report there were 5 recorded complaints. These were all dealt with satisfactorily by senior members of staff at a local level and none required further investigation by management.

Recommendations

Staff should be made aware of the existence of the report and given the opportunity to read it. In addition, it should continue to be made available to the public and all stakeholders by publishing it on the Board's website.

The survey for 2017-18 was carried out on the same basis as in previous years. The number of forms issued was less than the previous year – primarily due to the pressure of work in other areas. Although the statistical outcome remains constant compared with previous years, staff will be reminded of the value of the feedback obtained from the survey and that the policy of issuing forms to as many customers as possible will be reinforced for 2018-19.

The customer questionnaire for 2017-18 was supplemented with additional questions which asked customers if they fell into any of the protected characteristic groups as defined in the Equalities Act 2010. The responses received allowed us to assess how well our service meets the needs of these sections of society.

Management should continue to stress to staff the importance of customer service and of their individual roles in providing the best possible quality of service delivery.

Equalities Monitoring

As noted above, the customer questionnaire for 2017-18 was supplemented with additional questions which asked customers if they fell into any of the protected characteristic groups as defined in the Equalities Act 2010.

Responses were received on 47 of the 55 forms returned. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were almost exclusively white (ethnic group). The gender divide was 57:38 male/female with 5% jointly responding and the age group was predominantly over 45. Two responses indicated that the person had a disability.

This is the fourth year of gathering equalities information in respect of our customers. To date no specific issues relating to protected characteristics have been identified.