

TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires by Tayside Valuation Joint Board

Year 2018-19

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INTRODUCTION

1 GENERAL

This is the thirteenth, 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 2018 – June 2019.

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| Total number of questionnaires issued | = | 451 |
| Total number of questionnaires returned | = | 96 |

This gives an overall return of 21.3%, a modest reduction on the 25.5% which was experienced in 2017-18 given that significantly more questionnaires were issued. By way of comparison, 216 questionnaires were issued last year, 55 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 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 4 | 58 | 17 | 17 |

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 2018-19 | |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2A Did you get through to a person who could deal with your query? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | 71 3 74 | 96% 4% |
| 2B Were you aware of the name of the person who spoke to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p>If No, would knowing the name have been helpful to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | 51 19 70 10 9 19 | 73% 27% 53% 47% |
| If you have visited the office | Number of Responses 2018-19 | |
| 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 <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | 11 2 13 | 85% 15% |
| 3B Was there ease of access to the building? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | 13 13 | 100% |
| 3C Was there sufficient provision of facilities and information about our services available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | 13 13 | 100% |

| 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>43</p> <p>19</p> <hr/> <p>62</p> <hr/> <p>42</p> <hr/> <p>42</p> <hr/> <p>10</p> <p>9</p> <hr/> <p>19</p> | <p>69%</p> <p>31%</p> <p>100%</p> <p>53%</p> <p>47%</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>57</p> <hr/> <p>57</p> | <p>100%</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>56</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>58</p> | <p>97%</p> <p>3%</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>59</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>60</p> | <p>98%</p> <p>2%</p> |

Comment: It is good to note that appointments are made in most instances which accords with the general expectation of customers. At times, though, it more efficient to attend without appointment. On such occasions, these are noted as fairly convenient to the customer.

| 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;">20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">76%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">12%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">12%</p> |
| 5B Was this time acceptable to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">25</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">100%</p> |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">26</p> | |
| | <p style="text-align: center;">25</p> | |

Comment: Whilst delay beyond 10 days is not an acceptable practice, the longer than usual response remains acceptable to customers. In some cases, staff may respond to a written enquiry by telephone that may delay a formal written acknowledgement. A mail logging system is in operation that 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 <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">14</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">57%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">14%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">21%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8%</p> |
| 6B Was this time acceptable to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">14</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">86%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">14%</p> |
| 6C When dealing with the office did we undertake to contact you within a specified period? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">13</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">77%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">23%</p> |
| 6D Did the office do so? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always • Usually • Rarely • Never <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">90%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">10%</p> |
| 6E Do you feel a sufficient, clear and understandable explanation was given during your appeal discussions? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">100%</p> |
| 6F Following your appeal/proposal, was it upheld? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">11</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">91%</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9%</p> |

| 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> | 60 27 1 2 <hr/> 90 | 67% 30% 1% 2% <hr/> |
| 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> | 61 26 4 2 <hr/> 93 | 66% 28% 4% 2% <hr/> |
| 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> | 56 28 2 2 <hr/> 88 | 64% 32% 2% 2% <hr/> |
| 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> | 2 8 <hr/> 10 | 20% 80% <hr/> |
| 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> | 2 1 1 <hr/> 4 | 50% 25% 25% <hr/> |
| 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> | 53 23 3 <hr/> 79 | 67% 29% 4% <hr/> |

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

- Excellent Service throughout all proceedings whether by phone, letter or direct contact with personnel. Result was positive for me and had it not been it would not alter my view on the excellent service I received.
- A courteous and professional service. Thanks
- Good service!
- I wish other departments ran this well. Could not fault the service at all.
- Everything was handled in a courteous and efficient way.
- XXXXX was extremely helpful and informative. Thank you.
- All staff who were involved were very helpful and friendly.
- I wish all organisations that I deal with were as efficient as your office.
- Staff were so friendly, professional and knowledgeable. I was guided through each step of the process. I was very impressed. A gold star to all.
- We very much appreciate and welcome how helpful, friendly, professional and efficient all the staff we have dealt with while moving into our new house have been. Very impressive! Thank you!!
- Great helpful staff in the Angus office.
- V. good personal service, although online not quite right yet?
- No comments thank you! You are all doing your best!!
- The Assessor who attended at my property was a very pleasant individual who clearly explained the purpose of his visit and carried out his duties efficiently.

- All contacts were very helpful – especially good, as I had recently moved with a husband with dementia. Thank you.
- I think the service has been prompt, professional and fair. I have high confidence in Tayside Valuation joint Board. This is not always the case for Public Service Organisations and so recognition of this is appropriate.
- Extremely pleasant, helpful and competent staff.
- The initial telephone call takes too long to get to the point where you speak to a person.
- We phoned and were told that everything is now done online. We contacted via the website 3 times before we got any response.
- Lady arrived at 6.30pm unannounced. Reason for visit was to get details of my moving into new build house so she could alert Council offices of my change of address etc. She had been visiting someone else who had also just moved into their new house and saw my lights on so she took the opportunity to get my details for the council records. I am 80 years old and was wary of giving her my details even though she identified herself. Suggest house calls by Council members be only made by appointment.
- Delay of 3 months from moving into new build to receiving council tax bill resulting in higher monthly outgoing for remainder of year – see no reason why this procedure should take so long. New builds could be inspected before or on completion to obtain valuation from the staff.
- Sent an email to query the council tax rates for sewerage but never received a reply. Would rate the communication from the offices as poor.
- Valuation- efficient and fair. Electoral – efficient service. Council tax – inefficient. Inflexible. Poor IT system for anything other than straightforward situations. Staff not helpful but referred to IT system. Manager very good and sorted problem but only after frustration and inflexibility of staff and IT system.
- Our house was valued at band G yet next door was valued at Band F. It's about £800/year more.
- Band E too high.

Conclusions

For 2018-19 the number of questionnaires issued has significantly increased to 451 compared with 216 the previous year. The response rate of 21.3% is in line with returns in previous years.

On this occasion 58 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 17 with Non-Domestic Rates, 4 relate to Electoral Registration and 17 cover more than one category. The return pattern mirrors proportionately the numbers issued to customers under the three main headings of business.

The responses at Section 7F demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction with our service with 96% of responses being either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied". This is a very encouraging albeit that there remain gaps in the service which can cause dissatisfaction.

25 out of 96 customers took the opportunity to make comments. The majority of the comments are positive and it is pleasing 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.

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 3 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 2018-19 was carried out on the same basis as in previous years. The number of forms issued was significantly more than the previous year. Although the statistical outcome remains relatively 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 2019-20.

The customer questionnaire has been 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 has been 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 87 of the 96 forms returned. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were almost exclusively white (ethnic group). The gender divide was 37:49 female/male with 1 joint response. The age group was predominantly over 45. Three responses indicated that the person had a disability.

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