

# **TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**



## **Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires by Tayside Valuation Joint Board**

**Year 2019-20**

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1 GENERAL

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

The decision has been 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 2019 – June 2020.

Total number of questionnaires issued	=	293
Total number of questionnaires returned	=	55

This gives an overall return of 18.7%, a reduction on the 21.3% which was experienced in 2018-19. By way of comparison, 451 questionnaires were issued last year, 96 of which were returned. The number of questionnaires issued is lower than the last twelve month period due to restrictions caused by the government lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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	13	13

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 2019-20	
2A Did you get through to a person who could deal with your query? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	40 3	93% 7%
Total:	43	
2B Were you aware of the name of the person who spoke to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	35 8	81% 19%
If <b>No</b> , would knowing the name have been helpful to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	4 3	57% 43%
Total:	7	
If you have visited the office	Number of Responses 2019-20	
3A How convenient did you find the opening hours? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very convenient</li> <li>• Fairly convenient</li> <li>• Not very convenient</li> <li>• Not at all convenient</li> </ul>	6 1	86% 14%
Total:	7	
3B Was there ease of access to the building? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	5	100%
Total:	5	
3C Was there sufficient provision of facilities and information about our services available? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	5	100%
Total:	5	

If you have received a visit from a member of our staff	Number of Responses 2019-20	
<p>4A Did we make an appointment for a visit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> <p>If <b>Yes</b>, were we punctual?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p> <p>If <b>No</b>, would an appointment been preferred?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>29</p> <p>11</p> <hr/> <p>40</p> <hr/> <p>28</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>29</p> <hr/> <p>4</p> <p>5</p> <hr/> <p>9</p>	<p>73%</p> <p>27%</p> <hr/> <p>97%</p> <p>3%</p> <hr/> <p>44%</p> <p>56%</p>
<p>4B Was the time of our visit convenient to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>33</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>35</p>	<p>94%</p> <p>6%</p>
<p>4C Did we properly identify ourselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>37</p> <hr/> <p>37</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>4D Was the purpose of the visit clearly explained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>36</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>37</p>	<p>97%</p> <p>3%</p>

**Comment:** It is good to note that appointments are made in most instances which accords with the general expectation of customers. It can be more efficient to attend without appointment. On such occasions, these are noted as fairly convenient to the customer. However circumstances have changed since the current pandemic commenced and there will be an expectation of staff that an appointment is made for any necessary inspection in all instances.

If your contact with the office was by letter, E-mail or Fax	Number of Responses 2019-20	
5A Was it acknowledged in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-5 days</li> <li>• 6-10 days</li> <li>• Longer than 10 days</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	12	75%
	4	25%
	16	
5B Was this time acceptable to you? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	12	80%
	3	20%
	15	

**Comment:** Whilst delay beyond 10 days is not an acceptable practice, the longer than usual response remains acceptable to customers. Staff are advised to respond to a written enquiry by telephone or letter where there may be a delay in providing a formal written response. A mail logging system is in operation that allows monitoring of response times.

Appeal/Proposal	Number of Responses 2019-20	
<p>6A How long did it take to settle your appeal/proposal from the time you made it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 3 months</li> <li>• 3 to 6 months</li> <li>• 6 to 12 months</li> <li>• 12 to 18 months</li> <li>• 18 months +</li> <li>• Don't know/Can't remember</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>7</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>11</p>	<p>64%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>12%</p>
<p>6B Was this time acceptable to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>8</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>10</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>20%</p>
<p>6C When dealing with the office did we undertake to contact you within a specified period?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>5</p> <p>3</p> <hr/> <p>8</p>	<p>63%</p> <p>37%</p>
<p>6D Did the office do so?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always</li> <li>• Usually</li> <li>• Rarely</li> <li>• Never</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>4</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>6</p>	<p>66%</p> <p>34%</p> <p>34%</p>
<p>6E Do you feel a sufficient, clear and understandable explanation was given during your appeal discussions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>8</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>9</p>	<p>89%</p> <p>11%</p>
<p>6F Following your appeal/proposal, was it upheld?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>9</p> <hr/> <p>9</p>	<p>100%</p>

Overall Impression	Number of Responses 2019-20	
<p>7A How would you assess the helpfulness and friendliness of the people you dealt with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Fair</li> <li>• Poor</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>42</p> <p>8</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>52</p>	<p>81%</p> <p>15%</p> <p>4%</p>
<p>7B How would you assess the competence and efficiency of the people you dealt with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent</li> <li>• Good</li> <li>• Fair</li> <li>• Poor</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>42</p> <p>7</p> <p>3</p> <hr/> <p>52</p>	<p>81%</p> <p>13%</p> <p>6%</p>
<p>7C How satisfied were you with the time taken to deal with your enquiry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Satisfied</li> <li>• Satisfied</li> <li>• Dissatisfied</li> <li>• Very Dissatisfied</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>41</p> <p>6</p> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <hr/> <p>52</p>	<p>79%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>6%</p>
<p>7D If you were unhappy about the service you received, did you complain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>1</p> <p>5</p> <hr/> <p>6</p>	<p>17%</p> <p>83%</p>
<p>7E If you complained how satisfied were you with the way we dealt with your complaint?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Satisfied</li> <li>• Satisfied</li> <li>• Dissatisfied</li> <li>• Very Dissatisfied</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>1</p> <hr/> <p>1</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>7F Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from us?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very Satisfied</li> <li>• Satisfied</li> <li>• Dissatisfied</li> <li>• Very Dissatisfied</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>41</p> <p>9</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>52</p>	<p>79%</p> <p>17%</p> <p>4%</p>



## 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 redacted from the comments listed below.

### LIST OF COMMENTS

- The officer who called was excellent but we were advised that we would be advised of the result of our appeal. As yet we have no result from our appeal – 6 weeks after visit
- Answer telephone quicker and get to speak to the person you need. Also not everyone has computers and can't go on line
- Everything was explained very clearly and efficiently. Overall very happy with the service
- The only comment I would like to make is the length of time from the assessor visting to receiving my bill was extremely long. This means I now appear to be paying large monthly payments to cover the missed months
- I received card through the door and noticed lady up the street so went to talk to her. As yet I have had nothing from DCC about my Council Tax
- I dealt with XXXX. She was very helpful and courteous. Everything was explained and completed in a timely manner
- Happy with the conversation and explanation of the valuation process as it was an individual property
- Received a card through the door. Called named person and sorted over the phone – very easy
- Man was very helpful to me. Could not ask for better. Helped me 100%.
- XXXX was polite and helpful. A pleasure to deal with
- XXXX and his successor have always been helpful

## Conclusions

For 2019-20 the number of questionnaires issued has significantly decreased to 293 compared with 451 the previous year. The response rate of 18.7% is lower than returns in previous years. The reason for this is the restrictions imposed by the government lockdown as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

On this occasion 27 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 13 with Non-Domestic Rates, 2 relate to Electoral Registration and 13 cover more than one category. The return pattern generally 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.

11 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 and Principal Valuers responsible for the administration and management of the Divisional offices so that feedback is 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 4 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 2019-20 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 48 of the 55 forms returned. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were almost exclusively white (ethnic group). The gender divide was 28:21 female/male with 1 joint response. The age group was predominantly over 45. Four responses indicated that the person had a disability.

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