

# **TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**



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

**Year 2020-21**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## GENERAL

This is the fifteenth twelve-month period during which users of our services would have been asked to provide feedback on the service they received. The decision to issue customer satisfaction questionnaires annually flows from the Joint Board's commitment to Best Value and creating a customer focus.

Customer questionnaires are usually issued to a random sample of customers on a regular basis over a period of one year i.e. July 2020 – June 2021. Questionnaires are targeted towards:

- 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.

Unfortunately, the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic and enforced homeworking arrangements did permit the issue of customer questionnaires during the course of the 20/21 year. As an alternative to the analysis of the returned questionnaires, a statement relative to the feedback received concerning the performance of staff is given below, as evidenced of by comments and complaints received over the period.

## 2 STATEMENT ON CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Staff have been homeworking since 22 March 2020. In the first instance not all staff had the capability to access office records from home which resulted in a number of challenges to provide sufficient equipment to enable that access. The number of staff having remote access to office records was incrementally increased and by October 2020, all staff had such access.

The immediate matter which required attention was the many requests from ratepayers seeking certification of valuation roll entries or alteration of the valuation roll so that they could receive financial support for their business during this first period of the pandemic.

Initial contact was achieved by email or voicemail with subsequent follow up either by telephone or email. Where possible the necessary actions were taken. In terms of customer feedback, there was mostly a positive response. Below are examples of the extraordinary statements received from customers:

- Thank you for your excellent assistance in these difficult times!
- Thank you for all that you and your team are doing in these extraordinary circumstances.
- ...thanks for letting me know and helping in these challenging times.
- Finally, I want to personally thank you XXXXX for doing a sterling job on our behalf when the pandemic started in March, you went way and beyond your job description to get us the much promised grant....

- Your effort will forever be remembered
- ...first all a huge thanks for your previous help with my grant application. Been a long haul but the information you provided helped massively.

By May 2020, those staff who had remote access, were providing a normal service using different working methods. The transition had an impact on Key Performance Indicators. Nonetheless, practices and measures introduced enabled continuing contact with the public, although this was not face-to-face contact. The practices and measures enabled the Council Tax List and Valuation Roll changes to be made and the Electoral Register updated.

Many of the expressions of thanks were both in relation to the prompt response and the quality of the service. Examples of routine messages of thanks are set out below:

- I appreciate your help and the time you have taken to collate the information for us.
- Thank you for the quick response
- You are a ☆
- that's brill...!
- Thanks XXXXX, much appreciated
- Many thanks for this XXXXX.
- Greatly appreciated
- XXXXX, thanks for taking the time to talk with me last week, much appreciated.
- Thanks for the prompt response...much appreciated!
- ...thanks very much for the phone call. Thanks a lot for your help in the matter.
- Thank you so much XXXXX!! You have no idea how much this means for me and my family.
- Honestly XXXXX a VERY KIND THANKS for all your explaining of all my concerns very much appreciated thank you so much.
- I'd just like to say how delighted I was to receive such a quick and positive outcome to my query regarding my tax band

- That's wonderful news all round and thanks for getting back to me so quickly. Thank you very much
- Thanks for your assistance XXXXX – much appreciated!
- Good morning. That is so helpful. Many thanks
- Thank you so much for dealing with this so quickly
- Thank you for your email regarding the above, and thank you for getting back to me so quickly.
- Many thanks for your swift reply
- That's super, thanks for your help, it's much appreciated.

Additionally, in the period under review, a Scottish Parliamentary election was held on 6 May 2020. In advance of this arrangements had been made to redirect mail to a scanning service so that images of items of mail for all parts of the service could be received securely and dealt with normally. This meant having to alter internal arrangements to receive, distribute and deal with mail for any action. Contact with the public was maintained through mail, email, telephone and pre-arranged visits to the office where this was necessary to deal with essential matters.

Examples of the expressions of appreciation of the service are shown below.

- Thanks so much for the information and top tips - we've never voted by post previously so that's really useful to know.
- No worries at all, I appreciate how busy you are! I would like to say a huge thank you – you're the only helpful person I have found during the past week so thank you very much.
- thank you for speedy reply and explanation.
- Excellent XXXXX - great service and focus on fixing things is the easiest way possible. I am very impressed with the way you have managed our registrations.
- Many thanks for your help. Much appreciated.
- Thank you again for such prompt and positive responses, my partner will be registering tomorrow so hopefully your work will help there too.
- ....many thanks once again for your always super helpful replies!

- Can't thank you enough, XXXXX, you have been amazing
- Thank you very much for responding so quickly!
- That's great, thank you very much for getting back to me so promptly and for the information.
- Thank you, very efficient!
- That's brilliant XXXXX - Very speedily done!
- Oh that's brilliant. What a prompt and efficient service.
- Thank you. Tayside is so efficient.
- Having recently moved back here I can honestly say that South East England efficiency could use a Tayside boost.
- Many thanks for replying, and so quickly. What excellent service.
- Oh my goodness. How well organised. Fabulous system.
- I must also thank you very much for your efficient and friendly service. It cannot be easy working on such matters during the current crisis!
- ...many thanks for the swift action here....it's greatly appreciated.
- Great, thank you so much XXXXX. Been a wonderful experience.
- Thank you - an impressively speedy response too!
- That's great, thank you very much. Once again, thank you for your friendly and very efficient service.
- Thank you very much for your prompt, helpful and reassuring reply. It is much appreciated.

### **3 Comment on Customer Feedback**

The above customer statements were received by email rather than the usual method of a statement within a customer questionnaire.

The feedback has been anonymised. Where the member of staff was identified in the feedback 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 redacted from the comments listed below.

### **4 Conclusions**

As stated above, customer questionnaires were not issued during the period June 2020 – June 2021.

However the many expressions of thanks received during the same period indicate that there continues to be high level of satisfaction with the service provided. The speed of response stands out as an element of the service which results in most positive comment. Although this may be the result of circumstances where a delayed service was expected.

As a record of dissatisfaction with the service, the number of complaints for the same period was 8. These were all dealt with satisfactorily by senior members of staff at a local level and none required further investigation by management.

Whilst it is clear the notes of thanks far outweigh the recorded complaints, it is recognised that customers did not have the opportunity to raise matters which they may have submitted anonymously on the customer questionnaire. Accordingly, the report may only give a notional account of the quality of the service provided. Notwithstanding, the noted comments indicate that staff have worked hard to adapt to the altered working arrangements and continue to provide as efficient and high a standard of service to the public as is possible, for which many users are grateful.

### **5 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 customer questionnaire is under review and minor changes are proposed. The revised form will be issued to as many customers as possible in the period June 2021-2022 so that formal measurement of performance can recommence.

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.

### **6 Equalities Monitoring**

There is no data to provide a statement in this respect.