

TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



**Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires
By**

**Tayside Valuation Joint Board
Year 2021-2022**

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Introduction

1 GENERAL

This is the sixteenth twelve-month period during which users of our services 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 2021 – June 2022. 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.

The period has seen the continuation of the Covid-19 pandemic which has reduced direct face to face contact with customers.

Total number of questionnaires issued	=	345
Total number of questionnaires returned	=	44

This gives an overall return of 12.75%, a significant reduction on the 21.3% returned in 2018-19 as the last full pre-pandemic year. It may be the case that customers feel less inclined to comment on services provided more remotely.

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
5	19	8	12

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 2021-22	
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>	30 2 32	94% 6%
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>	24 4 28 4 4 8	86% 14% 50% 50%
If you your contact with the office was by letter or email	Number of Responses 2021-22	
3A 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>	19 4 2 25	76% 16% 8%
3B Was this time acceptable to you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No 	23 2	92% 8%

Comment: Whilst delay beyond 10 days is not an acceptable practice, in some cases, staff may respond to a written enquiry by telephone that may delay a formal written acknowledgement. A mail logging system remains in operation to allow monitoring of response times.

If you have visited the office	Number of Responses 2021-22	
<p>4A How convenient did you find the opening hours?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very convenient • Fairly convenient • Not very convenient • Not at all convenient <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p>	
<p>4B Was there ease of access to the building?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p>	
<p>4C Was there sufficient provision of facilities and information about our services available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p>	

If you have received a visit from a member of our staff	Number of Responses 2021-22	
<p>5A 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 • No answer given <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>4</p> <p>4</p> <hr/> <p>8</p> <hr/> <p>4</p> <hr/> <p>2</p> <p>0</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>	<p>50%</p> <p>50%</p> <hr/> <p>100%</p> <hr/> <p>50%</p> <p>50%</p> <hr/>
<p>5B 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>4</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>	<p>100%</p> <hr/>
<p>5C Did we properly identify ourselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>4</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>	<p>100%</p> <hr/>
<p>5D 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>4</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>	<p>100%</p> <hr/>

Appeal/Proposal	Number of Responses 2021-22	
<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"> • 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>3</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>6B Was this time acceptable to you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>3</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>100%</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"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>67%</p> <p>33%</p>
<p>6D Did the office do so?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always • Usually • Rarely • Never <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>2</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>67%</p> <p>33%</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"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>3</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>100%</p>
<p>6F Was the appeal/proposal successful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>3</p> <hr/> <p>3</p>	<p>100%</p>

Overall Impression	Number of Responses 2021-22	
<p>7A How would you assess the helpfulness and friendliness of the people you dealt with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Good • Fair • Poor <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>25 11 5</p> <hr/> <p>41</p>	<p>61% 27% 12%</p>
<p>7B How would you assess the competence and efficiency of the people you dealt with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent • Good • Fair • Poor <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>26 11 2 1</p> <hr/> <p>40</p>	<p>65% 28% 5% 3%</p>
<p>7C How satisfied were you with the time taken to deal with your enquiry?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>28 10 2 1</p> <hr/> <p>41</p>	<p>68% 24% 5% 2%</p>
<p>7D If you were unhappy about the service you received, did you complain?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • No <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>7</p> <hr/> <p>7</p>	<p>100%</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"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p>7F Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from us?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very Satisfied • Satisfied • Dissatisfied • Very Dissatisfied <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>29 11 1</p> <hr/> <p>41</p>	<p>71% 27% 2%</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 been blanked out of the comments listed below.

LIST OF COMMENTS

- Thanks from Invergowrie to Forfar, so have been in touch a couple of times with Perth and Kinross and Forfar offices. Each occasion everyone was helpful, friendly and assisted in getting addresses, Council Tax and voting sorted out. Thanks
- Extremely helpful and informative. I couldn't have asked for a better service. Thank you very much.
- Excellent service – prompt and clearly explained. Returned my call within 10 minutes with the information I required.
- No issues whatsoever.
- Just awaiting arrival of the postal voting paperwork for the May council elections before we leave for our holiday. Thanks.
- Unfortunately, I cannot recall the name of the lady who I dealt with but she was extremely helpful and informative. She listened to my query and offered visit. This visit helped to gain info needed to reassess my council tax banding from E to D. A first class experience received.
- I am unsure why I was sent this. I moved into a new build and contacted Dundee City Council re council tax and they had to check what banding my house was. Which I think is what triggered this.
- The TVJB is the best organisation (including service providers) that I deal with. Always helpful.
- Very happy with the service and with how helpful all I spoke to were. No complaints.
- Staff always very polite, helpful and informative.
- Very satisfied in the way my enquiry was dealt with. Could not fault the service given.

- I was happy with my dealing via email, however you have sent this letter to the wrong address. My address is XXX.
- Mr XXXX attends to any alterations promptly. Excellent service.
- After we purchased house there were various issues to sort re non-commercial status of church hall. XXXX dealt with them quickly and clearly. He also went the extra mile supporting us in sorting issues with SSE and Business Stream. So helpful! Can't praise him enough. Thank you!
- XXXX is very helpful and always responds in a timely manner and resolves any issues.
- Initial letter required a second sheet of paper just for the signature. Printing double sided or changing the layout/ format slightly would save you a piece of paper each time. Otherwise the actual service was excellent. Would recommend.
- Didn't receive the £150 off community charge that everyone is getting. Telephoned. They said they would amend it. Still waiting.
- We moved into a new build and you issued letters and set up our council tax within two months. We then set up a direct debit to pay and everyone I spoke to by phone was very helpful and no issues raised.
- Here at the Caledonian Bar we were very unsure about the paperwork. The people we spoke to were very helpful.
- The online service for change of address worked well.
- Nothing to add. Requests were dealt with in reasonable time without any need to chase.
- You have to navigate the telephone system. Why not put an option to talk to someone who can direct you to the correct department? I have had to dial numerous times to find a path to talk to someone. Email was faster but you then rely on getting a response.... Days later.
- Staff should be available more easily and in their office so they can be contacted.

Conclusions

For 2021-22 the number of questionnaires issued has dropped but more noticeable has been the drop in the rate of return. The response rate of 12.7% is significantly lower than the pre-pandemic norm at just over 20% return.

It may well be the case that as service provision has adapted to the pandemic and accelerated changes in working practices, that the more remote nature of the work carried out has left customers less likely to respond to follow up enquiries.

On this occasion 19 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 8 with Non-Domestic Rates, 5 relate to Electoral Registration and 12 cover more than one category. The return pattern is proportionately more weighted towards Electoral than at last reporting, most likely due to there having been council elections during the period covered.

The responses at Section 7F once again demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction with our service with 98% of responses being either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied". This maintains previous levels and it is encouraging that despite the changes imposed by the pandemic that the level of customer satisfaction remains consistently high.

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 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 continue to be made aware of the existence and regular update of the report and encouraged to read it, and to discuss with their managers the lessons to be learned from 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 2021-22 was carried out on the same basis as in years prior to the pandemic. Although the outcome remains relatively constant compared with previous years, staff will be reminded of the value of the feedback obtained from the survey.

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 in light of altered working practices, of their individual roles in continuing to provide 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 40 of those returned. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were 100% white (ethnic group).

The gender divide was 22:18 (55%:45%) female/male.

The age group distribution is as follows:

Age Range	Returns	%
25-34	3	8%
35-44	5	12%
45-54	10	25%
55-64	14	35%
65-74	4	10%
75+	4	10%

One response stated that they consider themselves to have 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.