

**TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD**



**Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires  
By**

**Tayside Valuation Joint Board  
Year 2022-2023**

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# Introduction

## 1 GENERAL

This is the seventeenth 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 2022 – June 2023. 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 service emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic with some amended work practices in place which have reduced the amount of face to face contact with the public.

Total number of questionnaires issued	=	496
Total number of questionnaires returned	=	73

This gives an overall return of 14.7%, a broadly similar rate to the 12.79% returned last year, and still down on the level of return pre-pandemic.

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

<b>Electoral Registration</b>	<b>Council Tax</b>	<b>Valuation for Non-Domestic Rates</b>	<b>Other/More than one</b>
20	30	8	15

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

## Results of Questionnaires Returned

*NB: All figures rounded to nearest whole%. Accordingly some totals may not add to 100%*

If you have phoned the office	Number of Responses 2022-23	
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>	53 4	93% 7%
Total:	57	
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>	36 14	72% 28%
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>	12 2	86% 14%
Total:	14	
If you your contact with the office was by letter or email	Number of Responses 2022-23	
3A 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>	24 10 4	63% 26% 11%
Total:	38	
3B Was this time acceptable to you <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>	33 1	97% 3%

**Comment:** Whilst delay beyond 10 days is not, generally, 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 2022-23	
4A 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> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	1 2 0 0	33% 67%
4B Was there ease of access to the building? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	1 0 1	100%
4C 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> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	1 0 1	100%

If you have received a visit from a member of our staff	Number of Responses 2022-23																			
<p>5A 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> <li>• No answer given</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">40%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">15</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">100%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">44%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	6	40%	9	60%	15		6	100%	6		4	44%	1	12%	4	44%	9		
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<p>5B 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>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	9	90%	1	10%	10														
9	90%																			
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<p>5C 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>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="text-align: center;">90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	9	90%	1	10%	10														
9	90%																			
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<p>5D 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>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">91%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	10	91%	1	9%	11														
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1	9%																			
11																				

Appeal/Proposal	Number of Responses 2022-23	
<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>3</p> <p>1</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>5</p>	<p>60%</p> <p>20%</p> <p>20%</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>3</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>5</p>	<p>60%</p> <p>40%</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>3</p> <p>2</p> <hr/> <p>5</p>	<p>60%</p> <p>40%</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>1</p> <hr/> <p>1</p>	<p>100%</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>4</p> <p>1</p> <hr/> <p>5</p>	<p>80%</p> <p>20%</p>
<p>6F Was the appeal/proposal successful?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>	<p>4</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>	<p>100%</p>

Overall Impression		Number of Responses 2022-23	
7A How would you assess the helpfulness and friendliness of the people you dealt with?  <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>		50	72%
		17	24%
		2	3%
		1	1%
		70	
7B How would you assess the competence and efficiency of the people you dealt with?  <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>		53	76%
		14	20%
		1	1%
		2	3%
		70	
7C How satisfied were you with the time taken to deal with your enquiry?  <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>		42	59%
		23	32%
		4	6%
		2	3%
		71	
7D If you were unhappy about the service you received, did you complain?  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Total:</p>		1	5%
		18	95%
		19	
7E If you complained how satisfied were you with the way we dealt with your complaint?  <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>			
		n/a	
7F Overall, how satisfied were you with the service you received from us?  <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>		44	70%
		16	25%
		2	3%
		1	2%
		63	



## 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

- *I have found all of my dealings with PKC to be very satisfactory both with local taxes team and the Valuation Board. Staff have been very courteous, helpful and informative. Thank you.*
- *Super quick and helpful response. Thank you.*
- *I had been appealing over many years to have my Council Band lowered. It was only when I was able to speak to someone that there was progress. Prior to this it was by letter email.*
- *Thank you in clarifying doubts on Council Tax.*
- *The people were very friendly and helpful on the end of the phones.*
- *Business-like, professional, helpful. Overall excellent.*
- *I was very impressed with the care and attention given to my query when I first made contact. The Assessor who visited my property was very helpful and knowledgeable. He also took the time to signpost me to another council department to assist with another query I had. A very good service, thank you.*
- *Having moved into a new build I had to get council tax sorted. Found the lady I spoke to very helpful.*
- *Extremely helpful and informative. I couldn't have asked for a better service. Thank you very much.*
- *Have always found service at Electoral Registration – and also Council Tax – to be excellent. Calls answered and allocated to the correct department quickly and staff involved always courteous and helpful. Even on the phone it is 'service with a smile'.*
- *I received a follow up email which was unexpected with guidance, advice and information. This was very helpful and I was impressed and delighted with the level of support and friendliness and helpfulness of the person I spoke to, who was XXXX. Terrific in all aspects. Give XXXX a raise in salary, he is a great example of superior customer service. Best in class.*
- *I phoned the Electoral Registration twice and both times spoke to courteous, friendly and professional people who took time to help and were a pleasure to speak to.*
- *Very friendly and efficient and very nice not to get transferred to a computer! Prefer to speak to human being. Thank you for your service.*
- *Thank you, all my queries and requests were dealt with efficiently and the service provided was excellent. How refreshing it was to speak to an advisor very quickly without a long wait on the phone and for the name of the valuer*

for my region to be named and who phoned me back to discuss my requests. Excellent service by XXX. Much appreciated.

- *I would suggest you update your automatic email response. It assumes we are still living under Covid restrictions. Also this survey could have been done online for some.*
- *Having previously dealt with another council I was delighted and surprised at how quickly I got through to someone and with their helpful attitude. Everything that was promised was done promptly. Couldn't have been better.*
- *I only contacted your office to change my address on my postal vote which was done but I had to fill out the form twice. Your office phoned / lettered me saying they never received first one.*
- *The Electoral office has always been very helpful. My husband and I were service voters, which always creates extra issues. Staff have always been prompt, helpful and knowledgeable, following up with emails or calls.*
- *XXXX handled my query and was very polite, efficient and helpful. I could not have asked for a better service. Thank you and well done.*
- *XXX was very knowledgeable and gave appropriate advice. Also made sure to follow up to reassure all had gone through which was appreciated. Put "satisfied" at 7C because first time I called I was left on hold 45 mins and had to call back as had been forgotten / system didn't work. Other than that it's been great.*
- *We used the service via online application. No problems encountered, all good.*
- *Got passed to 3 different people before my query was answered. The communication with homeowners of new build properties needs to be better.*
- *Excellent service – keep it up.*
- *Takes far too long – and why are you wasting money on paper and postage when most people want to be contacted by email. I am still awaiting further information as to what my council tax is and what rebate I will get now that my band has changed.*
- *The overall process took more effort than it should or could have. The inability to make a known change forward made a lot of extra work and delay in moving things on. This was then further amplified by the way the change was signalled to other relevant parties causing yet further effort and hassle. The delay between action by the VJB to the change appearing on the SAA website cost us bin collection and hassle with ending the commercial water supply.*
- *I telephoned and emailed several times to register for Council Tax having moved from another area, the staff and the local office were always polite and responsive to enquiries but ultimately the response required was via valuations teams which took approx. 5 months. Sorted now though.*
- *I was trying to pay rates but couldn't because I couldn't get this reference number. I and you could have saved a lot of time if that information was included in the correspondence.*
- *The way Council Tax bands are assessed dearly needs reformed. To assess the bands based on house values 32 years ago is archaic and flawed. The cynic in me would conclude that the system remains this way as it is confusing and inaccessible to the layman. In addition the back-dating*

*of council tax band increase by almost a year without warning and no flexibility is financially crippling.*

- *We bought a new build and I thought the problem was 'user error' i.e. me. The ladies I dealt with were both friendly and happy to help. Got registered for bins, council tax and votes. Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming. Once in touch with Angus everything went smoothly and quickly. Thank you.*
- *The lady was very helpful with my query.*
- *Extremely friendly response on the phone. The process of valuation was explained clearly. Only drawback was being I was told it was on the list for next week and it was almost two months until I heard my banding. It didn't matter though.*
- *Applied for Council Tax after purchasing a new house after submitting details online & receiving an acknowledgement I heard nothing. Due to a friend working for the council I was updated (that the fact it was a new build was delay).*

## Conclusions

For 2022-23 the total number of questionnaires issued and returned is higher but the return rate has remained consistent with last year (and again significantly lower than the norm prior to the pandemic). The response rate of 14.7% is marginally above the 12.7% of last year but significantly lower than the pre-pandemic norm of just over 20%.

The statement made last year bears repeating – that 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 30 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 8 with Non-Domestic Rates, 20 relate to Electoral Registration and 15 cover more than one category. The relatively low return for non-domestic rating may reflect the fact that the bulk of work in this field last year was geared towards the 2023 revaluation which, by its nature reduces interaction with the public.

The responses at Section 7F once again demonstrate a very high level of satisfaction with our service with 95% of responses being either “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied”. This is consistent with the returns of last year and maintains the long term high levels of customer satisfaction. Ongoing changes in work patterns and ongoing changes in delivery arising from changes to legislation have not had an observable negative effect on the quality of service delivery.

The majority of the comments recorded above are positive and reflect well on staff and the service they provide. 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.

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 7 recorded complaints. All were all dealt with to a satisfactory conclusion.

## 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 2022-23 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 is 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. Based on the returns there is no reason to believe that our service provision is disadvantageous to any group identified as having protected characteristics.

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.

The management team have considered the form and medium by which returns are made to inform this report and it is felt that the current method of issuing forms by mail does not maximise the rate of return. Whilst there is no doubt that the high levels of satisfaction recorded in this report reflect a good quality service, it may be that the effort people must go to in order to make the return may mean that it tends toward members of the public who are relatively highly motivated by either very good or, conversely, very poor service being more likely to return. Accordingly the intention is to move to a primarily on-line return going forward in an effort to maximise return rates.

Similarly the length of the current form is also thought to be a reason for low return and it is the intention for 2023-2024 to shorten the questionnaire to focus on broader themes and modes of service delivery. If there are shortcomings in any of these modes of delivery this can be further investigated going forward.

## 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 66 of those returned. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were 98% white (ethnic group).

The gender divide was 40:25 (62%:38%) female/male with one return not specified.

The age group distribution is as follows:

Age Range	Returns	%
25-34	4	6%
35-44	4	6%
45-54	7	11%
55-64	16	24%
65-74	24	36%
75+	11	17%

Seven responses stated that they consider themselves to have a disability.

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