

TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



**Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires
By**

**Tayside Valuation Joint Board
Year 2023-2024**

Contents

Contents	2
Introduction	3
Results of Questionnaires Returned	4
Comments from Customer Questionnaires	5
Conclusions	8
Recommendations	9
Equalities Monitoring	10

Introduction

1 GENERAL

This is the eighteenth 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 were previously issued by mail to a random sample of customers on a regular basis over a period of one year i.e. July 2022 – June 2023.

A decision was made to alter this method during 2023 and for this report the method of ingathering data has moved to online. The decision to move to online was made with a view to reducing the costs of issuing forms which were seeing a return rate of less than 15%, to simplifying the process for service users and, by promoting the link in all staff external email, attempting to maximise the coverage and increase return volumes. This intention was addressed in last year's report. The web address for the customer questionnaire is <https://www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk/have-your-say/>

Furthermore, the previously long questionnaire was shortened from twenty-three questions to five simple questions aimed at assessing customer satisfaction with main metrics of service delivery:

- Ease of making contact
- Speed of Response
- Helpfulness of Staff involved
- Perceived competence and professionalism of staff involved

And a fifth question as to the overall satisfaction with the service provided, along with the space to provide comments and written feedback.

A paper version is available for issue to those who wish to complete a customer questionnaire in this way and is included as an appendix to this report.

Unlike previous years it is impossible to determine a return rate on questionnaires issued as the link is attached to all outgoing emails, and no 'return rate' can be calculated. However, the number of returns received, at 78, is only marginally higher than last year. Insofar as the goal of the move to online was to increase uptake it has had limited success but the other goals – simplifying the process and reducing costs are considered to have been met.

Results of Questionnaires Returned

Total Returns	78		
Division		Service	
East	44	Council Tax	20
West	34	Rating	30
		Electoral	28

Service Metric	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Ease	59	11	3	2	3
Speed	63	10	3	1	1
Helpfulness	67	3	3	4	1
Competence	61	7	6	2	2
Overall	61	8	5	3	1

Expressed as percentages these returns are distributed as follows:

Service Metric	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Ease	75.6%	14.1%	3.8%	2.6%	3.8%
Speed	80.8%	12.8%	3.8%	1.3%	1.3%
Helpfulness	85.9%	3.8%	3.8%	5.1%	1.3%
Competence	78.2%	9.0%	7.7%	2.6%	2.6%
Overall	78.2%	10.3%	6.4%	3.8%	1.3%

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 would be 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.

Additionally, comments are received directly by email. These too are set out below.

LIST OF COMMENTS

The online/email facility is first rate. Congratulations to everyone involved in making it happen.

XX was v helpful . I found the whole process difficult as am technically challenged but he was very nice and kind

I always find a helpful person at the Perth end.

Pathetic service, it is likely that you have just not gotten through the mountain of letters from people applying for postal votes.

I appreciated the very prompt, helpful and courteous reply from XX even though my query was after office hours

I am 85 years old and have been voting for 64 years, but I have never experienced such a mixed up set of rules as I have this year. First the form which I completed to have a postal vote (I have been using this method for a few years now) The form required a signature - don't you realise that people are using IPHones and IPads to complete these forms? I have received several mailings and a phone call from your office re. this. What a waste of money.

I was disappointed with the answer. We have lived in France for over 20 years and we're unable to vote last time because of the 15 year rule. So now we have re-registered, but only to find that postal votes are being sent out too late for us to vote.

I wasn't really aware of the tvjb, normally my interactions with the council or government is very minimal, I do really appreciate the information that's been sent from the last email as it gives more information on who can vote and at what ages :)

Firstly, contacted council tax office, the person I spoke too was very polite and extremely helpful (above and beyond) in my view, then got exactly the same from the person at the electoral registration office, so refreshing to get that sort of response from people who are under a fair amount of pressure, and often get the brunt of people's anger.

Well done.

*Excellent service. Quick responses.
I'm a very happy customer.*

Thank you.

*XX was knowledgeable and replied quickly. Easy to deal with and 'human'!
Thanks*

I was completing the self catering annual return as we now have to do, for each of my 3 properties. The form was straightforward, and material easily accessed from Supercontrol. Everything worked. Good to get acknowledgement back speedily.

I dealt with XX on my new build and I found her manner and tone was very professional. She was always prompt in answering my questions. She must be regarded highly as an asset to the assessor's office.

Everyone made my visit easy and worthwhile. I managed to get my paperwork completed instantly!

I received a letter initially to contact XX who I found extremely helpful and knowledgeable on the subject. It was a pleasure to deal with her.

Very swift response, clearly communicated . Many thanks

I really feel no one listened to me on the phone. Everyone just seems to want you on a website. I queried my council tax banding when I moved into my property, no one helped me. Now I still feel not one person cares.

XX was absolutely fantastic. She sorted and talked me through what seemed like a minefield with our non domestic rates bills. It was a very fast response and she came totally prepared with everything I needed. Thank you for an amazing service

XX was punctual and respectful of my property. Professional review and communication. Easy to talk to. Did everything she said she would do. Best council interaction I have had since returning to Perth.

Excellent service, prompt and knowledgable. Thank you XX in particular.

This experience was simpler and more pleasant than expected, not something I experience every day, so I was very happy with my contact with the Board.

I also had contact with staff by phone. All communication was really helpful, knowledgeable and friendly. They went above and beyond of what was required of them, which enabled me to resolve the problem I had with the council. Thank you.

I was impressed to be able to speak to a person straight away. They then came back to me with the relevant information in the timescales they said they would. This was also followed up with timely paperwork through the post. Excellent service. Thank you.

We were dealing with XX who responded very quickly to our query. I found her very easy to work with. We did an onsite visit of the currently derelict building and assessment was agreed.

XX was particularly very polite and helpful via email

XX was very helpful, not just in dealing with my initial inquiry but also giving advice about the best course of action going forwards which she then actioned very quickly

Your website had failed to complete a process I was doing. I phoned the given phone number and couldn't have got better service. Exceptional. Thank you.

Very quick and efficient service from both areas. Helpful and knowledgeable

Absolutely no issues at all with the process

The website was very difficult to use. Some staff at office very helpful others not. Telephone staff very helpful.

All good so far. Suggest you need to give more time, like after payment (for Council Tax) have been taken. Plus nothing much from Electoral Registration other than an acknowledgment

Interaction with XX was excellent - very knowledgeable and efficient

Very difficult to suggest anything when everything went so well.

Contact was good and quick but I am deaf - need interpreter or Advocacy service. or sign video Interpreter BSL contact Scotland

I felt the whole process was very good

Thank you very much - really efficient to both register me to vote and now the proxy. I appreciate the timely contact.

Many thanks for your prompt and helpful reply.

Oh thank you so so much that puts our minds at rest we've had so much to deal with after my late father passed away. Thank you so so much again for all your help and support.

Thank you for replying so quickly, especially on a Saturday. This is really appreciated. We have just applied to vote by proxy as we will both be working overseas on the day of the election. Many thanks once again for your help.

Thank you very much for your prompt, civil and helpful service In the new world of AI (an electronic form of Snakes and Ladders) I often revert in exasperation to telephone contact with a person, but it's time consuming and many organisations have retreated behind an electronic, phone proof wall. My correspondence with you has been a life enhancing experience.

Thanks to XX for his help, assistance and professionalism.

I have now submitted my information online. I cannot thank you enough for giving me a call and bringing this to my attention.

Good afternoon XX Thank you very much for checking

Many thanks for your ongoing assistance and guidance in this process. Your professionalism is greatly valued.

Conclusions

For 2023-24 the total number of questionnaires returned is, as mentioned above, comparable to previous years.

On this occasion 20 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 30 with Non-Domestic Rates, 28 relate to Electoral Registration. Compared to last year this represents a shift to a higher return in respect of non-domestic rates. This can be assumed to reflect the higher degree of public engagement with ratepayers as a result of the revaluation coming into force just before the period covered by this report.

The results of the survey do not show any significant differences in the levels of satisfaction reported and there is therefore no reason to believe that any one service of the three service lines is performing either better or worse than any other.

The responses continue to show high levels of customer satisfaction and the fifth question, summarising overall customer satisfaction shows a positive return in 88.5% of responses. This is consistent with previous years and, over a period of significant legislative change around both non domestic rating and electoral registration, maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction reflects well on those providing the services.

The service metric with the highest positive response was speed of response with 93.6% reporting either very good or good.

Reflecting the results of the survey, 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 where 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.

Having changed the way in which responses are gathered, a higher level of return remains a goal and staff will be regularly reminded to draw the link to the questionnaire to the attention of customers. The possibility of altering footers to increase prominence will also be considered.

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.

The levels of satisfaction expressed do not differ appreciably according to the gender of the respondent; and the levels of satisfaction measured by those respondents identifying themselves as having a disability are also similar to the broader totals and we can be satisfied that disability has no bearing on the level of service delivered.

Ethnic diversity within the survey returns is not statistically significant and no conclusions can be drawn as to any variance in service delivery measured by ethnic groups. However, the lack of diversity among those making returns is something which management will seek to address going forward and staff will be asked to encourage return from ethnic minority groups to allow service delivery across different groups to be properly assessed.

Management will 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 move to online return is still new and management will continue to monitor progress and consider ways in which this can evolve 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.

Not all respondents gave this information and, in some cases, only partial responses were given. The responses indicated that those returning the forms were all from white ethnic groups, identifying variously as British, Scottish, Irish or East European.

The gender divide was 34:38 (43%:57%) female/male with six returns not specified.

The age group distribution is as follows:

Age Range	Returns	%
Under 25	1	1.3%
25-34	2	2.6%
35-44	6	7.7%
45-54	8	10.3%
55-64	23	29.5%
65-74	18	23.1%
75+	18	23.1%
No response	2	2.6%

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

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