

TAYSIDE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



**Report on Issue of Customer Questionnaires
By**

**Tayside Valuation Joint Board
Year 2024-2025**

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Introduction

This is the nineteenth consecutive year in which users of our services have been invited to provide feedback on their experience. The annual distribution of customer satisfaction questionnaires reflects the Joint Board's ongoing commitment to Best Value and to maintaining a strong focus on the customer experience.

Following the 2023 decision to transition to online data collection, this method has continued to be used. It remains effective in achieving its intended goals of reducing costs and simplifying the process for service users. The web address for the customer questionnaire is <https://www.tayside-vjb.gov.uk/have-your-say/>

The questionnaire remains in the same short-form, focused format, designed to assess customer satisfaction across key service delivery metrics:

- Ease of making contact
- Speed of response
- Helpfulness of staff
- Perceived competence and professionalism of staff

These are followed by a fifth question measuring overall satisfaction with the service provided, along with space for additional comments and written feedback.

A total of 55 responses were received this year, representing a decrease compared to the previous year. While the move to an online format has not yet achieved the goal of increasing response rates, it has successfully met the objectives of simplifying the process and reducing associated costs.

Results of Questionnaires Returned

Total Returns	55		
Division		Service	
East	27	Council Tax	13
West	28	Rating	25
		Electoral	10
		Other	7

Service Metric	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Ease	45	8	2	0	0
Speed	45	5	5	0	0
Helpfulness	47	5	3	0	0
Competence	46	6	3	0	0
Overall	47	6	2	0	0

Expressed as percentages these returns are distributed as follows:

Service Metric	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Ease	81.8%	14.5%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Speed	81.8%	9.1%	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Helpfulness	85.5%	9.1%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Competence	83.6%	10.9%	5.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Overall	85.5%	10.9%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%

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.

All 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 then 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. Staff are named in comments more frequently now than in the past, and this assumed to be the result of the online submission meaning the response is more closely linked in time to the service delivered than under the old postal method of data collection.

LIST OF COMMENTS

- My query was dealt with extremely quickly and efficiently and resolved equally promptly. Could not ask for more.
- Spoke to XXX about the changes planned to my business style & the possible building alterations as a result and; was interested to find out how the rates valuations might be calculated as a consequence XXX was able to answer all my questions & showed me, also, where the information could be found. It was a delight to be able to speak to someone who was obviously very knowledgeable & experienced in the matter.
- XXX has been brilliant. Accurate and very clear responses She went above and beyond by being thorough in updating the records for our new property and not just completing the specific action requested. Not only does that mean it has saved us the time and hassle, but also avoided us contacting your office again in future to make the amendments we had overlooked. Thank you XXX.
- I was connected with XXX. Having just moved to Aberfeldy from the US, I found the process of signing up for water, sewer and trash to be completely different from the US and thus was confused about the council tax in the UK. XXX was absolutely wonderful to work with! I can't begin to express my appreciation for her competence, efficiency, kindness and patience. I felt like she genuinely cared about my situation. I feel like XXX personally gave us a very warm welcome to Aberfeldy!!
- Very quick and impressive turnaround from initial correspondence with your office, to the site survey conducted by XXX. Very grateful for all parties in managing to reduce our Council Tax liability.
- I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the service I received today from your XXX. He was very helpful with my enquiry and provided very practical advice. Thank you so much for your assistance.
- I don't usually make any comment but I was very pleased with the quick response about my council tax proposal and the easy to understand explanation of the band.
- I spoke to XXX, who was extremely helpful and personable, I feel confident that my problem is resolved.
- XXX and XXX are fantastic and very efficient with any dealings we have had with them.
- XXX contacted us with a timely reminder to take care of our business rates. This avoided us un-necessary fees. Thanks.
- So lovely to deal with a real person rather than a "bot". XXX was so timely and responsive. Thankyou
- The lady I spoke to was XXX, she was exceptionally helpful with a very helpful manner. Her knowledge was first class and she made my experience a whole lot easier. Form had no relevance to our rental properties, and was very difficult to understand, but after I spoke to her I had no problems. Fab service.

- Had a receipt email at the start of the process and nothing further after that. Chased query up after three months of hearing nothing with a very quick response thereafter. Maybe some form of keeping people updated on progress would be good.
- XXX was very good, professional and knowledgeable. A friendly service and I left feeling confident the problem had been resolved.
- No suggestions for improvement...how can you improve on perfection!!!!???? The speed of response was amazing and I have to specifically mention XXX, who is a superstar. She provided all the information that I required in a very timely manner. If you have "an employee of the month award", XXX gets my vote.
- XXX was EXCEPTIONALLY BRILLIANT in helping and sorting out the issue we had. PS - re Equalities Monitoring, below:
why have a separate box for 'Scottish' and 'British' - and no English or Welsh...? Surely Scottish either comes under 'British', or, if Scottish is to be considered a separate 'Ethnic Group' (!?) then there should be no 'British' and all three countries of Great Britain [England, Scotland and Wales] should be listed separately ('Irish' is NA to this point as they are part of either the United Kingdom [NI] or British Isles [Republic of Ireland], of course.)
- I thought both the original person who answered the phone and XXX who called me back after I left a message were very professional, caring and helpful. I was so happy that they resolved my problem within hours of me emailing the details requested. Very efficient.
- I contacted the Valuation Board by email on behalf of a friend, I received a very prompt reply from a lovely lady XXX, she was wonderful, efficient, understanding and extremely helpful you can not ask for better, you are lucky to have someone like that working for you, she is a credit to you and the Valuation Board
- The individual, XXX, that I spoke to was extremely helpful in providing me with the context to explain why decisions were taken for the properties on which I was querying the rateable value. This enabled me to withdraw my proposal to challenge these values and I appreciated XXX taking the time to explain all this to me in a very measured way
- I'm still not happy about my banding and will reply direct with some worries that I have regarding payment of my Council Tax.
- XXX gave a really detailed explanation and answered my questions. Also replied within an hour or two. Really good.
- PKC dealt with my query quickly and efficiently, I spoke to XX yesterday and he was extremely helpful, explained everything to me and was very patient and thorough. Thanks for your great customer service.
- Family mixup not understanding what they were doing and entering the wrong thing
- Thank you for the very prompt response.
- XXX has been exceptionally helpful in communicating and progressing my application for business rates.
- I did speak to XXX on the phone and through email she is first rate couldn't be any better. Thank you for all the help and support XXX.
- I sent a email and within 2 days had a reply from XXX who was extremely helpful and gave me all the answers i requested, thank you for a great service

Conclusions

For 2024-25 the total number of questionnaires returned is, as mentioned above, down a little on the previous year but still sufficient to provide a relevant overview of how the service is received, and perceived, by the public.

On this occasion 13 of the forms returned are connected with Council Tax, 25 with Non-Domestic Rates, 10 relate to Electoral Registration and 7 relate to "Other". Returns continue to be weighted to non-domestic, where the shortened revaluation cycle and the proposal process may involve higher levels of public engagement.

The results of the survey reveal higher levels of satisfaction with service provision at Non-Domestic Rating and Electoral than at Council Tax. While the reasons for this difference are not immediately evident, the findings will be reviewed with staff responsible for maintaining the Council Tax List and to increase the number returns on that service line for 2025-2026.

Overall, responses continue to reflect high levels of customer satisfaction. Notably, the final question, measuring overall satisfaction, received a positive response from 85.5% of participants. This is consistent with previous years. As the service continues to adapt to significant reforms in both Non-Domestic Rating and Electoral Registration, maintaining strong satisfaction levels continues to reflect well on staff responsible for delivery.

Levels of satisfaction expressed as "very good" across the four measured metrics of ease of contact; speed of response; helpfulness of staff and perceived competence and professionalism of staff, was reasonably consistent, varying from 81.8% to 85.5%. The speed of response metric had the highest levels expressed as fair or lower at 9.1%. It is encouraging to note that none of the responses felt their interactions was poor or very poor on any of the metrics.

The majority of the comments submitted are positive and reflect well on staff and the service they provide. Comments are monitored on an ongoing basis to identify any particular issues that need addressed immediately.

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 Engagement and Reporting

Staff should continue to be made aware of the report's existence and its regular updates, and encouraged to read it and discuss key findings and lessons with their managers. The report should also remain publicly accessible by being published on the Board's website, ensuring transparency for all stakeholders.

Encouraging Participation

The drop in the level of returns highlights the need for staff to actively promote engagement. Staff will be encouraged to bring the questionnaire to customers' attention and highlight the link where appropriate. Footer text has been amended to increase awareness, and further strategies to drive uptake will continue to be explored.

Equalities Monitoring

The customer questionnaire includes supplementary questions to identify whether respondents fall within any of the protected characteristic groups defined under the Equalities Act 2010. This allows us to assess how effectively we meet the needs of all sections of the community.

Based on the responses received, there is no indication that service delivery is disadvantageous to any group with protected characteristics. Satisfaction levels do not differ significantly by the stated sex of the respondent. Given the sample size and sensitivity to small variations, this is not currently considered a concern, though it will continue to be monitored.

Respondents identifying as having a disability expressed satisfaction levels consistent with the overall totals, with all indicating their overall perception of the service was good or very good. This suggests that disability does not negatively impact the quality of service received.

Ethnic diversity among survey respondents was limited, though broadly reflective of the demographic profile of Tayside. Among those identifying as from non-White British or Scottish backgrounds, satisfaction levels were similar or slightly higher than the overall average. Accordingly, there is no evidence to suggest service delivery differs according to ethnic background.

Ongoing Commitment to Service Quality

Management will continue to emphasise to staff the importance of excellent customer service and the key role each staff member plays in delivering a high-quality service.

Digital Engagement

The transition to online returns is still relatively new. Management will continue to monitor its progress and consider further developments to enhance accessibility and engagement.

Equalities Monitoring

As noted above, the customer questionnaire was supplemented with additional questions to determine whether respondents identified with any of the protected characteristic groups defined under the Equalities Act 2010.

Not all respondents provided this information, and in some cases, only partial responses were given. Responses were received from Scottish, British, Pakistani, and "Other" (unspecified) as follows:

Ethnicity	Returns	%
Scottish	32	58.2%
British	16	29.1%
East Europe	0	0%
Black	0	0%
Asian	0	0%
Irish	0	0%
Pakistani	1	1.8%
Other	6	10.9%
Blank	0	0%

The gender split was evenly divided, with 24 respondents identifying as male and 24 as female. Seven respondents chose not to specify their gender.

The age group distribution is as follows:

Age Range	Returns	%
Under 25	0	0%
25-34	1	1.8%
35-44	13	23.6%
45-54	11	20%
55-64	6	10.9%
65-74	16	29.1%
75+	7	12.7%
No response	1	1.8%

Five respondents indicated that they consider themselves to have a disability.

This marks the ninth consecutive year in which equalities information has been gathered from our customers. To date, no specific concerns or issues relating to any of the protected characteristics have been identified.