



People, Performance and Development Committee
5 April 2016

Improving the Resident Experience: Telephone and Voicemail Policy Update

Purpose of the report:

Members of PPDC requested an update on what has happened since the new telephone and voicemail policy was approved by the Committee on 29 September 2015.

This report details what work has been done to implement and promote the new telephone and voicemail policy. The report also describes how this work aligns with the wider programme of work to promote a customer focused culture.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee continues to support the promotion of the new telephone and voicemail policy and the wider programme of work to promote a customer focused culture.

Introduction:

1. The Council is committed to delivering excellent customer service as defined by the organisation's Customer Promise (Annex A). To support this, PPDC introduced a new telephone and voicemail policy for officers on 29 September 2015.

Implementation and raising awareness

2. The new telephone and voicemail policy has now been implemented and the following actions have been undertaken to help raise awareness of it and the Customer Promise.

Senior Leadership

3. Senior managers have been briefed through the Extended Leadership Team (ELT) and the Customer Network (the Customer Network

comprises senior representatives from across the Council with a responsibility for improving customer service).

4. Five 'Leading with Confidence' sessions, with a focus on the Customer Promise, have taken place between April 2015 and February 2016. These were attended by 240 managers. A further programme of events for managers is to be planned.

Communications

5. A new campaign has been launched on the staff intranet (S-Net) to promote a customer focused culture. This has included a focus on the new telephone and voicemail policy. The banner and landing page which offers straightforward guidance for officers is at Annex B.

Induction and training

6. Mandatory customer service training reflecting the principles of Our Customer Promise has been developed. Two courses are currently being rolled out: an introductory course for all staff (Excellent Customer Service - Our Promise) and an advanced course for managers (Customer Service for Managers).
7. The Customer Promise and the telephone and voicemail policy are now promoted on the Customer Services stand at the Surrey Marketplace breakout session during induction training.
8. A new Customer Promise video focussing on inspirational examples of outstanding customer service is being developed. It will be used in training and other customer service and leadership events.

Customer Service Excellence

9. Services undergoing Customer Service Excellence accreditation are looking at individual service standards with regard to the Customer Promise and the telephone and voicemail policy.

Measuring Success

10. To monitor compliance with the new telephone and voicemail policy, a programme of mystery shopping will be undertaken across all services by the Customer Service Improvement team.

Conclusions:

11. To improve resident experience, the Customer Promise commits the Council to ensuring that services are responsive and accessible. The telephone and voicemail policy supports this commitment and its implementation is progressing as part of a wider customer service approach within the Council.

Financial and value for money implications

- 12. Delivering excellent resident experience both improves customer satisfaction and increases efficiency. There is no additional cost for this work.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 13. Ensuring services are accessible, responsive and easy to use benefits all of the Council’s customers.

Risk Management Implications

- 14. Failure to provide accessible and responsive services will have a detrimental effect on resident experience and will damage the Council’s reputation.

Next steps:

- 17. To continue to endorse the telephone and voicemail policy within the wider context of work to promote a customer culture within the Council.
 - 18. To undertake mystery shopping of telephone and voicemail practices across the Council and to report back at a future date.
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Report contact: Mark Irons, Head of Customer Services

Contact details: mark.irons@surreycc.gov.uk

Sources/background papers:

- A. Our Customer Promise
- B. S-net banner and landing page
- C. Original Telephone and Voicemail Policy Report

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