

REPORT TO: Policy and Performance Review Committee
MEETING DATE: 25 September 2012
BY: Executive Director (Support Service)
SUBJECT: Contact Centre Performance – 1.10.11 – 30.6.12

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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of the Report is to advise the Committee on the following matters which the Committee has requested:
- Why has the Contact Centre call handling performance reduced during the quarter 1 April 2012 – 30 June 2012?
 - What has been the effect of handling Social work calls on the performance of the Contact centre?

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to note the situation with regard to the call handling performance of the Contact Centre
- 2.2 The Committee is asked to note the handling of Social Work calls on the performance of the Contact Centre.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Contact Centre comprises of 4 separate teams:
- the Contact team where the staff answer all calls related to property maintenance, environment (roads, waste services, landscape and countryside services), public sector housing enquiries, payments and switchboard
 - the Community Access team where the staff answer calls related to adult and children wellbeing
 - the Community Response team where the staff provide: the 24/7/365 call service for community alarm/telecare customers for East and Midlothian residents; the out of hours emergency call service for both Council areas; the call service for antisocial behaviour and cctv monitoring

- the Systems and Development team which provides the IT and development support to the Customer Services team as a whole.
- 3.2 Each team has dedicated staffing establishment to it.
 - 3.3 The Contact Team has a current establishment of 11.32.FTE which comprises 1 Supervisor and 10.32 FTE.staff. The establishment has been increased at the end of August by 2 FTE in order to answer Council Tax calls from January 2013. These posts are currently being advertised. However, prior to last month, there had been no increase in establishment of the Contact Team for the past 3 years. Approximately 4.5 FTE staff hours were employed to deal with property maintenance calls when the Contact Team was originally established in 2005.
 - 3.4 The Community Access Team has a current establishment of 7 FTE which comprises of 1 Supervisor and 6 FTE staff. The Team was established in August 2010 with 1 Supervisor and 4 FTE staff. The establishment was increased by 2 FTE staff at the end of last year to take on Childrens SW calls from May 2012 and reablement work from June 2012.
 - 3.5 As can be seen in Appendix 1, over the past 2 years, the total calls coming into the **Contact team** for the first quarter of the year has **increased by 9.31%** and the **no. of answered calls has increased by 5%**.
 - 3.6 The priority in staffing the contact Centre as a whole is that the Community Response Service is given the highest priority followed by the Community Access team and then the Contact team.
 - 3.7 As is seen from the figures, there are low abandonment rates for calls for the CommunityAaccess team and that will be because we have experienced staff now working in this service and the staff team was fully staffed. However, we do have two staff who have just left in the past month and these posts will be filled shortly.
 - 3.8 The largest amount of calls coming into the Contact Centre for any service is property maintenance and is generally related to council house repairs. The demand on property maintenance calls has increased in the past two years by **over 24%**. Some of this increase will be related to the severe rain in June which resulted in many calls about water coming in through roofs and flooding issues. However, it remains the case that there are a significant amount of **repeat calls** related to property repairs not carried out which is having a significant effect on the performance of the Customer Services team as a whole. Last year, in the report to the PPRC in September 2011, it was reported that approximately **31%** of all property maintenance calls were about existing repairs. For the first quarter of this financial year, approximately **34%** of all property maintenance calls are about existing repairs and so the proportion of repeat calls is increasing.

- 3.9 The Contact Centre is not staffed to support the increasing no. of property maintenance calls and it is this service which is having a detrimental effect on the call handling performance of the Contact Centre. It is also having an effect on the Customer Feedback team where property maintenance issues continue to be the highest type of all Council complaints and this figure is not reducing. This is identified in a separate Customer Feedback report.
- 3.10 There are to be changes in how appointments are made to carry out council house repairs and these changes are due to be implemented at the end of November 2012. It is hoped that this will reduce the need for repeat calls.
- 3.11 There has also been an increase in Environment calls for this quarter with an increased abandonment rate but this will be generally due to the severe rainfall in June 2012.
- 3.12 In October 2012, the Contact Centre will be implementing a new call management system. This will allow the flexibility to make better use of our contact team staffing in terms of answering calls on the switchboard and to have an automated switchboard service which should result in a reduction in abandoned calls.
- 3.13 However, if the property maintenance service processes are improved and there is a reduction of avoidable contact with repeat calls related to existing property maintenance requests, the Contact team staffing establishment should be appropriate.
- 3.14 We are also looking at drawing up a Channel Shift strategy to put more information and services through the Council website in order to reduce the number of calls being made to the Contact Centre.
- 3.15 The introduction of social work calls to the Contact Centre has been a positive development for social work clients and the social work service as a whole. Currently the staffing establishment within the Community Access team is sufficient to meet call demands. However, there has been a significant increase in calls in the past year and in particular, we have seen an increase in social work calls and referrals for both adult and children's wellbeing in recent months and we will need to monitor this situation closely.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There is no equalities impact assessment required as there is no change to the current service.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial - None
- 6.2 Personnel - None
- 6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Lines of Enquiry – Quarter 3, Contact Centre Calls - Policy and Performance Review Committee – 26 April 2011
- 7.2 Contact Centre Performance – 1.10.10 – 30.6.11

AUTHOR'S NAME	Eileen Morrison
DESIGNATION	Customer Services Manager
CONTACT INFO	Ext. 7211
DATE	13 September 2011

Appendix 1

Quarter 1 April to June

No. of presented calls to Contact Centre

Team	Service	2010	2011	2012	% difference since 2010
Contact	Environment	3029	3887	3571	+17.89
Contact	Property repairs	10282	11028	12780	+24.29
Contact	Payments	3398	3275	3594	+5.77
Contact	Switchboard	40123	43608	42178	+5.12
Contact	Total Calls	56832	61798	62123	+9.31
Community Access	Adult Wellbeing		5175	5984	+15.6
Community Access	Childrens Wellbeing			1612	
Community Access	Total Calls		5175	7596	+46.8

Quarter 1 April to June

No. of answered calls to Contact Centre

Team	Service	2010	2011	2012	% difference since 2010
Contact	Environment	2777	3702	3251	+17.07
Contact	Property repairs	9459	10289	11260	+19.04
Contact	Payments	2978	3079	3414	+14.64
Contact	Private sector housing			333	
Contact	Switchboard	34602	35871	34053	-1.59%
Contact	Total Calls	49816	52941	52311	+5%
Community Access	Adult Wellbeing		4413	5598	+26.85
Community Access	Childrens Wellbeing			1518	
	Total Calls		4413	7116	+61.25

Quarter 1 April to June

% calls abandoned within the Contact Centre

Team	Service	2010	2011	2012
Contact	Environment	8.32	4.76	8.96
Contact	Property repairs	8.00	6.70	11.89
Contact	Payments	12.36	5.98	5.01
Contact	Switchboard	13.76	17.74	19.26
Contact	Total Calls	10.61	8.80	11.28
Community Access	Adult Wellbeing		14.72	6.45
Community Access	Childrens Wellbeing			5.83
Community Access	Total Calls		14.72	6.14