

Agenda Item 8

Service Delivery/Performance Committee

21 October 2009

Systems Thinking



Preventable demand in the Customer Service Centre

Summary

This report explains volume levels of customer contact with the Customer Service Centre (CSC) over a comparable period of one month following each roll out of the refuse and recycling scheme in phases I and II. The data is split into value and preventable demand. Value demand is what we are here to do ('Can you get rid of rats in my garden', 'I've lost my dog', 'I've seen an abandoned car') and preventable demand is as a result of us failing to do something ('You've missed my bin') or getting something wrong ('I can't understand the letter you've sent me'). The report also includes customer service performance levels.

Recommendation

Members consider the work we are doing to reduce preventable demand in our services.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

One of the critical measures we are using to understand what a service is like from a customer point of view is the split between value and preventable demand.

Individual services, such as Planning and Benefits, who have been reviewed are reporting preventable demand already to members in their Measures Reports. This is the first time we have captured the information corporately using the Customer Service Centre data.

b) Alternative Options

Members can consider the frequency with which they receive this data, but I wouldn't recommend not seeing it, given that it can help improve our services greatly.

c) Risk Considerations

If we don't pay attention to preventable demand, we risk continuing to provide services which don't meet our customers' needs.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

This report helps members understand one of the ways we are trying to achieve our Corporate Priority "Excellent service for our customers".

e) Date for Review of Decision

Quarterly with performance information.

Main Body of the Report

1. Following the introduction of Systems Thinking within EDDC it was decided that all contacts to the Customer Service Centre should be tagged as 'Preventable' or 'Value' demand. Also, in 2008 the National Indicator (NI) 14 – Reducing Avoidable (or Preventable) in our

terms) Contact was introduced, which basically asks all councils for this same data... This work has enabled reports to be generated which show where and when preventable contact has taken place. For the purpose of this report we have reviewed a comparable period of one month following the roll out of phases I and II of the refuse and re-cycling scheme. Both periods are based on a 5 week month and similar number of residences within the district would have been affected.

2. If we look at Appendix A we see the call volumes, cases (enquiries which generate an action) recorded on Lagan (the Customer Relationship Management-CRM system) and total preventable demand.
3. During the period reviewed (September 2008) a total of 22,890 calls were received by the CSC, 4275 of these were recorded on the Lagan system. Of these recorded contacts 54% were tagged as preventable. 51% of this preventable contact came about as a result of the promotion and change in collection days before Phase 1 of the new recycling scheme.
4. During the period of phase II roll out (July 09) the amount of calls received in the CSC was 24,406, but only 2963 cases were recorded on Lagan. This shows that even though the amount of calls increased, the number which required action fell dramatically compared to the same period in phase I. We believe this is because we received many calls from our elderly residents asking for:
 - confirmation of the day of collection already given in the information leaflet
 - reassurance that they had understood what they had read, for example, what they should place in each receptacle.
5. The table in this paragraph indicates how preventable demand during the two comparable periods has decreased. This is especially evident when we look at the figures for refuse and re-cycling.

	Comparable Phase I & II period	
	September 2008	July 2009
Total calls	22,890	24,406
Total Cases recorded	4275 (19% of all calls)	2963 (12% of all calls)
Total Preventable Contacts	230814 (54% of all cases recorded)	1409 (47% of all cases recorded)
Total Preventable Refuse and Recycling contacts	2181 (51% of all cases recorded)	1268 (38% of all cases recorded)

6. In between the two comparable periods a number of actions were taken to improve service delivery and also communication to our residents. These actions will continue and also be reviewed as each phase is introduced.
 - The lagan reporting system was changed to highlight those properties whose recycling and refuse bins had been missed on 3 occasions or more in the last 6 months. See appendix E. As a result a process was introduced to allow the refuse and re-cycling supervisors to monitor these properties to ensure that collection had taken place.
 - Working groups were established to review leaflets advertising the new scheme, changes were made to enhance the literature and make it easier to understand.
 - Regular meetings with SITA were held and problems were identified and solutions sought.
7. Important points to remember are:
 - The total calls in Appendix A include switchboard enquiries some of which are street scene and bin calls and also other service areas within the CSC

- A dedicated 'bin' telephone number has been introduced. This number was then advertised on literature relating to the refuse and re-cycling scheme. This enables us to allocate staff to purely handle these enquiries only.
 - Grade of service (GOS) is the number of calls answered within a 20 second target (7 rings). This is a Key Performance Indicator that has been agreed locally in Devon and is used as for benchmarking purposes with other councils. Appendix A indicates that GOS in July 09 far exceeds that of September 08. This was a result of the knowledge base gained from the experiences of phase I, more understandable literature of the refuse and recycling scheme and also the fact that in phase I we had the additional issue with the change of collection day for the whole district as well as supporting phase I of the roll out.
8. Overall, the level of service within the Customer Service Centre has improved over the comparable periods and now remains consistent. The service provided to residents by our Contractors has also improved significantly and is monitored on a monthly basis.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

With the reduction in preventable demand this leads to efficiencies which can in turn reduce costs

Background Papers

- Appendices
 - A - Overall Call Volumes and Grade Of Service
 - B – Preventable Contact September 08
 - C – Preventable Contact July 09
 - D – Call Volumes and Grade of Service on Street Scene and Dedicated bin lines
 - E - Summary of Persistent Missed Bins

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