

Customer Experience Strategy

Getting things right first time,
every time



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Our Vision

Getting things right first time, every time

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DRAFT - 22nd February 2019

Context

Why do we need a Customer Experience strategy?

Our customers include everyone who lives, works, visits or does business in Brighton & Hove; we all use council services such as street cleaning and lighting, parks and culture. This also includes those who actively interact with the council (for example, residents who live in council housing) as well as those the council has to interact with, such as where we have a duty of care.

We are committed to ensuring that all our customers, whatever their needs have a good experience when they interact with Brighton & Hove City Council.

The way we deliver customer service is core to providing public services efficiently and effectively. This is relevant to all staff, not just those whose role involves answering phone calls, or seeing customers face to face.

Whilst we strive to provide high quality services, there are currently varied levels of customer satisfaction with the range of services delivered by the council. We have created this strategy as a means to

- Ensure a shared understanding of what a good customer experience feels like
- Plan the actions needed to achieve good customer experience, learning from best practice both internally and externally.
- Embed a consistently good standard of service delivery with resilience and efficiency, in a fair and inclusive way.

Customer Experience Steering Group

The Customer Experience Steering Group consists of all key front line and support services across the council. The group has developed this strategy, taking account of the feedback we receive from customers and staff. The group will be responsible for implementing the strategy and monitoring its effectiveness through continuous engagement with staff and taking on board customer feedback gathered in a range of ways including through focus groups and other engagement activities.

Brighton & Hove is a satisfying place to live

Levels of satisfaction with the local area are higher in Brighton & Hove than nationally. In the most recent Local Government Association survey, 78% of residents at a national level are satisfied – well below the Brighton & Hove figure of 89%. User satisfaction with the services provided by Brighton & Hove City Council (55%) has decreased from 63% previously. Nationally satisfaction with councils has also fallen, dropping from 65% to 60%. The national comparator is the Local Government Association's Resident survey, carried out quarterly. This tells us that customers think Brighton & Hove is a great place to live, but that this is not reflected in improved customer satisfaction with the way that the council runs things.

Our key challenges and opportunities include:

Reducing council resources



The need for us to provide high quality customer service does not go away as our funding reduces. We need to develop more cost effective ways for our customers to contact us and encourage and support our customers to use them. We need to find ways to be clearer about what we can and can't do so that there is transparency and to better manage customer expectations.

Meeting rising customer expectations and increased demand



Customers expect to be able to access services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using the council's website and social media for relevant services. They expect flexible and more personalised services. Managing this demand in a way that makes the best use of limited resources is essential to continuing to improve the customer experience.

Welfare reform



We have been proactively analysing and managing the impact of changes to the welfare benefits system on our customers. We need to make sure that this strategy is firmly linked to our work of supporting vulnerable customers who could be affected by welfare reforms.

Digital exclusion



Some people don't have access to the internet at home, or have specific accessibility needs, and that may mean that they can't find our information and services online. We need to find ways to help these customers by providing equipment and support at venues across the city, as well as working in partnership with local digital inclusion charities.

Listening to our customers



We need to be able to capture customer comments and use them to improve services.

Community Collaboration



We need to work in partnership with residents to enable them to play an active role in their communities

Using customer intelligence to shape service delivery



Customers contact us through a variety of channels. We need to continue to make the best use of the information about this contact, in a timely way, to better understand what our customers need and to inform our service delivery

Equality of Access



Our city's communities are changing and becoming increasingly diverse. As a council we work hard to understand our communities and the barriers to access and support needs people may have. Knowing this enables us to provide responsive services that better anticipate all customers' needs and respond respectfully, appropriately and efficiently.

Our Customers

By customer we mean, any user of council services, active or passive. This includes residents, visitors to the city, businesses, students, service users and their representatives.



Brighton & Hove's population is estimated at 286,000



The population registered to vote is 201,392



130,000 Council Tax payers



32,270 children attending school



20,000 receiving housing benefit



11,552 total council owned dwellings



10,500 Business rate payers



624km of carriageway



1,020km of footpaths



12km of coastline



98 parks and open spaces



1,318,517 visits to libraries

Our Services



City Environment

- 92,881 individual refuse collections per week
- 45,050 individual recycling collections per week



Parking and Transport

- 343,977 visitor permits issued per year
- 37,321 resident permits issued per year
- 6,357 Concessionary Bus pass holders
- 3,765 Blue Badge issued per year
- 1,387 business permits issued per year
- 14,462 permits for roadworks granted



Development Management (Planning)

- 3,671 applications received in 2018
- 2,667 applications approved in 2018



Housing Management

- 13,097 Council tenancies supported
- 2,807 Leasehold properties managed



Housing Needs

- 2,800 Applications for social housing per year
- 1,785 Units of temporary Accommodation per year
- 1,700 open cases for prevention, intervention, advice
- 1,128 Emergency placements and transfers per year



Health & Adult Social Care

- 4,726 care assessments or reviews conducted per year
- 4,361 people receiving long term adult social care service
- 1,306 people receive short term intensive support
- 30,274 terms of daily living equipment issued



Families, Children & Learning

- 5,432 children with special education need receive support in schools
- 2,135 children attend our children's centres and nurseries
- 1,985 children supported by social work to be safe (including 414 children in care)
- 531 receive family support



Registrars

- 3,400 births registered per year
- 2,500 deaths register per year
- 1,300 marriages registered and officiated
- 580 new British naturalisation certificates issued



Bereavement

- 1,992 cremations in 2017/18
- 281 burials in 2017/18
- 1,233 deaths reported to the Coroner's Office in 2018



Benefits

- 4,761 receiving help with council tax
- 3,236 new claims assessed a year
- 1,500 applications assessed for emergency help

Our Customer Promise

Our promise to you

We have developed our customer service standards as a promise to customers, which we monitor through a range of measures to make sure we are keeping that promise.

To ensure that our Promise is focused on what is important to our customers, during its development, we surveyed a sample of visitors to the Customer Service Centres in Brighton and in Hove.

Customers were asked to rank the qualities of customer service delivery in order of what they felt was most important.

Of those surveyed:

- 40% said that 'First contact resolution' was most important to them
- 21% said 'Professionalism'
- 13% said 'Waiting times'
- 12% said 'A choice of ways to contact the council'
- 7% said 'Being listened to'
- 7% said 'Easy to access services'

In addition to the above survey, we reviewed the feedback we receive from customers through a variety of means such as online survey responses, customer complaints and compliments. Our Customer Promise was created from these priorities, in collaboration with representatives from front line services.

To maximise our ability to keep our promise to customers, we don't just apply these standards to staff who deal directly with customers, but to all staff who work for the council, including those in support services such as Human Resources, IT& Digital teams, Finance, Health and Safety. This approach helps ensure that staff who do deal directly with residents have the appropriate infrastructure, tools and support to deliver the best customer service that they can.

Our customer promise to you

We will make it clear how you can contact or access our services



- Communicate with you digitally where possible and appropriate, because it is more convenient for you and often quicker and more cost effective
- Where digital access is not appropriate offer you different ways to contact us and use our services
- Where you have a disability or impairment, we will work with you to find the best ways to communicate.

We will be clear and treat you with respect



- Increasingly provide digital services but still aim to deliver a personal service, treating you with courtesy, politeness and understanding
- Be clear and easy to understand in all our communication with you
- Keep your personal data secure and ensure your confidentiality.

We will understand and get things done



- Aim to answer the query at first point of contact, when this cannot be achieved we provide clear information about next steps so you know what to expect
- Take care to fully understand and respond appropriately to your needs
- Keep you informed with up to date information and explain what we have done
- Make sure our officers have the skills and tools to deliver the service you need
- Work together across the council to provide a service that minimises your efforts.

You can help us to keep our promise by

- Treating us politely and with respect
- Letting us know if you have any specific needs
- Giving us the information we need to deal with your enquiry
- Telling us if you are happy or unhappy with our service
- Participating when we seek feedback so we can learn and improve.

Please tell us how we are doing

- We welcome all feedback including when things don't go right. Feedback helps us to learn from what we are doing well and also our mistakes. We are committed to using this information to improve our services
- Please tell us how satisfied you are with our service, this short survey should take you approximately two minutes
- If you would like to provide a detailed compliment or complaint please contact the customer feedback team.

Monitoring our performance against this promise

- We check our performance through monitoring:
 - Customer satisfaction and ease of access
 - Number of compliments and complaints received
 - Evidence of how our customers contact us
 - Survey of residents of Brighton & Hove and service users
- The results will be published through our Customer Insight Report annually.

Different ways to contact us

Website

We will:

- Aim to have the Council website available for 24 hours a day all year round
- Continually improve the ability to interact with us digitally

Face to face

We will:

- Make sure our Customer service buildings are fully accessible
- Aim to greet you on average within five minutes of arrival and to see you within 20 minutes
- Make clear the range of ways of contacting us

Written communication

We will:

- Ensure all service emails are set up with 'automatic reply' with a clear indication of what will happen next

Social media

We will:

- Be clear how frequently we will respond to any queries received
- Be proactive in sharing relevant information and keep this up to date

Telephones

We will:

- Aim to keep average waiting times under ten minutes. When high demand is anticipated we will give an indication of the expected wait
- Update voicemails and telephone messages regularly to hold accurate information

We have listened to our customers and created this promise using their suggestions and priorities. (July 2017)



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Our Customer Experience Vision: Getting things right first time, every time

Efficiency



Services are available online, where possible and are easy to find



Council information systems are joined up appropriately to make it easier for customers



It is clear to customers what the best way of contacting the council is, based on what they need



Staff are skilled in delivering customer service, including being able to resolve customer dissatisfaction quickly and fairly



The Customer Promise is checked regularly to make sure it includes what is important for customers



All services are delivered to the standards set in the Customer Promise



Customers feel confident that everything we do is in keeping with the Customer Promise



All services engage with those who may be affected before making changes

Improvements



Making improvements to the customer experience is a priority in everyone's day to day role



Customers are asked what they think about the services they receive and their feedback is acted upon



The data and knowledge that the council collects, is used to understand and to improve things for customers



Services work together to improve the customer experience in a consistent way



Council resources are appropriately used to manage customer needs through all contact methods



All services support each other positively to fulfill the Customer Promise



Staff are all able to offer basic advice, support or signposting to other council services and external support.



The council works with other public or private services, charities and community groups to resolve issues together

One Council

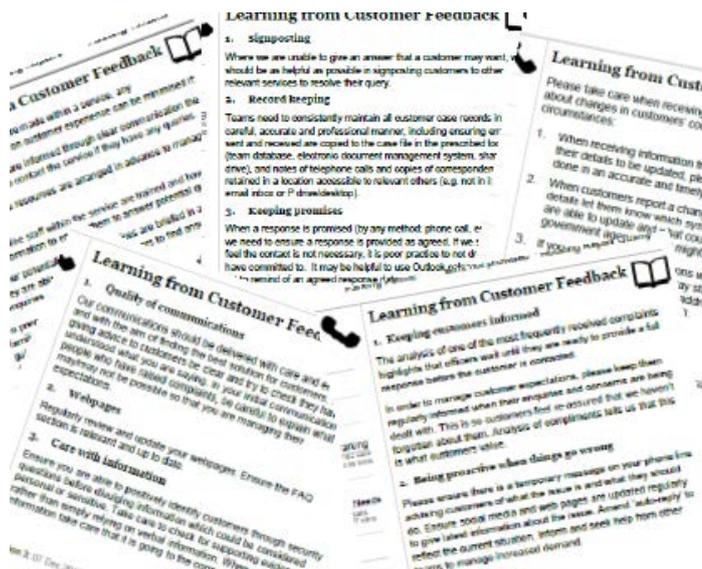
Consistency

Resilience

Learning from Customer Feedback

We receive feedback from customers in a variety of ways, such as comments on surveys, compliments and complaints. To improve the experience of our customers, it is essential that we are proactive in understanding and acting on this feedback.

To make sure that all staff are aware of what is important to customers, and the ways in which we can improve our service delivery, we create a monthly summary of information relating to customer contact referred to as the Customer Insight dashboard. This dashboard is shared across the organisation.



Key learning themes

- Ensure good practice with email correspondence e.g. send clear, timely responses.
- Keep our contact details up to date on the intranet to improve joint working, and include them in our email signature.
- Keep our webpages up to date and clear to navigate, including frequently asked questions (FAQs).
- Aim to resolve all matters raised during customer contact, rather than rushing to pick up the next enquiry.
- Deliver what has been promised e.g. call a customer back at the time agreed, even if you don't have any new information for them.
- Consider the wider impact of your work e.g. if you are unable to do something as agreed, make sure anyone who may be affected is informed, such as other service teams, customers or other professionals.
- Be proactive when things go wrong e.g. tell affected parties what has happened as soon as possible, and what will be done to put it right and keep them informed throughout
- Be aware of and regularly review your Business Continuity Plan especially in relation to customer facing aspects.
- Be aware of how to report and record incidents of alleged discrimination or hate crimes.
- Handle personal or sensitive data with care and in accordance with agreed governance standards and guidance.

One Council Approach

One of the council's core values is 'Customer Focus', this means we want to put our customers at the heart of everything we do. 'Meeting customer needs' is an integral part of our Behaviour Framework which describes how all staff in the council are expected to perform their roles.

As a public body which delivers around 700 different services for its customers, the way that the organisation is structured can be complex to understand and navigate. Knowing which department does what and how or where to contact them shouldn't be something that our customers have to learn in order to receive the help that they need.

We have a committed staff team who are passionate about providing high quality services. Our Staff Survey results show that 89% of council staff care about how the organisation is perceived by citizens. However, only 23% feel that the council works as one big team working collaboratively for the good of our customers. To address this we have introduced a Customer Experience Ambassador role to systematically enable joint working and embed a 'One Council' approach across the organisation. A 'One Council' approach will create a way of working where customers experience a response which is similar in 'style' and consistently helpful, regardless of the service they approach.

Customer Experience Ambassadors

We have so far appointed 80 Customer Experience Ambassadors from a wide range of services across the organisation. We will work closely with these Ambassadors to further develop this strategy and the 'One Council' approach. The Ambassadors will then be responsible for embedding what has been developed within their teams, working closely with their head of service and the Customer Experience Steering Group representative from their service.

These are some examples of how a 'One Council' approach could improve customer experience.

- Customers only have to contact us once to have their service request resolved.
- Customers receive a consistently set standard of service from the council, regardless of their query.
- Customers receive a 'joined up' service as appropriate where teams communicate with each other to resolve customer queries, rather than the customer having to liaise with different departments for each element of their query to be resolved.
- Customers can expect council officers to have appropriate access to information that has been provided to other council departments to help resolve their query/verify their identity/assess their application e.g. Parking teams can check council tax records to prove residency.
- Customers can expect council officers to be able to accurately signpost them to other council services/public services/third sector partners to help resolve their query
- Ensure that customers receive consistent advice / information about the same issue.

What actions are we taking?

Improving our communication with customers

Communication

We will continue to improve and refine the ways that we communicate with residents and key stakeholders, enhancing understanding and awareness of how the council is delivering, progressing and achieving its services and its commitments to residents and the principles which underpin our decision making. By putting people at the heart of our communications and by actively listening and keeping the customer at the forefront of our minds when we are replying, we will enable a genuinely two way relationship based on trust.

Nudge Toolkit



A toolkit has been developed for use by services to make communication with residents more effective. Nudge (also known as behavioural insights) is a concept which promotes positive reinforcement and indirect suggestion as ways to influence the behaviour and decision making of groups or individuals. An example would be rearranging the layout of our Council Tax bills to make it easier to find the information about setting up a Direct Debit. Behavioural insight research has found that when we read letters, we tend to see the information in the top right hand corner first, so by promoting the benefits of paying by Direct Debit in that space, more people notice and read that information than when it was on the reverse-side of the bill.

Improving complaint response quality

We have begun regularly conducting quality assurance on our responses to formal complaints, to ensure they are meeting the agreed standards. This will improve the quality of responses that customers receive as well as reducing the number of complaints that are escalated to the next stage, which can be frustrating for customers, and costly for the organisation.

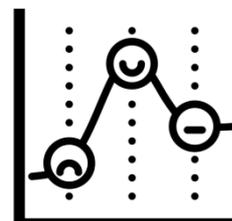
Training in Better Complaints Handling

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman LGSCO is the public body established to advise on best practice in Local Government and regulates the way that councils respond to complaints. A number of officers across the council have attended training delivered by the Ombudsman and facilitated by the Customer Feedback Team to improve their complaints investigation skills. This will result in improved quality of complaint responses to customers, as well as a reduction in the need for customers to escalate their complaints.

Understanding the needs and experiences of our customers

Customer journey mapping

Customer journey mapping is a method of getting a better understanding of what a customer's experience of interacting with an organisation is like. We are in the process of embedding the regular use of this methodology by front line service managers, to ensure we are continually checking how we could



improve the customer experience. The next step is to map what the ideal ‘journey’ looks like for each transaction and work towards matching the real experience of customers to these ideal states.

Executive Leadership Team weekly update

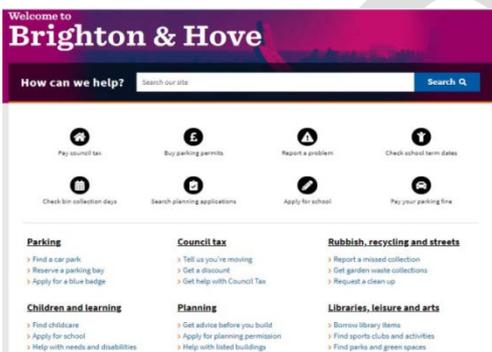
Each week the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meet to discuss and manage the highest priority matters of the organisation. A new standing item has been introduced to that agenda, which focuses on issues affecting the customer, and allows for swift action and decision at a strategic level.

Coordinating significant changes which affect residents

We recognise that some changes or new initiatives can affect a large number of residents who will need to contact or transact with the council as a result, such as the introduction of a new parking zone or a change to the way refuse or recycling is collected. To ensure that the organisation is as prepared as possible to continue to provide a high level of customer service, in spite of increased contact, we have introduced a timetable which outlines all planned events and initiatives which will affect residents. This helps us identify where there are opportunities to coordinate activities, minimising the impact on residents and enabling services to manage the resulting demands.

Making services fit for the future

Website re-design



Work is ongoing to improve the council's website and the new style home page went live in October 2018. The new design is based on the principles established by the award winning Government Digital Service – ensuring that the site is easy for people to do the things they need to do. User experience techniques were used to make sure that we understand why customers visit the website and to arrive at a design which enables customers to transact with us easily.

Self-service days for Revenues & Benefits services

As customers increasingly expect to be able to transact with organisations digitally, the Revenues and Benefits service have changed the way that their services can be accessed, and introduced a range of online facilities and contact methods. They now offer customers support in accessing these services online in the Brighton Customer Service Centre on certain days of the week, so that in future, customers will know how to transact with the service at a time and in a place which suits them, rather than travelling to the city centre and queuing to hand in forms or documents. This initiative also promotes the need for customers to have experience of accessing benefits services digitally, as with the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) introduction of Universal Credit in Brighton & Hove all contact with the DWP must be online. Positive feedback has been received from customers who have been shown how send their documents by email, or to fill in an online application form, so the service continues to adapt and evolve its digital offer, informed by the

feedback received from customers. We are now exploring extending this approach to other departments that have developed a strong online service for customers, this may result in a review of our overall delivery model.

What will we do next?

Delivering excellent customer service isn't just a one off initiative, it's a continual process of culture change - reviewing, redesigning, monitoring, training, learning and listening. We will continue to embed and reinforce the good practices that are already in place across the organisation, and will keep improving the way that services are delivered. These are some examples of the actions already planned.

Work with customers to identify what excellent service looks like to them

We want our customers to be satisfied with the way that the council delivers services, but need to be sure that we know what our customers value, and what excellent customer service means to them. Through consultation and engagement in a range of ways, we will seek views from a variety of customers who represent the diversity of our city.

Develop and promote digital by design communications and transactions

To deliver services in ways which are convenient for customers and to create capacity for the council to help those who need more intensive support or have more complex queries, we continue to invest in and promote the use of simple and intuitive online services so that customers can self-serve.

Some service areas have developed their technological capability to ensure their whole process is digital, eliminating any delay for customers in their account being updated. This functionality is currently live for new council tax accounts for those moving into the area. Work continues to extend this to those who move within Brighton & Hove and to investigate other customer-facing processes and systems that are of this kind and are suitable for integration into a single digital customer experience. We also continue to work towards the longer term goal of a simple, single sign on to all digital council services as well as a single 'golden' customer record instead of records spread across many council systems.

In order to make most efficient use of the investment in technology, it is vital that we understand our customer's needs as well as the detail of the transactions and interactions that they have with the council; it isn't always most effective or efficient to use digital channels of communication, and so we will look in detail at which interactions are suitable, and ensure that any digitisation of service is also supported by digital inclusion work, ensuring accessibility for all.

Technology to help departments work together

The council currently has many separate systems and databases used by different teams and services which contain information about the identity, accessibility needs and contact preferences of a customer and their related case history and transactions. One of the key areas of focus is to locate these disparate systems and match the identity of a customer across all systems to create a Customer and Property Index, so that:

- A customer only needs to 'tell us once' when their address or name details change
- A customer can make a Subject Access Request and request deletion of their information
- Internal BHCC teams can better manage the needs of a customer e.g. debt programmes, fraud prevention etc.
- Property information can be more accurately relied upon e.g. the empty property register

The lack of a single shared system is currently a barrier to embedding a truly 'One Council' approach and prevents real-time reporting that would provide BHCC with greater intelligence, to make data-led decisions. With further exploration of future business requirements, the Customer and Property Index project could allow for the automatic population of changes back into the source systems (subject to technical constraints), as well as enabling a single view of case work.

The benefits of effectively implementing this technology will be reduced effort for the customer, minimising the requirement for them to provide the same information to multiple departments. It will also assist with the detection of fraud by identifying mismatched data, such as discrepancies between council tax single person discounts, parking permits and housing applications. The single view of a customer is also being used to provide verification functionality, whereby customer-facing transactions 'lookup' into the Customer and Property Index to prove identity details. This is more efficient for the customer (e.g. not having to provide the council with a copy of a Council Tax statement) and reduces the overhead of third party credit reference agencies, where we are able to prove an identity using our own data.

The technology also has the potential to feed the up to date information into a single system. We will be exploring the benefits of this further, whilst being mindful of the organisational culture change that will be a significant factor in the successful implementation of such a system. Any such system will also help us explore a wider range of options for our future service delivery model, and could also provide a single point of data collection for all customer transactions and contact which would provide far more sophisticated intelligence than is currently available – allowing for greater analysis and flexible resource planning

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

We analyse information that we collect to understand the reasons that customers contact the council, this analysis has identified that customers often email, phone or visit the council to get information which is readily available on our website, or from leaflets, letters and other publicity. This can be frustrating for customers who have taken the time to wait for a response, only to be given signposting information about how they can find the details that they need for themselves.

To make things more convenient for customers, and to increase the council's capacity to help those who need more intensive support, each of the key service areas will compile information sheets which give the answers to their area's most frequently asked questions:

- All council staff will be made aware of how to access FAQ for all council services
- FAQ will be prominently available on the website, so customers can get assistance with a range of basic queries, no matter which reception point or phone number they call
- FAQs will also include advice and/or signposting in circumstances where the council is unable to help.

Understanding customer preferences

We will be exploring the use of data, based on the postcodes of each service area's customers. This type of analysis can offer insights into, amongst other things, their preferred methods of communication.

Customer Service Centre changes



We have developed some inexpensive, yet important changes which should make it easier for customers to find and access the help they need at our Customer Service Centres. These changes include a clearer exterior, changing the reception area to make it more accessible, and making it easier for customers to understand where to go to get the help they need. These changes will also make the free digital access facilities easier for customers to locate and access, promoting our digital by design approach, maximising our investment in digital services and providing better

support for customers who may not have other ways of getting online.

We need to continue to examine and review the council's customer access points carefully balancing meeting customer needs, versus efficient use of council assets and resources.

How will we know that we are improving?

To track our progress against this strategy, we will use multiple sources of data and information, to assess whether things are improving.

Listening to our customers

The most important way for us to know that the work we are doing is making things better for customers, is to listen to the customers themselves. We will ask for, analyse and make recommendations from various sources of customer feedback, including:

- Results from the City Tracker annual survey, which measures resident satisfaction levels, these can be benchmarked against national results, through the Local Government Association's Resident survey
- Service specific satisfaction surveys
- Service user evaluation forms, some services which have a more intensive or complex relationship with their customers such as youth services and the Integrated Team for Families, ask for detailed feedback at the end of each intervention or interaction.
- Using complaints information

Listening to our councillors

The city's elected representatives are often made aware of issues that are important to their ward residents. A new case management system is being introduced to improve the way in which councillors can get assistance for their residents from the council. The system will provide an enhanced ability to identify themes or trends in these enquiries, both at ward level and city-wide, and enable us to identify areas of improvement which can be shared across the organisation as appropriate.

Listening to our staff

Our staff have a keen sense of what is and isn't working for our customers, so their feedback is an important part of measuring our improvements. We will regularly collect staff feedback in these, amongst other ways.

- Feedback from the Customer Experience Ambassador network
- Annual Internal customer satisfaction survey
- Annual staff survey

Making good use of our data

In the course of conducting our business, we gather a lot of data about our customer transactions and contact, in order to make best use of this data we will regularly measure and analyse metrics which relate to customer contact. These include:

- Volumes of complaints and compliments and analysis of themes and trends
- Phone, email and complaint response times - through the monthly dashboard
- Contact volumes by channel of communication – through the annual Customer insight report
- Customer journey mapping (both ideal states and current experiences)

Contact us

We welcome any comments, questions or other feedback about this strategy, please contact:-

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Brian.Foley@brighton-hove.gov.uk – Customer Experience Lead

Rima.Desai@brighton-hove.gov.uk – Head of Performance, Improvement and Programmes

Appendices

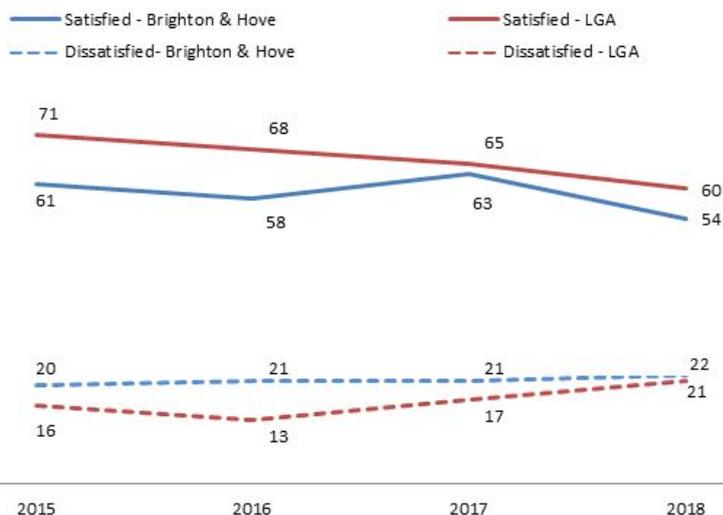
Current levels of satisfaction with council services

User satisfaction with the services provided by Brighton & Hove City Council (55%) has decreased from 63% previously. Nationally satisfaction with councils has also fallen, dropping from 65% to 60%. National comparator is the Local Government Association's Resident survey, carried out quarterly.



Satisfaction with Brighton & Hove City Council varies across age, ethnicity and location categories:

- The youngest age group (18-34s) report the highest level of *very satisfied* ratings (20%), significantly above the level reported by 35-54s (11%)
- The proportion reporting a *very satisfied* rating amongst BAME residents (29%) is higher than among white British residents (13%)
- Residents living in BN3 (58% *very/fairly satisfied*) and BN41 (65% *very/fairly satisfied*) have an overall higher level of satisfaction with the council than residents in BN2 (48% *very/fairly satisfied*)



This chart shows trend over time in dissatisfaction, as well as satisfaction with Brighton & Hove City Council, which has remained broadly static over the last three years, bucking the national trend of increasing dissatisfaction with local councils.

The levels of dissatisfaction with our council are now only one percentage point above the national average.

Demographics and Equal Opportunities

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination on the basis of the following 'protected characteristics': age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation.

All customers have the right to be protected from discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on our protected characteristics.

Understanding the protected characteristics of people living, working in and visiting the city helps us to be fair, accessible, and appropriate when we make policies, deliver services, and employ people. In addition, the council has an aim of 'Tackling Inequality'.

Supporting and developing good customer experience in relation to all the city's diverse communities is a central aim of the council. Customers may experience numerous barriers to accessing services or need different support to get the right outcomes from them. Where these barriers or needs are related to legally protected characteristics, the council has a duty to consider how to remove these barriers, reduce disadvantage and promote equality of opportunity.

This strategy will support the development of a culture of responsive services that anticipate diverse customers' needs and respond respectfully and appropriately. Providing the right services, in the right way, at the right time to the right people will result in better, more efficient, more appropriate services for everyone.

The following information is taken from the last census which was in 2011. We know from surveys carried out in schools that the profile of people living in the city is changing but these are the most up to date figures we have.

- The ratio of women to men is almost exactly equal and is very similar at every age group.
- There are 286,000 adult residents living in 120,000 households.
- We have a high proportion of residents in the age range 20-30, a further peak in the range 40 to 50 and a slight increase in people aged 65.
- Around 37,000 (13%) of residents are lesbian, gay or bisexual.
- An estimated 3,000 adults are transsexual.
- At the time of the census 55,000 people were from BME background.

More recent data from Health research tells that

- 45,000 people(16%) have a health problem or disability that affects their day to day activities and 25,000 (9%) residents provide unpaid care for a family member of friend
- 26,500 (1 in 10) people have depression and 1 in 100 have severe mental illness
- More than 3,000 people have visual impairment
- More than 20,000 have a hearing problem
- There are an estimated 11,750 ex-service personnel in the city

How do our customers contact us?

We receive more than 60,000 phone calls, 25,000 emails, 18,000 pieces of post, 13,000 visits and 18,000 online forms to public contact points each year.

Responses to customer feedback

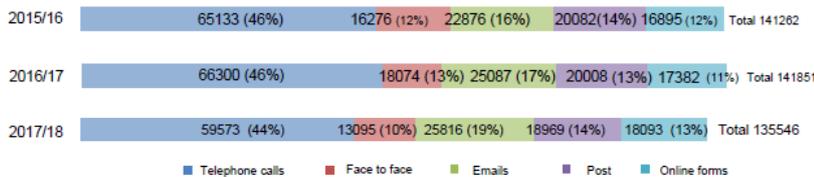


The number of complaints responded to within 10 working days continues to improve, going to 72% from 67% since 2016/17, and from 66% in 2015/16, but is still below the target of 80%.

Complaints escalated from Stage 1 to Stage 2

2016/17	12.3%	Area with most significant increase since 2016/17: Parking
2017/18	10.4%	Area with most significant decrease: Housing Repairs

Customer contact volumes for transactional services by channel



The overall volume of customer contact has reduced by 5% since 2016/17



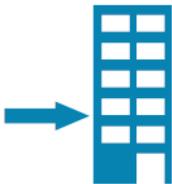
Overall, incoming calls to the organisation have reduced by 13% since 2016/17, with particular decreases seen in Housing Management (42%), Development Management (40%), and Electoral Services (68%).

In addition to this, calls to a switchboard operator have reduced by 33% (from 11,135 to 7,493) with more callers using the automated options available rather than choosing to be put through by an operator.

Between Aug 17 and Mar 18, we have kept our promise of having an average call waiting time of 10 minutes or less. The services struggling to achieve this in particular months were Council Tax, City Environmental Management, Housing Needs and Parking.

Face to Face contact

There has been a 30% reduction in footfall to service reception points overall since 2016/17.



Online forms

Overall submissions of online forms have increased by 4% since 2016/17.

Notable increases since 2016/17 have been seen within the Benefits service (52%) and Parking services (39%)

Services who have seen significant decreases in online form submissions include Registrars (62%) and the Environment Contact Centre (60%) though due to a change in the software for online forms, there may be discrepancies in the combined data.



Website

Overall visitor numbers to the council website have increased by 10% since last year, at 4,914,296 sessions.

Emails

Overall, there has been a less than 1% increase in unstructured emails since 2016/17.



Post

Incoming post volumes continue to reduce with a 5% decrease overall since 2016/17. Significant decreases have been seen in Parking Services (55%) and Housing Management (32%).



We publish an [annual report](#) which summarises and tracks this contact, monitoring the return on investment in digital services and the trend for fewer customers contacting the council in the traditional (often slower, less flexible and more expensive) methods of contact, such as postal and face to face communication. This data points towards the trend for increased contact through digital channels, and decreased contact through more traditional means such as post, personal visits or telephones.