

West Lothian Council Property Management & Development

Customer consultation review 2012 - 2013

PM&D works with its customers, partners, stakeholders and other services of the council to deliver its services in the best way possible. As an integral part of this process we regularly consult with our customers to ensure that we meet their expectations and needs. Customer feedback is welcomed and we review our services as a result of comments received. This document outlines our activity during 2012-13 in formally consulting our customers.

Segmentation and consultation programme

As a result of our 2012 WLAM Assessment we have modified our programme of customer surveys and the methodology for reporting results.

In previous years the survey results we have reported have been an aggregation of the results of the questions on the 5 Drivers of Customer Satisfaction from all surveys carried out during that year. This had been changed in 2009 because of low returns to some surveys. This meant that the results we reported reflected a two yearly cycle, as the amalgamated results were based on the Tenant Survey one year, and the occupier surveys from Civic Centre and Headquarter offices the next.

In order to present a consistent annual report our results will now be based solely on the regular, generic customer survey, which runs throughout each year. We have also changed the structure of our question set, so that there is a five point choice of response (Excellent; Good; Adequate; Poor and Very Poor) instead of the four point choice that we had previously used. Results are still based on the percentage of replies that are Excellent or Good.

Our programme has been simplified to remove the previous survey of internal customers of professional services – and we will ask these customers to complete our generic customer survey instead. The feedback from the Tenant and Occupier surveys remains important in shaping the delivery of services, but as the results on the 5 Drivers are no longer aggregated, these questions will be removed from these surveys in future. To avoid survey fatigue, and to allow us time to implement recommendations before issuing a subsequent survey, we will continue to run these specialised surveys in alternate years.

Target setting

At the start of the year PM&D's Quality team reviewed the amalgamated results for previous years, in order to set targets for the generic survey for 2012-13. The changes noted above made the setting of relevant targets quite difficult – in particular it was felt that the move to a five point response structure might mean that more respondents would rate the service as “adequate” (the middle line), which, while not actually representing dis-satisfaction, would potentially reduce the calculated percentage level of satisfaction. As a result the targets were set to show a marginal improvement over the 2011-12 results.

In addition, to comply with the standard corporate question set, it should be noted that our previous question on the accuracy and quality of information was split into two. The target for each was based on the results for the single question in previous years.

Overall Performance against Customer Service Standards (5 Drivers)

The table below shows the results for our performance against the 12 questions in our generic customer survey, which are based on the 5 Drivers. The results show the percentage of results that were Excellent and Good. In all but one question the results show an improvement over the previous year, and performance above target. Where performance fell the difference was marginal, and as it is still close to 90%, remains satisfactory. Overall the results demonstrated that the fears about the move to a five point scale were unfounded.

Corporate PI ref.	Delivery: Please rate the following	Covalent Ref.	2012 result	2012/13 TARGET	2013 result
6a.2	The service you received compared to what you needed	PMD.122	80.48%	81%	91.89%
6a.9	Our handling of any problems that arose	PMD.129	79.02%	80%	88.57%
6a.12	How easy it was to contact us	PMD.132	78.84%	80%	82.35%
	Timeliness: Please rate the following				
6a.1	The promptness of our response to your request?	PMD.121	77.53%	78%	86.11%
6a.8	Our ability to resolve your issue at the first point of contact?	PMD.128	74.09%	75%	78.13%
	Information: Please rate the following				
6a.3	Our performance in keeping you informed of the progress of your request?	PMD.123	68.02%	70%	85.71%
6a.10	The accuracy of the information provided, as relevant to your needs	PMD.130	72.19%	73%	82.35%
6a.11	The quality of the information provided, as relevant to your needs	PMD.131		73%	85.71%
	Professionalism: Please rate the following				
6a.5	Our people's professionalism in terms of the knowledge and skills of our staff	PMD.125	83.13%	84%	94.44%
	Staff attitude: Please rate the following				
6a.4	Our people's attitude in terms of the friendliness and helpfulness of our staff	PMD.124	90.51%	91%	89.19%
	Our Service: Please rate the following				
6a.7	The overall quality of customer service.	P:PMD.127	78.49%	79%	89.74%
6a.6	Were you treated fairly? (NB Yes/no answer)	PMD.126	100%	100%	100.00%

Where respondents answered a question Adequate, Poor or Very Poor, they were asked for further information, so that we could understand their response. Of four comments made three related to difficulties in making contact with our people, and one that suggestions about possible improvements to service in a Headquarter building were ignored. (The fourth related to a service delivered by others in the council). We have reinforced the need for staff to respond quickly to emails and phone messages. Suggestions are taken seriously, although they may not (after review) always be adopted.

At the PM&D Quality Team meeting in June 2013 it was agreed that we should set challenging long term targets, aiming to reach 90% customer satisfaction in all PIs. Incremental targets have therefore been set accordingly, to reach 90% by 2016/17. The exception is satisfaction with the equality of service delivery where the target will remain at 100%.

Equality questionnaire

The equality questionnaire was developed during 2006/2007 to ensure that PM&D does not discriminate in the delivery of its services. It is primarily issued with application forms for the lease of our commercial property (shops, offices and industrial units). The questionnaire asks for comments and suggestions as to how we can improve our service – no comments were received.

Tenant Survey

Over 400 occupiers of our commercial property (the Tenanted Non-Operational Property portfolio) were asked to complete our Tenant survey. We had a response rate of 26.5%. The results confirmed the significant role the Council plays, as a landlord, in providing space for local SME's:

- 9 out of 10 of our tenants originated in West Lothian.
- Despite the short term nature of most of our leases, over half of our tenants have been in our properties for 6 years or more.
- Over three quarters of our tenants have fewer than 5 employees

A full analysis of the results can be seen on our website: www.westlothian.com/pmd

Building user groups

As Facilities Managers of the council's headquarter office buildings we have regular contact with council staff that occupy these properties. The Building User Groups provide a forum for feedback and comment from our colleagues, and for us to raise specific issues of concern (e.g. energy management). The Building User Group for Civic Centre includes all partners, and not just West Lothian Council employees. In most of the other buildings the management/occupier interface works best where a single officer is nominated as the focus for any occupier comment/concern – however, as the council's office rationalisation programme progresses we will review whether and how BUG's should operate in these properties.

Complaint and compliments analysis

We record feedback from customers who make comments or complaints about our service. In 2012/13 we received no complaints which we found to be justified. This Performance Indicator will change in 2013/14 as we have revised our complaints procedure to reflect the new corporate complaints policy.

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