

# Customer Care Strategy

2015-2018



### Introduction

The Customer Care Strategy details how we plan to deliver our customer care and explain the organisational commitments we will make to our customers. In addition, we outline where we want to be by 2018, and detail how we will monitor and report our progress in achieving these commitments. We will encourage the adoption of common customer care standards and measures of performance across the council.

### Why we have a strategy

At Glasgow City Council, we want to provide the best possible service to all of our customers, both internal and external particularly resolving queries at the first point of contact. We know how important first impressions are, and how vital it is to get things right from the start. Every time a customer contacts us, the way they are treated, the standard of customer care they receive and the quality of the outcomes achieved all influence their opinion of us.

We live in a constantly changing environment and must be able to respond to the changing needs and circumstances of our customers. We must be able to recognise and embrace any new opportunities for our customers and ourselves as they arise. As a result, the priorities in our strategy delivery plan will be regularly monitored, and the strategy itself will be reviewed at least annually.

### Who our customers are

Everyone who lives, works, learns, visits and does business in the city is a potential customer of Glasgow City Council.

We know that:

- Glasgow City Council serves a population of 596,600.
- The city's population has risen in recent years and is predicted to rise by 24% in the next 25 years
- Glasgow has the most ethnically diverse population in Scotland.
- There are 20,000+ companies with a registered address in Glasgow supporting over 450,000 jobs
- Glasgow attracts 2.2 million visitors each year

We need to make sure that the council is able to support all our customers so that we can provide an excellent customer experience, whatever their needs.

### What are our customers telling us?

We want to provide the best possible service to all our customers. They are the best people to tell us:

- how we are doing
- what we can do to improve a service
- what problems they have experienced - this allows us to apologise, put it right and stop it from happening again.

In developing this strategy we have gained customer feedback from customer surveys to make sure customer views contribute to the direction we will take. These include recent Glasgow Household Survey, website survey, My Glasgow App survey, Customer Contact Centre Survey.

### The surveys tell us that:

- Approaching three quarters of residents were satisfied overall with the services provided by the Council Family Group.
- As we consistently find, satisfaction with individual services varied considerably.
- Museums and galleries and libraries continued to be very highly regarded by users as did nursery schools, sports and leisure centres, recycling centres, parks and primary schools.
- Lower levels of satisfaction were recorded for road maintenance, pavement maintenance, street cleaning and recycling collection. However, satisfaction of these services is showing considerable improvement with road maintenance and pavement maintenance satisfaction rates increasing from the 2013 survey by 10%.
- 80% of citizens have internet access at home and of them 89% use it at least once a day.
- The Customer Contact Centre within CBS receives an average of 30,000 calls per week.
- 80% of respondents rated the website as very good, good or ok, but our online services were used by just 4% of those surveyed. 85% of people like using the My Glasgow App and prefer this method to contact us than using the phone.
- The Customer Contact Centre within CBS receives on average 30,000 calls per week, with a further 20,000 per week received from outside the Customer Care Centre.

## What our customers want

The survey information was also telling us that customers want:

- A consistently high standard and quality of customer service in all methods of engaging with us
- To access information that is up to date
- To find the information they are looking for quickly and easily
- Access to services in a way that is convenient to them.
- To be informed of action that we take
- More transactional services available online
- The My Glasgow App to be maintained and extended to include additional services

## What needs to change?

We are making clear organisational commitments to our customers in three key areas:

- Customer Experience
- Customer Care Delivery
- Accessing our Services

We need to:

- Make it easier, simpler and more convenient for customers to interact with us when requiring a service
- Make our business processes simpler for customers to use
- Make sure our staff are equipped with the skills to deliver high quality customer service
- Promote approaches to delivering services that are more convenient for customers and less expensive to deliver for the council
- Develop our contact model to utilise digital technology to manage and serve our customers changing access needs better

## Customer Experience

We want to make sure that our customers' experience is a good one.

Our customer care strategy is of little value if our customers don't know about it or are aware of who the council is and what services we provide. Our customers are the best people to tell us how well we are doing, and if they have experienced a problem what we can do to improve our service. If we have made a mistake they can help us to put it right and stop it happening again.

We have developed customer standards that support the council's values to create satisfied customers, both internally and externally. These standards cover all our contact approaches including the internet, email, telephone, letter, public counter and reception desk. Our standards have been made public, so that our customers are aware of the commitments we are making.

We are developing our "online" approach to services to make accessing those services more convenient for customers and less expensive for us. Over time we expect this to significantly improve customer experience.

The Customer Care Centre has been established to provide excellent standards of customer care and best value to the citizens of Glasgow by providing a single point of contact for all enquiries relating to the services provided by the council. We will look to consolidate as much of our telephone contact outside the Customer Care Centre to this standard.

We operate a Customer Care Centre that aims to develop a single team, capable of answering the majority of service requests from the public and referring to service department colleagues only on an exceptional basis.

We have already publicised our Glasgow CARES charter internally. We will now make this information available to our customers; we will:

### **Publicise the Glasgow CARES charter and commitments.**

We will make sure that all our staff and customers are aware of our customer care vision and our standards of behaviour.

We will make sure that our service delivery is designed around our customer's needs, not our organisation's structure. We will do this for each of the methods a customer can use to contact us.

## Customer Care Delivery

We want to build upon our achievements in delivering quality customer care, and to make sure that we support our staff in providing the best possible experience for our customers. By engaging with them, we aim to be more responsive and reactive to our customers needs, improving our efficiency, performance and service delivery. Improving our customer care will drive us towards a better operational performance, enhance our customer understanding and enable better decision making.

Our commitment in Glasgow CARES is to have a “can do” attitude and supporting customers by going the extra mile for them. We want to build on this by providing the customer with an efficient service, delivered by welcoming, knowledgeable and professional staff.

To help us achieve this commitment, we will:

- Make sure that our staff deliver quality customer care.
- Give our staff the authority to put their customer’s needs first, to use their professional judgement above the requirement to simply “get the job done”.
- Treat all customers with dignity, fairness and equality, removing barriers to accessing our services.

We want to put the customer at the heart of our service delivery and we want our customers to value the services we provide. We support the Scottish Government’s aim to deliver first time public services by redesigning them around a customer’s needs – this is known as customer journey mapping.

Customers will only have to provide us with information once, and we will work towards providing them with an answer at their first point of contact with us. We will work towards the Scottish Government’s commitment that

“at least 75% of core service requests can be dealt with at the first point of contact.”

We want to provide an answer to a query by simplifying access to our services. And we also want to be able to add value to the relationship customers have with us, by providing them with information once.

We want to improve how we communicate with our customers and will use text, email and other internet enabled methods as quick and effective ways to inform customers of progress when they report a problem, or provide reminders to make a payment.

By understanding our customers' needs, we can improve the service we provide, making it easier for our customers to do business with us and making our jobs more focused and satisfying.

We have introduced a standard customer comments, complaints and compliments system across the Council. This process ensures that regardless of the service, a customers' complaint is addressed in the same way. The system is undergoing an audit and any improvements to the process will inform service development plans.

We will use mystery shopping exercises, customer satisfaction surveys and focus groups to inform us of our customer's experience and satisfaction with our service delivery.

We have introduced Glasgow City Council's public petitions process to enable Glasgow's citizens, local businesses and organisations to have a direct route of engagement and role in the policy development process of the council by raising matters of concern. It is hoped the on-line petitions system will encourage people in Glasgow to get more involved in the democratic process and to shape the work of the council.

### **Accessing Our Services**

As a city we are committed to making it easier for customers to access public services. Providing services online meets a growing demand, to provide ways that deliver a positive customer experience and which over time, will also help the council to reduce its administration costs.

Customers that access our services online do so because it is easy and convenient for them. They can choose to contact us from a location of their choice at a time of their choice. By making sure that more than 75% of customers' service requests are delivered at the first point of contact we aim to make our digital channels the preferred choice for the majority of our customers.

Our website is primarily used to tell customers about us, and what we do, rather than as a means to carry out business with us.

Currently Glasgow residents can complete a range of transactions 24/7 online, including making payments, calculating entitlement, applying for grants, requesting services, providing feedback, submitting a complaint and apply for licences.

We will make sure the information on the web site is kept up to date and that we make it easier for customers to find what they are looking for. Improvements will be made to the website to enable customers to interact with the website regardless of the device they are using.

We will adopt a more interactive approach with our customers, creating opportunities and supporting them to engage with us digitally, through the promotion of our digital services that offer a better customer experience. We will signpost and direct customers to online services to improve their choice of how and when they interact with us.

Increasing numbers of customers are contacting us through social media and we aim to improve the way we interact with customers through this medium.

We will develop and improve the range of services offered through digital means providing customers with a wider range of online transactions and easier access to information about our services. We will put systems in place that automate these transactions and improve the service that customers receive through web, smartphone and email enquiries.

By investing in the right technology and redesigning our business delivery process, we can make the lower cost transactions of internet and Smart Phone access more attractive. By making more of our services accessible online, we increase convenience and at the same time lower costs.

We will make sure that our service delivery is designed around our customer's needs, not our organisation's structure. We will do this for each of the methods a customer can use to contact us.

We will standardise our service processes, so that all delivery methods are equally available and convenient to the customer.

### **Customer First programme**

The Customer First programme aims to enhance existing and develop new digital capabilities. This will allow more customers to access these new digital channels as their preferred choice. Through providing more accessible information, the programme aims to reduce the amount of avoidable contact with the council. Both these will also help the council reduce the cost of the delivery of a wide range of services. The council will use promotional activity to inform and encourage customers to access these lower cost services.

The Customer First programme aims to enhance existing and develop new digital capabilities. This will allow more customers to access these new digital channels as their preferred choice. By providing more accessible information, the programme also aims to reduce the amount avoidable of contact with the council. Both these will also help the council reduce the cost of the delivery of a wide range of services by shifting the channel used for customer contact through promotional activity.

- We will actively promote digital as the channel of choice for our customers.
- We will grow and improve the number of services available via digital channels.
- Digital services will be accessible from any mobile device.
- All new services will offer a digital channel.
- We will provide assistance to citizens to interact with the council through digital channels.
- We will continue to develop the digital capabilities and skills of our staff to support a digital legacy.
- Alternative channels such as face to face or telephone will continue to be available for those who are unable to engage with us digitally.

The priorities planned for delivery by end of March 2016 include;

- An improved website to access relevant customer information easily and undertake transactions
- An improved MyGlasgow App providing feedback to customers on progress and resolution of requests
- An improved ability to deliver communications to our customers digitally rather through white mail
- Make it easier for more of our customers to pay for services online

### **How will we measure success?**

To monitor progress we will compare the following measures on an annual basis as part of programme monitoring:

- % of customers making requests through the internet or on smart phones
- % of requests that are resolved at the first point of contact
- Improved customer satisfaction ratings in the annual Glasgow Household Survey
- Improved customer satisfaction ratings in the annual website survey