

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 28 MARCH 2019

Report by Director of Education

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise committee of the outcome of the most recent Customer Service Excellence assessment for the Education Department.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. The recommendation is that Elected Members:
- a. note the continuing high standard of this award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and,
  - b. approve this approach to ensuring the department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

**BACKGROUND**

3. The Customer Service Excellence standard '*tests in great depth those areas that research has indicated are a priority for customers, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude. There is also emphasis placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.*'

4. The previous review of the Education Department took place in January 2018 and assessment is undertaken on an annual basis.

**REPORT**

5. The assessor spent the visit reviewing practice and interviewing staff, partners and customers and the assessment was undertaken in two stages.
- a) The first was a review of the self-assessment submission and enabled the assessor to gain an understanding of how East Renfrewshire Council's Education Department meets the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

b) The second stage was to review the actual service delivered in establishments by examining a 'customer journey'; this was focused on the Early Years curriculum provided for our children and the associated professional learning and training to develop our Early Years staff. This part of the review was carried out by interviewing staff in three groups which focussed on:

- *Growing Our Own – HNC Early Education and Childcare*
- *Supporting Our Teams – preparing for expansion and ensuring high quality early learning and childcare*
- *Playful Pedagogy - Impact on children*

6. The outcome of the review was the continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The assessment report, included in Appendix 1 of this paper, noted:

*'You continue to have very high levels of customer satisfaction at various levels of service delivery'*

*'You have used your extensive customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity.'*

*'The commitment to customer focus comes from the senior leadership of the organisation and has become embedded within your service in meaningful ways.'*

7. The report recognises the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified 22 areas of 'Compliance Plus', *'behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as an exemplar to others.'* The number of areas of compliance plus had increased from the previous assessments in January 2016, January 2017 and January 2018 when there were ten, 13 and 17 respectively.

8. These areas are set out in the report and included:

- very high levels of customer insight used effectively to prioritise resources and needs; consultation of customers being integral to continuous improvement;
- staff being empowered to act in a person-centred and customer-focused way;
- information being provided and delivered in ways that meet the needs and preferences of customers; and
- monitoring and meeting performance standards and sharing this with customers.

9. The report identifies two areas for improvement including the possibility of better publicising opportunities for stakeholders and citizens to become involved in early learning and childcare careers and consideration of early learning courses delivered on an outreach basis. The department will take these recommendations forward through discussions at the Early Learning and Childcare Expansion Board.

## **FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS**

10. Costs for the annual assessment are met within the Education Department's revenue budget.

## CONCLUSION

11. The assessment report and the confirmation of the continued achievement of the Customer Service Excellence standard recognise the Education Department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement and delivering services of the highest quality.

## RECOMMENDATION

12. The recommendation is that Elected Members:

- a. note the continuing high standard of this award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and,
- b. approve this approach to ensuring the department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

Mhairi Shaw  
Director of Education  
28 March 2019

Convener Contact Details

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Local Government Access to Information Act 1985

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Customer Service Excellence Report - East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department

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# Assessment Report

## CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the assessment, East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department was found to have a deep understanding of, and commitment to, Customer Service Excellence. The commitment was displayed from Senior Management levels through to operations and front-line staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people involved in the overall assessment process. It has been a pleasure meeting with your team and having the opportunity to observe your service in action.

The outcome of the assessment was -

**“Continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard has been recommended”**

Address:	East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, G78 1SY		
Standard(s):	Customer Service Excellence	Accreditation Body(s)	UKAS
Representative:	David Gordon Quality Improvement Officer		
Site(s) assessed:	Located at Arthurlie Family Centre	Date(s) of audit(s):	24 January 2019
Lead Assessor:	Robert Sullivan	Additional team member(s):	
Type of Assessment:	Annual Review		
Review of Certification Claims	Claims are accurate and in accordance with SGS guidance		



## 2. East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department

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### CONTEXT

East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department has around 200 staff and provides an education service through secondary schools, primary schools and nursery classes, early learning and childcare settings and one special school for children and young people with severe learning difficulties. The service has around 18,000 pupils, 1,400 teaching staff and 1,300 local government staff as its main customers alongside parents and carers.

During 2018, East Renfrewshire maintained its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools achieved very strong performance in all the key measures. 75% of young people in S4 attained 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 (National 5). Attainment in this measure remains considerably higher than the national average of 39%. The Higher results for S5 remained very strong, with 81% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 45% achieving 5 or more Higher awards. At Advanced Higher in S6, the authority also achieved its best ever performance with 40.7% of the original S4 cohort achieving 1 or more Advanced Higher awards, up from its previous record in 2017 (38.8%).

### 3. Method of Assessment

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The assessment was undertaken in two stages; the first was a review of your self-assessment submission. This review enabled the assessor to gain an understanding of how the organisation has met the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

The next stage was to review the actual service delivered on-site. This was conducted through reviewing practice as well as speaking to staff, partners and customers. This included following customer journeys through your processes and how these aligned with customer insight.

During the assessment process, the criteria are scored on a four-band scale:

**COMPLIANCE PLUS** - Behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as exemplar to others, either within the applicant's organisation or the wider customer service arena.

**COMPLIANT** - Your organisation has a variety of good quality evidence which demonstrates that you comply fully with this element. The evidence which reflects compliance is consistent throughout and is embedded in the culture of the organisation.

**PARTIAL COMPLIANCE** - Your organisation has some evidence but there are significant gaps. The gaps could include:





- Parts of the applicant's organisation which are currently not compliant and/or
- Areas where the quality of the evidence is poor or incomplete and/or
- Areas which have begun to be addressed and are subject to significant further development and/or
- Areas where compliance has only been evident for a very short period of time

**NON-COMPLIANT** - Your organisation has little or no evidence of compliance or what evidence you do have refers solely to a small (minor) part of your organisation.

The current scheme allows applicants a maximum number of partial compliances, equating to a pass mark of 80% for all criteria.

#### **4. OPENING MEETING**

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The on-site assessment commenced with an opening meeting.

The assessment activity was discussed. The itinerary had been agreed with East Renfrewshire Council- Education Department in advance. The organisation was informed that all information obtained during the assessment would be treated as strictly confidential.

The scope of Assessment was confirmed as: East Renfrewshire Council-Education Department

#### **5. ON-SITE ASSESSMENT**

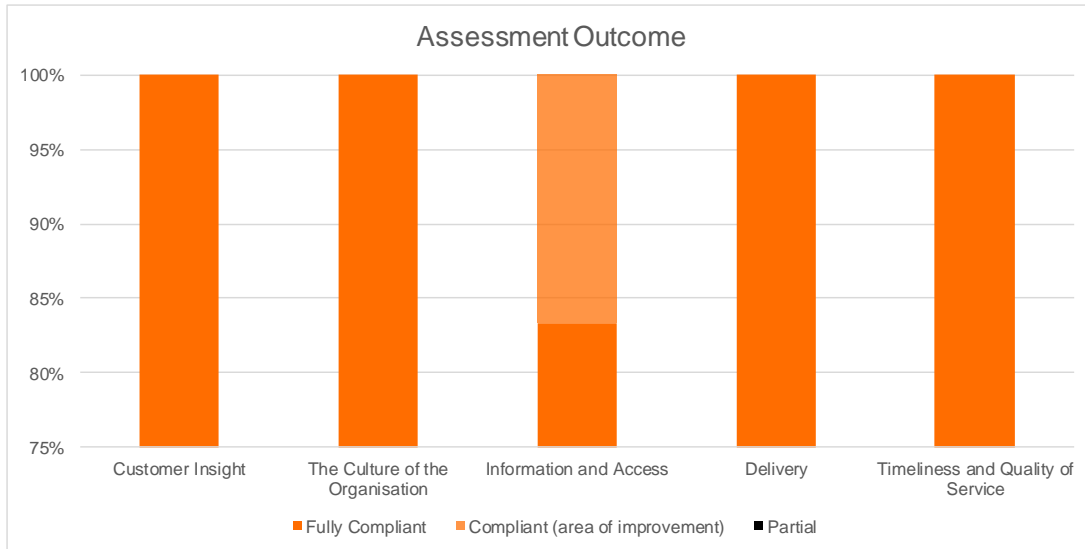
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The Assessor was accompanied throughout the assessment by David Gordon and other personnel within the organisation were involved when assessing activities within their responsibility.

The assessment resulted in the raising of no partial compliances. A number of observations are listed in Section 7 of this report.



Criterion	Maximum number of partial compliances	Actual number of non-compliances	Actual number of partial compliances	Actual number of Areas for Improvement	Fully Compliant
1 Customer Insight	2	0	0	0	11
2 The Culture of the Organisation	2	0	0	0	11
3 Information and Access	2	0	0	2	10
4 Delivery	3	0	0	0	13
5 Timeliness and Quality of Service	2	0	0	0	10



## 6. AREAS OF PARTIAL COMPLIANCE

### CRITERION 1

No Partials Raised

### CRITERION 2

No Partials Raised

### CRITERION 3

No Partials Raised

### CRITERION 4

No Partials Raised

### CRITERION 5

No Partials Raised



## 7. OBSERVATIONS

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During the site assessment, the following general observations were made. These include: positive areas scored as Compliance Plus; areas of good practice; areas for improvement identified throughout the entire assessment process, as listed below.

### **Areas for Improvement from the last assessment – now cleared**

- At the last assessment, the Assessor noted that you may wish to consider the possibility of using a generic 'how satisfied are you?' style of question in your surveys. Doing this would allow you to better analyse results across the service and allow for more effective internal benchmarking opportunities. You have now done this and have already include such a question where appropriate (1.3.1)
- Following previous CSE assessments, you had put in place several additional measures in relation to lone working. The Assessor noted those and highlighted that in some other environments the use of GPS technology and ID card alert systems are in use. You introduced such devices in August 2018 to increase the security of lone workers, including Family First workers, social workers, janitors and cleaners (2.2.4)

### **Areas for Improvement identified at this 2019 assessment**

- You may wish to consider if it is possible to better publicise opportunities for stakeholders and citizens to become involved in career opportunities such as those in the early learning centre environment. Some participants in the focus groups held at the assessment felt this could be further improved (3.2.1)
- While your work in this area was commended it was suggested, by some focus group participants, that greater opportunities for the delivery of Early Learning courses leading to qualifications could be held on an 'outreach' basis within local communities. It was felt this may increase uptake and be particularly welcomed by those with carting responsibilities (3.3.1)



## Areas of Good Practice

- You use of data to better understand customers, their needs and the outcomes achieved was commendable. In speaking with a wide range of staff there was a good understanding of the need to evaluate different methodologies and interventions and to evaluate impact and positive outcomes for customers
- You continue to demonstrate that you have systems in place to identify those hard to reach and disadvantaged customers and to engage and involve them in the wider discussions around your service
- You prepared well for the CSE review and provided a range of evidence that was both relevant and well presented. Your work in identifying appropriate customer journeys and arranging for appropriate stakeholders to be available assisted the Assessor in looking in-depth at the journeys. In doing so, you continue to add value to the service through continuous improvement and improved customer focus and satisfaction across the range of services you offer. You focus on aspects of the service in order to better demonstrate your compliance with the CSE Standard and to enable more in-depth scrutiny. Staff involved in the process are enthusiastic and display enthusiasm for what they do and to further improve
- You are continuing to use the CSE framework to evaluate of parts of your service. In general terms, CSE has become a useful and embedded tool for continuous improvement within the service. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a strong person-centred and individualised customer experience where possible across the service. You continue to develop, encourage and demonstrate good customer insight
- You continue your strong commitment to involving and engaging with customers throughout your service. This was evidenced throughout this review and was verified in discussion with customers as well as through the evidence presented. As part of the Customer Journey analysis and evidence, you involved customers in focus groups. You make good use of such as focus or consultation groups by using both existing groups and groups brought together to reflect the nature of the specific issue being consulted on
- The commitment to customer focus comes from the senior leadership of the organisation and has become embedded within your service in meaningful ways. Your ongoing commitment to Customer Service Excellence and your work to act on feedback from CSE assessments is testimony to this commitment
- You have reviewed the increasing demand for the services of the Education Department because of increased house building in the catchment area. You demonstrated high levels of insight into the characteristics, needs and preferences of both existing and potential customers. You have already developed new facilities and have additional improvements planned to take account of the increased demand for your service



- This year the Assessor was able to discuss several issues in some detail with staff and other stakeholders. It was obvious in discussions about your early years and childcare provision that staff were clear as to the 'added value' of such developments and their role in the wider education and socio-economic landscape. In discussing the 'Playful Pedagogy in Primary One and the Early Level Review' it was good to hear staff from a range of perspectives discuss the implementation and background to the review in a confident, customer focused way
- Stakeholders spoken to by the Assessor included school teaching staff, early years staff, staff from partner organisations and customers
- There was a strong culture of openness between your staff, customers and partners. It was clear that they were confident and at ease when giving feedback and asking questions of your staff. The Assessor also noted a high degree of inclusiveness between East Renfrewshire and Partner Agency/ providers staff
- You continue to have very high levels of customer satisfaction at various levels of service delivery and this was evidenced through a range of quantitative surveys and other qualitative information. These high levels continue to improve over time
- In performance terms, East Renfrewshire continues to maintain its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools achieved very strong performance in all the key measures. 75% of young people in S4 attained 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 (National 5). Attainment in this measure remains considerably higher than the national average of 39%. The Higher results for S5 remained very strong, with 81% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 45% achieving 5 or more Higher awards. At Advanced Higher in S6, the authority also achieved its best performance with 40.7% of the original S4 cohort achieving 1 or more Advanced Higher awards, up from its previous record in 2017 (38.8%).



## Areas of Compliance Plus

- You collect, record and analyse comprehensive data about the characteristics of prospective and current customers. This includes census data and information on such as new housing developments within the area. Data includes such as the early learning and childcare provision detailing such as The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity data. In addition, you continue to make good use of customer data to prioritise resources and to best meet their demands (1.1.1)
- Throughout the assessment there was an obvious and detailed understanding of your customers both at a macro and micro level. This detailed insight was verified in discussion with those spoken to by the Assessor. In addition to this being a general feature of your service you make particular efforts to tailor services where the impact is most vital (1.1.2)
- You have a very well established and developed engagement strategy. This is reviewed in a frequent and systematic way to ensure the robustness and comprehensiveness of the measures used. This was discussed and evidenced at this assessment visit (1.2.1)
- You understand the importance of understanding your customers and have evidenced a range of effective consultation mechanisms. The understanding of customers alongside being at the forefront of learning and teaching pedagogy and utilizing Government Policy is viewed as integral to continually improving your service and you also advise customers of the results and action taken. At the highest level, the Director of Education engages with pupils and uses these consultations to further improve insight into service delivery and to impact change where appropriate. Your system for pupil representation at school level involves the use of minutes and Action Plans to track issues raised and any action required. At another level, there is community engagement which seeks to involve communities in engaging with the Council to develop services to meet the needs of local communities and The Education Department plays an important part in such discussions (1.2.2)
- You have very high levels of customer satisfaction and these continue to improve over time. You recorded a pupil satisfaction rate of 87%, 97% parental satisfaction for school pupils and 98% for parents using of early year learning centers (1.3.4)
- You work with customers to develop insight about their specific needs and preferences and prioritise these. You then develop your service to assist customers in meeting their identified needs and preferences throughout their customer journey with your service (1.3.5)
- There is an ongoing, strong corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in your organisation actively support this.



There are many and varied strategies in place to engage with customers to determine their views on service provision and ensure that high levels of customer insight are maintained. Throughout the review there was strong evidence that a wide range of consultation mechanisms are deployed, and results and actions are published, and this informs implementation where appropriate (2.1.1)

- You have used your extensive customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity. Many examples of this, including the review of Playful Pedagogy in Primary One and the Early Levels were evidenced at this assessment visit (2.1.2)
- The authority has high levels of training in respect of Data Protection and Information Security to protect the privacy of customers. The Department has ensured that staff have been appropriately trained around the legislation in respect of Child Protection and Data Sharing (2.1.5)
- Staff are empowered to act in a person-centred and customer focused way. As well as evidence from survey results there were many examples at this assessment. Staff were very confident and able to explain and answer questions about their work. Staff demonstrated high levels of understanding as to why certain practices were being implemented and could explain this in a user-friendly way (2.1.6)
- At this review, you were able to evidence a strong customer focus in relation to recruitment and training. In particular there was a detailed discussion including customers about the recruitment and training of those involved in the 'Growing Our Own' initiative (2.2.1)
- You continue to develop training and development for staff and evaluate the effectiveness of this and other interventions on customer focus and outcomes. You use a performance management system to provide constructive feedback on the customer focus delivered across the service (2.2.3)
- Customer facing staffs' insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning through a variety of channels. It was clear during the assessment that staff had a keen awareness of customer needs and preferences at both a macro and micro level. Staff are encouraged to utilise their in-depth knowledge of customers to provide tailored and personalised service delivery where appropriate (2.2.4)
- You were able to demonstrate that your information provision is comprehensive and that you communicate directly where any new initiative or practice is introduced. You tailor information to specific customer group where appropriate (3.1.1)





- You have improved the quality of your information to make it more accessible. This includes work on GLOW and increased use of such as video and networking opportunities (3.2.3)
- You have arrangements with Colleges to supply a wider range of opportunities to staff and pupils. This year the Assessor heard how partnership working with Colleges supported workforce development (3.4.1)
- You have continued your work with a range of partners such as local Colleges to provide greater choice and joined-up services. This not only includes teaching deliverables but also such as transport to and from other venues. It is clear in these instances who is accountable for the service. In the vocational programme, pupils and parents/ carers have a dedicated telephone number and staff team to contact (3.4.2)
- You support the local and wider community in several ways. Some examples include your ongoing commitment to the support for future generations of early learning centre and school staff. At this assessment, we discussed and saw evidence of your work with probationer teachers, modern apprenticeship and foundation apprenticeship participants. In addition, the Assessor noted your creative and pioneering work in attracting and developing staff for careers within early learning environments (3.4.3)
- You monitor and meet your performance standards and you tell your customers about your performance. East Renfrewshire continues to maintain its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools achieved very strong performance in all the key measures. 75% of young people in S4 attained 5 or more qualifications at SCQF Level 5 (National 5). Attainment in this measure remains considerably higher than the national average of 39%. The Higher results for S5 remained very strong, with 81% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 45% achieving 5 or more Higher awards. At Advanced Higher in S6, the authority also achieved its best ever performance with 40.7% of the original S4 cohort achieving 1 or more Advanced Higher awards, up from its previous record in 2017 (38.8%). You have detailed monitoring of performance and report on your performance at school and authority level and this is used to proactively manage and support pupils and staff (4.1.2)
- You have significantly developed and become engaged in more benchmarking and opportunities to learn from and contribute to good practice. You have a strong ethos and culture of being a learning organization and being involved in the wider educational environment is part of this. You are involved with a group of 8 Local Authorities and this has led to additional partnership working and the spread of good practice. You have examples of your good practice published on the National Improvement Hub (4.2.4)





- You were again able to demonstrate that you analyse customer feedback and complaints and act to fully understand such feedback, learn from any mistakes and implement corrective actions and improvements where appropriate. You do this at a local level, but this is also monitored at Head Office to ensure learning takes place and opportunities for continuous improvement and the spreading of Good Practice are not missed. Complaint trends and issues are again reported to and discussed by the Education Leadership Team who build any relevant issues into the Quality Assurance regime to ensure that issues are addressed across the authority (4.3.4)
- You have continued to develop your Family Friendly Accreditation scheme and Standards. You have also developed and provided training about the scheme and monitored its effectiveness (5.1.2)

## 8. ACTION PLANNING & NEXT STEPS

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The achievement of Customer Service Excellence is an ongoing activity and it is important that East Renfrewshire Council-Education Department continues to meet the elements of the criteria throughout the three years the hallmark is awarded for. Efforts must be made by Customer Service Excellence holders to continually improve their service.

We recommend that you develop an action plan based on the findings of this report. The action plan does not need to be a separate document and is likely to be more effective if the actions are embedded in your normal improvement and service developments plans.

We will undertake an annual review that will look at your continued compliance with the Customer Service Excellence. As part of the review we will also look at progress on any findings of the previous assessments.

In addition to reviewing progress outlined above, we will also review the services delivery, done so by following customer journeys.

For more information on the annual review please refer to our document “Building on your Customer Service Excellence success – Preparing for the annual review”.

Holders must inform SGS of any major changes in the service provision covered by the scope of the certificate. This includes reorganisation or mergers.

In addition, SGS must be informed should the certified service experience a significant increase in customer complaints or critical press coverage.



If you are in doubt at any stage, we strongly recommend contacting the Customer Service Team for advice on the significance of any service or organisational change, or issues surrounding customer complaints.

SGS will visit within the next 12 months for the annual review.

SGS recommends that East Renfrewshire Council-Education Department retains a copy of this report to aid continuous improvement, and as a reference document for future assessment reviews.