

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEEThursday 30 March 2017Report by Director of EducationCUSTOMER 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 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 for the Education Department took place in January 2016 and assessment is undertaken on an annual basis.

REPORT

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

6. The second stage was to review the actual service delivered in establishments by focusing on two 'customer journeys'; family centred approaches and support for probationer teachers. This was carried out by interviewing family first workers, parents, teachers, head teachers and partners to see how these aligned with customer insight. The outcome of the review was the continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

7. The assessment report, included in Appendix 1 of this paper, noted:

“You have very high levels of customer insight and use this effectively to develop services to meet the specific needs of customers.”

“There continues to be a 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.”

8. The report recognises the department’s sustained commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified 13 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 assessment in January 2016 when there were ten.

9. These areas are set out in the report but included:

- very high levels of customer insight used effectively to develop services;
- consultation of customers integral to continuous improvement;
- commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery;
- customer insight informing policy and strategy;
- training in Data Protection and Information Security to protect the privacy of customers;
- staff awareness of customers’ needs and preferences;
- provision of customer information, including use of electronic media;
- analysis of customer feedback; family friendly accreditation.

10. The report identifies three areas of improvement including greater use of e-learning to support probationer teachers and consideration of a more robust system to support staff who are lone workers.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

11. Costs for the annual assessment are met within the Education Department’s revenue budget.

CONCLUSION

12. The assessment report and the confirmation of the continued achievement of the Customer Service Excellence standard recognise the Education Department’s sustained commitment to service excellence and continuous improvement.

RECOMMENDATION

13. The recommendation is that elected members:

- a. note the continuing 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
30 March 2017

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 -

“Renewal 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:	Rosamund Rodriguez/Maureen Sneddon Rosamund.Rodriguez2@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk Maureen.sneddon@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk Quality Improvement Officers Tel: 0141 577 3222/ 2942		
Site(s) assessed:	Education Psychology Service, St Johns Campus	Date(s) of audit(s):	17 and 18 January 2017
Lead Assessor :	Robert Sullivan	Additional team member(s):	
Type of Assessment:	Renewal		
Review of Certification Claims	Claims are accurate and in accordance with SGS guidance		



2. East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department

CONTEXT

East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department is based in two sites 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, 1400 teaching staff and 1300 local government staff as its main customers alongside parents and carers.

3. Method of Assessment

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

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

The Assessor was accompanied throughout the assessment by Rosamund Rodriguez 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 compliance	Actual number of non-compliance	Actual number of partial compliance	Actual number of Areas for Improvement
1	2	0	0	0
2	2	0	0	3
3	2	0	0	0
4	3	0	0	0
5	2	0	0	0

Number of good practices awarded during the assessment	15
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Have the partial compliance(s) raised at the last assessment been closed?	NA
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6. AREAS OF PARTIAL COMPLIANCE

CRITERION 1

No Partial Raised

CRITERION 2

No Partial Raised

CRITERION 3

No Partial Raised

CRITERION 4

No Partial Raised

CRITERION 5

No Partial Raised

7. OBSERVATIONS

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

- You may wish to consider, in discussion with probationer teachers, the format and timing of your Core Professional Learning training sessions for probationer teachers (2.2.1).
- You should consider if greater use could be made of e-learning to support probationer teachers. This could be used to ensure slides and other information would be available on an ongoing basis and to further improve peer support through effective use of online interaction (2.2.1).
- In discussion with some staff who operate as lone workers, the Assessor felt that more robust and established systems to report on the whereabouts and welfare of staff may be beneficial. You may wish to give consideration to the use of telephony or similar systems to do this (2.2.4).



Areas of Good Practice

- You prepared well for the CSE review and provided a range of evidence that was 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. It is again clear that you wish to work with the assessment body in a positive and constructive way to ensure that the assessment is as robust and rigorous as possible. In doing so, you add value to the service through continuous improvement and improved customer focus and satisfaction.
- During the previous review, the Assessor noted that the useful information videos on the Educational Psychology Service website could not be viewed on any device when outside of the Education Department. You have now remedied this by hosting these on You Tube and was seen during this assessment.
 - You are utilising the CSE framework as part of the evaluation of parts of your service. In general terms, CSE has become a useful tool for continuous improvement within the service. This can be seen once again by the increasing number of Compliance Plus scores awarded this year.
- You continue your strong commitment to involving and engaging with customers throughout your Department. This was evidenced throughout this review and was verified in discussion with customers as well as through the evidence presented. 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 top of the organisation and has become embedded within your service in meaningful ways.
- At this review you discussed the increasing demand for the services of the Education Department as a result 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 new Schools and family centres planned for the future to take account of the increased demand for your service.
- You again demonstrated a very strong customer focus throughout the Department. Staff from all areas interviewed were clear that their key role was to improve education and learning for citizens of East Renfrewshire. This permeated all aspects and personnel of the service that the assessor encountered during the assessment.
- Customers spoken to by the Assessor included 'customers of the Family First service and internal customers such as probationary teachers.



- Customers were particularly impressed by the flexible and evolving approach of staff to meet the changing needs of children and parents/ carers throughout their time with your service.
- This year those customers interviewed by the Assessor expressed a view that your service actively listened to and acted upon their expressed needs and preferences.
- Through observation and discussion with customers it was clear that customers were confident and at ease in speaking with a range of professionals within your Department and staff were very accessible.
- You work with partner agencies in order to best support your customers, prevent customer shuttling and offer a 'one stop shop' where possible was again a key feature of the customer journeys explored at this review. This was discussed as part of Family First service which assists customers in accessing partner agencies, coaching customers and receiving referrals from other customers.
- Customers felt that at all stages in their dealings with your service and partner agencies they were kept well informed and had a clear understanding of the next steps, timescales and accountability.
- 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.
- The Education Department continues to perform well across a range of National statistics and measures. You are the highest performing mainland authority in terms of SQA results. In 2016, there were outstanding S4, S5 and S6 results with the best ever results. High levels of performance were also evidenced through the national data gathered for children's progress in the Curriculum for Excellence however at this point, The Scottish Government are describing this as experimental data.



Areas of Compliance Plus

- You hold and utilise detailed information about the characteristics of prospective and current customers. This includes census data and information on such as new housing developments within the area. As an example of current customers, the Assessor saw data relating to those using the early learning and childcare provision detailing such as The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation and ethnicity data (1.1.1).
- You have very high levels of customer insight and use this to develop services to meet the specific needs of customers. Throughout this Review, the Assessor was impressed by the knowledge staff displayed about customers. This detailed insight was verified in discussion with customers spoken to by the Assessor (1.1.2).
- In your Family First service 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).
- You have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving your service and advise customers of the results and action taken. At the highest level, the Director of Education continues to engage with pupils and uses these consultations to further improve insight into service delivery and to impact change where appropriate. Your system for student/ 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. At the review, some discussion revolved around the Early Years consultation as well as consultations about individual facilities which have directly influenced service provision (1.2.2).
- There continues to be a 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 that results and actions are published and fed into mechanisms such as forward plans to monitor implementation where appropriate. In terms of the customer journeys this year, Family First engaged in consultations to determine the vision and aims of the service as well as the co-design of the actual service delivery model. At an individual customer level consultation takes place to determine the



ongoing nature of the work taking place with a very child/ person centred approach(2.1.1).

- You have used your extensive customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity. A number of examples of this across the service were evidenced at this review (2.1.2).
- The authority has high levels of training in respect of Data Protection and Information Security in order to protect the privacy of customers. The Department has ensured that all Head Teachers have been appropriately trained and that this has been cascaded to class teachers and other staff. This was confirmed by probationer teachers, in addition discussion was held around the legislation in respect of Child Protection and Data Sharing (2.1.5).
- At this review, you were able to evidence a strong customer focus in relation to recruitment and training. Job descriptions, Person Specifications and training pathways were customer focused and person-centred (2.2.1).
- 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. Staff involved in the customer journeys followed in this review used their insight to develop appropriate service provision in the short, medium and long term (2.2.4).
- Through the provision of numerous pieces of evidence, you demonstrated that your information provision is delivered in ways that meet the needs and preferences of customers. In terms of oral presentation and delivery of information it was clear that the pace, format and content of information delivery is tailored to meet specific circumstances (3.21).
- You provide your customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels. At this Review, the Assessor noted that information has been reviewed across various parts of the service. There was detailed discussion about the appropriateness of different media and the use of a variety of channels to suit customer preferences. Interestingly, parts of the service found that such as SMS messaging and telephone calls proved very popular and effective with some customer groups (3.4.1).



- You were again able to demonstrate that you analyse customer feedback and complaints and take action to fully understand such feedback, learn from any mistakes and implement corrective actions and improvements where appropriate. It was also clear that you do this at a local level but also that this is monitored and progressed 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. Data was viewed on site and was discussed in some detail (4.3.4).
- You have continued to develop your Family Friendly Accreditation scheme over the past year. You have also developed and provided training about and monitored its effectiveness. 81% of the original participants now have Silver status and are working towards Gold. This has now been rolled out to Primary Schools with 68% of them holding Bronze status (5.1.2).

8. ACTION PLANNING & NEXT STEPS

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.