

**Appendix A**



**COMMITMENTS SURVEY**

**APRIL 2007**

**SUMMARY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Copeland Borough Council appointed CN Research to carry out an independent assessment of the Council's Customer Service Commitment Policy to determine whether the Council departments are fulfilling the Council's Customer Service Commitment policy. This report shows the analysis from the survey which was carried out between 15<sup>th</sup> March and 16<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

## **METHODOLOGY**

CN Research was initially provided with a sampling frame of 100 of the most recent contacts to each of the six departments (Legal & Democratic, Leisure & Environment, Policy & Performance, Regeneration, Customer Services, and Finance & Business. A further 158 contacts were provided once the Survey commenced, making a total of 758 contacts. Telephone interviews were attempted for all the contacts with a telephone number, contacts without a phone number were sent either a postal or e-mail questionnaire.

## **RESPONSE RATES**

The total number of interviews achieved was:

- Telephone interviews 195 (from a possible 503 contacts)
- Postal 30 (from 250 sent out)
- Email 1 (from 5 sent out).

This gives a total number of 226 interviews.

## **CONFIDENCE INTERVAL**

226 interviews would produce results with a confidence interval of + or – 6.5% at the 95% level.

## **RESULTS**

### **Telephone**

This was the most popular method of contact, 52% of those surveyed contacted the Council this way. 65% dialed the contact centre number and 35% dialed the Officer's number directly.

**Our Commitment states “We will answer telephone calls within 15 seconds during office hours”**

- 48% of those that called the contact centre were answered within the commitment
- 68% of those that dialled the Officer directly were answered within the commitment

16 people suggested changes to this commitment, which included extending the target response time and more staff to answer calls

### **Face to Face**

This was the second most popular method of contact with 36% of those surveyed choosing to contact the offices in person.

**Our Commitment states “We will attend to customers who visit our reception within 5 minutes of their arrival”**

- 88% of people that visited Council offices in person were seen within the commitment

6 people suggested changes to this commitment which included both increasing and reducing the target time.

### **Voice messages**

20% of those surveyed left a voice message.

**Our Commitment states “We will respond to voice messages left by customers within 1 working day”**

- 63% received a response within the commitment

12 people suggested changes to this commitment which included both increasing and reducing the target time.

## **Email**

6% of those surveyed had contacted the Council by e-mail.

**Our Commitment states “We will acknowledge external customers e-mails within one working day and respond fully to all e-mail enquiries within 3 working days”**

- 50% of people who contacted Council by email received an acknowledgement within the commitment.
- 50 % received a full response within the commitment.

16 people suggested changes to this commitment which included both increasing and reducing the target time. Other suggestions were that there should be an immediate answer and that there should be a second contact if the message is urgent and the person is out of office.

## **Letters**

Least popular was contact by letter, with only 4% of those surveyed contacting the Council by letter, 30% of these were letters of complaint sent directly to the department.

**Our Commitment states**

**“We will acknowledge letters of complaint within 3 working days of receipt and respond fully to all letters within 10 working days”**

**plus**

**“ We will respond to all letters received from our customers within 10 working days, as follows:**

- None of those who contacted the department directly with a letter of complaint received an acknowledgement within 3 days.
- 40% received a full response to their letter within the commitment.

6 people suggested changes to the commitment to acknowledge letters , mostly suggesting extending the response timescale.

## **Satisfaction with handling of enquiries and queries**

78% of customers were satisfied with the way their enquiry was handled (just under half said ‘very satisfied’). 16% were dissatisfied. When weighted and compared between departments, there was no significant difference in satisfaction with the way customer’s enquiries are handled.

**Our Commitment Policy states “We will ensure that our Customers feel that they have been dealt with politely, professionally and with respect”**

- 94% of customers said they felt their enquiry or query was dealt with politely.
- 92% of customers felt that their enquiry or query was dealt with professionally.
- 93% of customers felt their enquiry or query was dealt with respect

**Our Commitment Policy states “We will ensure that all of our customers feel that we make it easy for them to make comments or complaints about the service they receive”**

- 85% of customers feel it is easy to make comments, enquiries or complaints about Copeland Borough Council.

**Our Commitment states “We will ensure that all of our customers feel that the information provided about services is easy to understand**

- 87% of the customers feel that the information provided about services by Copeland Borough Council is easy to understand.

### **Further Questions asked**

**How important on a scale of 1-10, 10 being the highest, are the Commitments to you?**

- 80% of the sample rated each of the commitments as an 8, 9 or 10 level of importance.

**Are there any other comments you would like to say about the Commitments Policy at Copeland Borough Council?**

70 responses as follows

1. Good policy, as long as it is carried out (26)
2. Policy fine as it is (11)
3. Need more information on Commitments policy (3)
4. Good commitments policy (3)
5. Can be left waiting when staff are busy (3)
6. Sometimes get call transferred to wrong person (2)

7. All customers should be treated politely & with dignity (2)
8. Local office in Millom is good
9. Commitments are stretched
10. Councillors should abide by this policy as well as officers.
11. Fail on them all
12. Do not use email, so that isn't relevant to me
13. Do feel like they are trying to make changes for the better
14. Receiving a reply to queries within 4 days is sufficient
15. Not easy to get complaints resolved
16. Commitments Policy is a good idea
17. Council shouldn't forget smaller areas
18. E-mails should be handled the same way as telephone calls
19. This is just a paper exercise
20. If officer is out of office, someone else should handle call
21. Parking in Whitehaven should be longer than an hour 1
22. More communication between departments
23. Some issues should be dealt with privately (not at reception desk)
24. Need to improve services overall
25. Survey too long
26. Issues should be dealt with in each area
27. They should listen to people

**Are there any other general comments about Copeland Borough Council and the services it provides?**

121 responses as follows

1. Slow in responding to queries and complaints (26)
2. Complete satisfaction/happy with Copeland Borough Council (22)
3. Poor switchboard - needs improvement (18)
4. Need better recycling system (10)
5. Rubbish never collected/removed (8)
6. Rubbish should get collected weekly instead of fortnightly (6)
7. Litter problem (5)
8. Copeland Borough Council should not forget about other areas than just Whitehaven (3)
9. Copeland Borough Council are useless/waste of time (2)
10. Need more information on services (2)
11. Pavements & roads are in poor condition (2)
12. Unhappy with service from Copeland Borough Council (2)
13. More information on benefits needed (2)
14. Do not deal with the council regularly (2)
15. Paying too much council tax (2)
16. Computer system always down or inaccurate (2)
17. Council tax gone up too much
18. Need more information on what to recycle

19. Don't have enough resources to carry out Commitments
20. Feel like no one cares
21. Don't like discussing my personal information at reception desk
22. Council waste too much money
23. All customers should be treated politely & with dignity

### **Gender**

43% of those who responded were male

57% of those who responded were female

### **Age**

24% were aged between 35-45

23% were aged between 56-64

20% were over 65

17% were aged between 46-55

13% were aged between 25-34

4% were aged between 18-24

1% refused to give their age

### **Ethnic origin**

95% were White British

5% were any other white background (2 White European, Thailand, Scottish, Polish, English/ Danish, 2 Refused and 1 said don't follow multi cultural agenda – waste of money).

0.5% was Asian Indian