

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2017

SUMMARY

1. Members will be aware that the Customer Service Excellence Award (CSE), originally achieved in 2009, is re-certified on an annual basis subject to passing a compliance audit. The award covers a three year period, 2017 being a Year 3. Re-validation focussed on five criteria:
 - (a) Customer Insight;
 - (b) The Culture of the Organisation;
 - (c) Information and Access;
 - (d) Delivery and Timeliness;
 - (e) Quality of Service.
2. The assessor spoke to the Chief Fire Officer, senior managers, front-line staff and support staff, as well as a range of partners and customers of the Service. He also reviewed documentary evidence in print, on the website and on social media.
3. The re-validation audit for 2017 took place on 9th February; it is pleasing to report that the award has been successfully retained for a further twelve months, with no partial or non-compliance issues identified.
4. In summary the assessor found:
 - a) The assessor was pleased to note great leadership and commitment to the service. This was evident from the Chief Fire Officer through to front-line and back office staff.
 - b) Humberside Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) has continued to develop innovative and proactive service models to safeguard and improve the health and safety of its customers.
 - c) Partnership work is very strong in HFRS. Partners were unanimous in their positive comments regarding the commitment of HFRS staff.
 - d) The assessor was pleased to note high levels of customer satisfaction.
 - e) Customer journeys are well developed throughout the service and the assessor was pleased to note recent improvements, for example in complaints handling and in the delivery of services by the Falls Team, where extra steps had been added at the completion of the journeys to ensure customer satisfaction.

The full report is included at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATION

5. Members acknowledge the retention of the Award and take assurance from our ongoing commitment to Customer Service Excellence.

BACKGROUND

6. The Customer Service Excellence Award 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 an emphasis

placed on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

7. During the audit all criteria were reviewed, the Assessors itinerary allowed him to meet with several customers and partners as well as key members of staff.
8. Following the assessment, HFRS 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.
9. The following extracts have been taken from the formal report:

Areas of Good Practice

- The assessor was particularly impressed with the efforts made by staff to service the needs of hard to reach and vulnerable customers, often above and beyond the core requirements of the service. The care shown by members of the Falls Team, and the referral and follow-through of a customer in fuel poverty (noted by staff following a fire incident) being two notable examples.
- Well-developed customer journeys have been further improved. Complaints are treated promptly with in-person contact in addition to the written steps in the policy.
- The commitment of the Head of Service and senior managers was apparent to the assessor. Staff have been invited to participate in new developments (for example the Falls Team) to improve the service offered to customers.
- Senior managers empower employees to participate in the customer-focused culture of HFRS. Staff are given support, but often have freedom of action in order to ensure that the full needs of customers are satisfied (beyond the immediate requirements of the service).
- All customer feedback on the service is logged and analysed to identify trends. The comments are then fed back to service teams by the Community Safety Inclusion Manager, for discussion to ensure that managers and frontline staff are aware of customers' views, and amend service practices to take this into account.

Areas for Improvement

- You have established a customer satisfaction rating of 86% for 2016/17, following detailed analysis of significant levels of customer feedback, and have an aspirational improvement target, yet you have not made your customers aware formally of this. You could consider publishing this achievement on your website, together with a specific improvement target for 2017/8

Management Response

Details of customer satisfaction feedback collected via post incident and post home safety visit questionnaires and contact via the HFRS Website are now published on the HFRS Website at [Compliments and Complaints](#) , our aspiration is to demonstrate continuous improvement in terms of customer satisfaction. The breakdown of responses is as follows:

2016/17			
1,365 respondents			
Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
86.8%	10.7%	1.7%	0.8%

- Your website is well structured and informative (although rather formal) and you make good use of social media to keep your customers aware of your key messages and service improvements. You could consider further improving this by developing a simple 'customer promise' bringing together your key messages to your customers in terms of your standards and targets in key areas such as service quality and timeliness of response.

Management Response

A 'Performance Pledge' pamphlet has been produced in draft and will be progressed through the Tactical Management Team.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

11. The Customer Service Excellence Award contributes to our self awareness and continuous improvement.

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

12. None arising directly.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. None arising directly.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

14. None arising directly.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15. None arising directly.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

16. None arising directly.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

17. The Customer Service Excellence Report will be published on the HFRS Website.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

18. None arising directly.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

19. None.

RECOMMENDATION RESTATED

20. Members acknowledge the retention of the Award and take assurance from our ongoing commitment to Customer Service Excellence.

C BLACKSELL

Officer Contact: Simon Rhodes ☎ 01482 567479
Corporate Planning and Performance Manager

Humberside Fire & Rescue Service
Summergroves Way
Kingston upon Hull
11 April 2017

