

**Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee
3 March 2014**

**Report by the Assistant Chief Fire
Officer/Director of Safety**

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2014

REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Members will be aware that the Customer Service Excellence Award, originally achieved in 2009, is re-certified on an annual basis subject to passing a compliance audit.

The re-certification audit for 2014 took place on 22 January, it is pleasing to report that the Award has been successfully retained for a further twelve months.

The Assessor noted three areas of good practice and assessed two areas 'Compliance Plus', demonstrating exceptional or exemplar behaviour. Two opportunities for improvement were also observed during the audit.

The Assessment Report is included at Appendix 1.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. a) Members acknowledge the retention of the Award and take assurance from our ongoing commitment to customer service excellence.
- b) The Committee makes any recommendations to the Fire Authority as it deems appropriate.

BACKGROUND

2. The Customer Service Excellence Award 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.
3. The Assessor spent the morning reviewing the evidence, which had been submitted prior to his attendance, to meet the Criterion of the award which focused on the Culture of the Organisation and Information and Access. He then met with key members of staff at SHQ and customers from the business community that Technical Fire Safety have been working with. In the afternoon he was taken to see the "Service in Action" at the Learning Centre where he met staff and students on a BTEC Diploma course, and also local Police Community Support Officer's to discuss our partnership working. Community Safety staff also facilitated a home visit to a "customer" who has had a domestic sprinkler fitted.
4. Following the assessment, Humberside Fire & Rescue Service 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.
5. The following extracts have been taken from the formal report:

Areas of Compliance Plus

- The development of the Mosaic system of data management is both innovative and adds to the efficiency of the service. There are plans in place to develop mapping information as a means of sharing information about the Service. The work of the Organisational Intelligence Unit in this regard was commended as compliance plus.
- The Mosaic system has been used to improve services with Care First (Safeguarding Adult Services) in the Hull area. By agreeing protocols for data protection better services are being delivered. This is again an area worthy of compliance plus status.

Areas of Good Practice

- The presentation of information for the Assessor in electronic format with links to the relevant evidence is easy to use and efficient. It is, however, necessary to ensure that the data is updated and to remove or archive historical data so that the evidence is current at the time of assessment review.
- The management of customer complaints and comments demonstrates a real commitment to learning and service improvement. This is indicated when examining the annual report for 2012/13 which shows only 8 justified complaints and 128 expressions of thanks.

- The way the Service delivers advice to ensure statutory compliance to business is appreciated by this sector. It is possible to use the good reputation of the service with those business contacts to promote fire prevention within the business community using business partners as advocates for the Service.

Areas for Improvement

- The Service has systems in place to review all key policies including those covering customer services. Whilst some of these have been updated on schedule there are indications that certain key policies are not being reviewed in accordance with Service guidelines. The Service should review the efficiency of its policy review system to ensure that key policies are in line with practice and thus avoid the risk of potential partial compliances being raised at future assessments.
 - The Service website has been renewed and is now working very well. It was noted, however, that when information is being updated the relevant page just shows a show a bland message which may lead the reader to believe that the promised information is simply not available. Putting up a statement saying that the page is being updated would give a more positive customer message.
6. One area of Partial Compliance remains in place. This was in regard to the customer contact and feedback questionnaires, the report states:
- The Service has now piloted and assessed the new service contact questionnaires. This is now being rolled out to cover the whole of the Service area. It is necessary to examine the Service Policy covering Complaints, Compliments and Comments (which is due to be reviewed) to ensure that the new system and the overall policy are in synch. Subject to analysis of feedback data and policy review this partial compliance should be able to be closed at the next review.
7. The areas for improvement have been noted and a number of actions are already being implemented:
- The monitoring of the review of Policies and Guidance is a standing agenda item of the Performance and Risk Board.
 - The Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 4 February 2014 received a report on Service Policies which identified a number of areas where the policy review process is being improved.
 - The feedback area on the Service website now contains a link to the Service feedback form.
 - The Service website has been updated and now includes a Messages of Thanks page and a basic summary of Complaints against the Service page within the feedback section.
 - The feedback form is now being utilised by sections throughout the Service. Monitoring and analysis of the feedback form will be done by Community Safety central support to continually evaluate and improve the services we provide.
8. The report has been submitted to this Committee so that Members can provide an additional level of scrutiny to the information provided within it.

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPATIBILITY

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

FINANCIAL/RESOURCES/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10. None.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. None.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT/HR IMPLICATIONS

12. None.

CORPORATE RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

13. None.

HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

14. None.

COMMUNICATION ACTIONS ARISING

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

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION

16. None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS AVAILABLE FOR ACCESS

17. Customer Service Excellence Assessment Report January 2014 (Appendix 1).

RECOMMENDATIONS RESTATED

18. a) Members acknowledge the retention of the Award and take assurance from our ongoing commitment to customer service excellence.
- b) The Committee makes any recommendations to the Fire Authority as it deems appropriate.

C BLACKSELL

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19 February 2014