

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILEDUCATION COMMITTEE10 May 2018Report 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 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 for the Education Department took place in January 2017 and assessment is undertaken on an annual basis.

REPORT

5. The assessor spent the 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 examining a 'customer journey'. This was focused on the vocational programme offered by secondary schools. This part of the review was carried out by interviewing staff, taking part in a learner focus group and visits to establishments 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 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.'

8. The report recognises the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified 17 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 and January 2017 when there were ten and 13 respectively.

9. These areas are set out in the report but 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; monitoring and meeting performance standards and sharing this with customers.

10. The report identifies two areas of improvement including the possibility of using a generic 'how satisfied are you?' questionnaire and further exploration of technology 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 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
10 May 2018

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:	Rosamund Rodriguez/ David Gordon Quality Improvement Officers		
Site(s) assessed:	Located at Barrhead High School	Date(s) of audit(s):	15 February 2018
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

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 2017, East Renfrewshire maintained its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools recorded their best performance in all the key measures. 76% 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 41% and has increased by 15% since 2011. The Higher results for S5 increased again in 2017 to the highest level recorded, with 83% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 44% achieving 5 or more Higher awards.

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

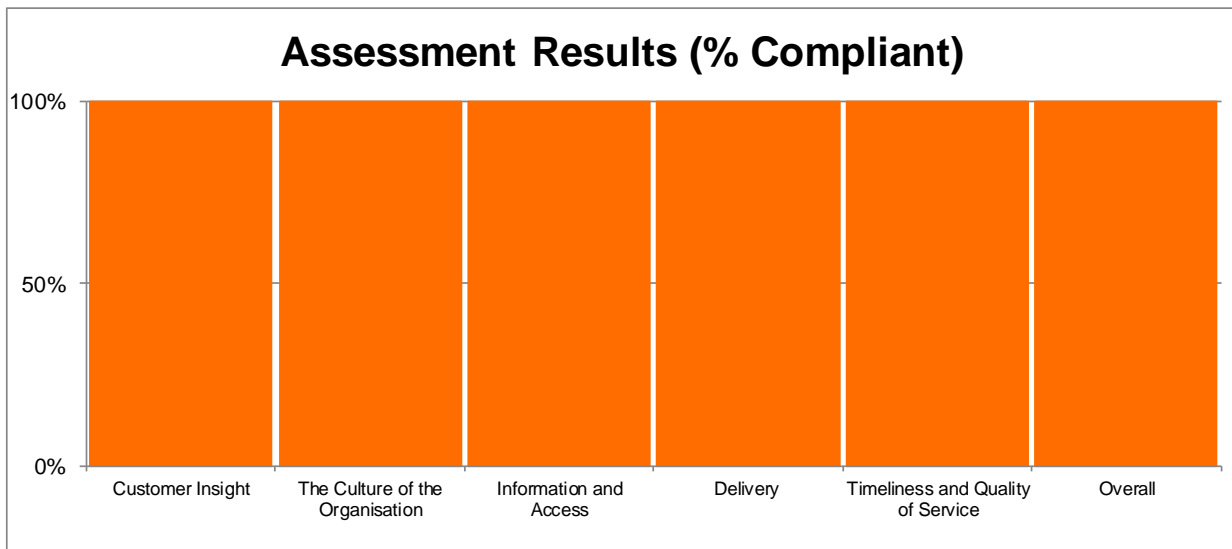
The Assessor was accompanied throughout the assessment by David Gordon and other personnel within the organisation were involved when assessing activities within their responsibility.

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	Number of non-compliances	Number of partial compliances	Number of Full compliances
1	Customer Insight	2	0	0	11
2	The Culture of the Organisation	2	0	0	11
3	Information and Access	2	0	0	12
4	Delivery	3	0	0	13
5	Timeliness and Quality of Service	2	0	0	10

Good practices awarded during the assessment	11
Compliance Plus awarded during the assessment	17



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

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 the possibility of using a generic 'how satisfied are you?' style of question in your surveys in order to make consolidation of your results across the service easier and allow for more effective internal benchmarking opportunities (1.3.1)
- Following the previous CSE assessment, you have put in place several additional measures in relation to lone working. The Assessor notes these and highlighted that in some other environments the use of GPS technology and ID card alert systems are in use. You may wish to continue to explore such options (2.2.4)

Areas for Improvement identified at the last assessment

- It was noted that you may wish to consider, in discussion with probationer teachers, the format and timing of your Core Professional Learning training sessions for probationer teachers. You reviewed and implemented revised session timetabling as well as adding a number of additional optional sessions to meet demand (2.2.1)
- At the last assessment, the Assessor noted that you may wish to 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. You have taken this on board and, in addition, have further developed a yammer group to help with collaboration as well as adding material to your GLOW platform. (2.2.1)
- At the previous assessment visit, 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 have since conducted risk assessments and put in place additional measures such as shared diaries, buddy systems and staff have mobile telephones (2.2.4)



Areas of Good Practice

- You once more had 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. In doing so, you add value to the service through continuous improvement and improved customer focus and satisfaction across the range of services you offer
- 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
- 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 Assessor was able to take part in, and benefit from, a Learner Focus group comprising of pupils involved in various aspects of your Vocational Programme from a wide variety of schools. The group was very open and constructive feedback and dialogue was encouraged and welcomed
- The commitment to customer focus comes from the senior leadership of the organisation and has become embedded within your service in meaningful ways
- 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 new schools and family centres planned to take account of the increased demand for your service. Over the past year you have opened new facilities at Barrhead High School (including vocational facilities), Arthurlie Family Centre and St Clare's Primary and Calderwood Lodge
- In discussion with a wide range of staff and partner agencies the Assessor found there to be high levels of 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
- Stakeholders spoken to by the Assessor included pupils, school based teaching staff, College liaison staff and College teaching staff



- Once more throughout the assessment there was a 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
- Your work with partner agencies 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.
- 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
- In performance terms, during 2017, East Renfrewshire maintained its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools recorded their best performance in all the key measures. 76% 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 41% and has increased by 15% since 2011. The Higher results for S5 increased again in 2017 to the highest level recorded, with 83% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 44% achieving 5 or more Higher awards.

Areas of Compliance Plus

- You hold and analyse detailed 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 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 partner agencies spoken to by the Assessor (1.1.2)
- You have built on your previous good work on the consultation of customers. This 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. At this assessment, we discussed and evidenced the role of consultation in the development of policy around literacy involving a range of stakeholders (1.2.2)



- 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. This year we spoke of, and saw evidence of, those customers involved in vocational education as well as other groups such as refugee families (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 the literacy strategy, 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 to protect the privacy of customers. The Department has ensured that all Head Teachers 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 from individual stakeholders who gave examples of your staff 'going the extra mile' for customers at group and individual level. At this assessment, we looked at the vocational programme customer journey and there were numerous examples of this given by partners, pupils, Head Teachers and staff (2.1.6)
- At this review, you were able to evidence a strong customer focus in relation to recruitment and training. Discussion around changes to the scheduling and content of training for probationary teachers highlighted an increased learning and teaching focus. In addition, you have implemented a development programme in support of newly appointed Head Teachers supported by Quality Improvement Officers. You have also introduced a mentoring or 'buddy' system that gives new Head Teachers support from more established peers (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. There were numerous examples of this



including staff involvement in the review of such as Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, your inclusion strategy and the vocational programme (2.2.4)

- You were able to demonstrate that your information provision is delivered in ways that meet the needs and preferences of customers. This was validated in discussion with Head Teachers, Partners and Pupils in relation to the vocational programme during this assessment visit. You have worked to integrate the vocational programme into the other choices of study opportunities and have done so in a way that makes the information accessible. In addition, you have majored in the development of information about vocational programmes with neighbouring local authorities (3.2.1)
- You have improved the quality of your information to make it more accessible. One example of this is the integration of the vocational programme into the main options booklet for pupils. All available options are now presented in the one source document, and in alphabetical order, irrespective of the delivery agent or venue. This makes it more obvious to all that a wider range of study options are available (3.2.3)
- You have arrangements with Colleges to supply a wider range of opportunities to your pupils and these arrangements benefit your pupils. During this assessment, we looked in detail at this provision and spoke to a range of stakeholders involved. It was clear that this partnership working had improved choice and was opening up wider opportunities to pupils (3.4.1)
- You 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 member to contact (3.4.2)
- You monitor and meet your performance standards and you tell your customers about your performance. In the academic year ended 2017, East Renfrewshire maintained its position as the highest performing mainland authority in national examinations. East Renfrewshire schools recorded their best performance in all the key measures. 76% 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 41% and has increased by 15% since 2011. The Higher results for S5 increased again in 2017 to the highest level recorded, with 83% of young people in the authority achieving 1 or more, 67% achieving 3 or more and 44% achieving 5 or more Higher awards. You have detailed monitoring of performance and report on your performance at school and authority level (4.1.2)



- 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. Recent data was viewed on site (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

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.

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