

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

THURSDAY 13 MARCH 2014

Report by Director of Education

CUSTOMER 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 the Education Committee:
- a. notes the continuing high standard of this award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and,
 - b. approves 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 February 2013 and assessment is undertaken on an annual basis.

REPORT

5. The assessor spent the one and a half day visit interviewing a wide range of customers and service users. The outcome of the review was the award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard.

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

"Following the assessment Education Department – East Renfrewshire Council were 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."

7. The report recognises the department's continuing commitment to providing excellent services and to seeking continuous improvement. It identified no non- or partial compliances with the Customer Service Excellence standard, whilst identifying five 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"*.

8. These areas are set out in the report but included: commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery; customer insight informing policy; staff awareness of customers' needs and preferences; provision of customer information, including use of electronic media; partnership working to meet customer needs.

FINANCIAL AND EFFICIENCY IMPLICATIONS

9. Costs for the annual assessment are met within the Education Department's revenue budget.

CONCLUSION

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

RECOMMENDATION

11. The recommendation is that Elected Members:

- a. notes the continuing high standard of this award in recognition of the department's high quality services; and,
- b. approves this approach to ensuring the department's sustained commitment to continuous improvement.

Mhairi Shaw
Director of Education
March 2014

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Appendix

Appendix 1

Customer Service Excellence Report - East Renfrewshire Council – Education Department

Key Words

Customer Service Excellence, East Renfrewshire Education Department, assessment, continuous improvement

Assessment Report

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
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®

East Renfrewshire Council - Education Department

Address:	Council Offices, 211 Main Street, Barrhead, G78 1SY		
Standard(s):	CSE	Accreditation Body(s)	UKAS
Representative:	Clare Creighton		
Site(s) audited:	St John' Primary	Date(s) of audit(s):	08-09/01//2014
Effective No. of Personnel	200	No. of sites:	1
Lead auditor:	Robert Sullivan	Additional team member(s):	
Type of Assessment:	Recertification Assessment Criterion 1		
Certificate Outcome	<input type="checkbox"/> Granted <input type="checkbox"/> Withheld	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued <input type="checkbox"/> Suspended	
Certification Claims are accurate and in accordance with SGS guidance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council has around 200 staff and provides an education service through secondary schools, primary schools and nursery classes, 17 pre-five establishments (9 nursery classes, 2 nurseries and 6 family centers) 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. The Education Department also has responsibility for Arts, Libraries and Sports, Adult and Family Learning and Facilities Management.

Following the assessment, Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council were 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.

During the assessment no Non or Partial compliances with the standard were identified.

As a result of these findings:

“Award of the **Customer Service Excellence** Standard has been recommended

Yes No

2. METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment was undertaken in two stages; the first was a review of your self assessment pack. This review enabled the assessor to gain an understanding of how the organisation had met the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

The next stage was an on-site assessment. The objective of this part of the assessment was to obtain evidence demonstrating that the applicant was meeting the requirements of the standard, within the area covered by the scope of the application. This evidence was obtained through a documentation review as well as interviews with staff, customers, representatives of partner organisations, and senior management.

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 in the wider public 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.

3. OPENING MEETING

The on-site assessment commenced with an opening meeting.

The assessment activity was discussed. The itinerary, which had been forwarded to Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council in advance, was agreed. 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"

4. ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

The Assessor was accompanied throughout the assessment by Clare Creighton and other Personnel within the organisation were involved when assessing activities within their responsibility.

The assessment resulted in the raising of no non/ partial compliances. A number of observations are listed in Section 7 of this report.

Details of the non/partial compliance(s) can be found in section 5 for Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council to address as appropriate.

Criterion	Number of Elements	Maximum number of Partial compliance	Actual number of non compliance	Actual number of partial compliance
1	11	2	0	0
2	11	2	0	0
3	12	2	0	0
4	13	3	0	0
5	10	2	0	0

	Yes	No
Have the partial compliance(s) raised at the last assessment been closed?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. AREAS OF NON / PARTIAL COMPLIANCE

CRITERION 1

None

CRITERION 2

None

CRITERION 3

None

CRITERION 4

None

CRITERION 5

None

6. OBSERVATIONS

During the site assessment, the following general observations were made. These include: positive areas scored as compliance plus; observations of good practice; opportunities for improvement identified throughout the entire assessment process, as listed below.

Areas for Improvement

- You may wish to construct a schedule of consultation indicating consultation methods, frequency and review dates for consultation in order to more clearly articulate and consider methods used and their effectiveness.

Areas of Good Practice

- There was a strong customer focus throughout the Department and 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 indicated that they felt very well supported by HQ functions in both a pastoral and professional way.
- You continue to see value in consulting with stakeholders in a variety of ways appropriate to them. You do this in a variety of ways including Directors Forum, the Equalities forum, pupil forum, parent's forum and surveys.
- There appeared to be a good use and ethos of sharing resources, ideas and good practice across Schools and this was facilitated by the Education Department centrally.
- You have recently conducted a Teacher Workload survey and hosted a subsequent feedback event to discuss issues.
- You have very high levels of customer satisfaction that is evidenced in both your Education Department surveys and through the Citizens Panel results.

- There was evidence of the organization responding to the needs, preferences and choices of individual customers and groups through the provision of courses and at curriculum planning stages.
- There was evidence of high performance from the authorities Schools as seen from statistics supplied during the assessment.
- In speaking to and observing customers it was clear that they felt comfortable in speaking to staff and others about their experiences.
- You have started to look in an in-depth way at the needs of young people at a very early age to ensure access to appropriate services at the right time. This should led to service provision that is best able to best assist in their development in the most cost-effective way and to secure the best outcomes for them.
- You are currently developing 'The Foundry' as a Council Building or 'hub' in Barrhead. This facility will provide for and meet the educational needs of the wider community.
- You will open a family centre that will serve 0-5 year old customers and include training facilities for parents and support them in various ways including health and welfare benefits information. You have consulted extensively with customers in the development of the service.
- You have opened a new School in the last year and part of the facility is available to the wider community after School hours.

Areas of Compliance Plus

- 2.1.1 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 real attempts to engage with customers to determine their views on service provision and ensure that high levels of customer insight are maintained. Throughout the assessment there was 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.
- 2.1.2 You have used customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to priorities service improvement activity. There are numerous examples of this within the Department.
- 2.2.4 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 spoken to had a keen awareness of customer needs and preferences.
- 3.2.1 You provide your customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels. Examples of this include the growing use of social media such as facebook, twitter and Youtube. There is an increased use of electronic media as a way of disseminating information which has been welcomed by customers.

3.4.1 You made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinate services and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for your customers. Examples include work with colleges, private organisations and others to provide a wider, enhanced vocational programmed for pupils. This includes such as work at The Style Academy and Rouken Glen where the Department works alongside other training and education providers.

7. ACTION PLANNING

The achievement of Customer Service Excellence is an on-going activity and it is important that Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council 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.

Your next steps:

On-going review

It is a requirement of the Customer Service Excellence scheme that 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 Education Department - East Renfrewshire Council retains a copy of this report to aid continuous improvement, and as a reference document for future assessment reviews.

8. RECERTIFICATION INFORMATION

It is confirmed that all elements of the standard have been assessed at least once over the past 3 years

It is confirmed that all partial /non compliances raised over the last 3 years have been reviewed and improvement has been made against these

I confirm that certification should be continued

I confirm that all sites covered in the certification has been visited at least once over the 3 years period