

Governance Committee

2 October 2020

Appendix 1 Key customer experience developments in 2019/20

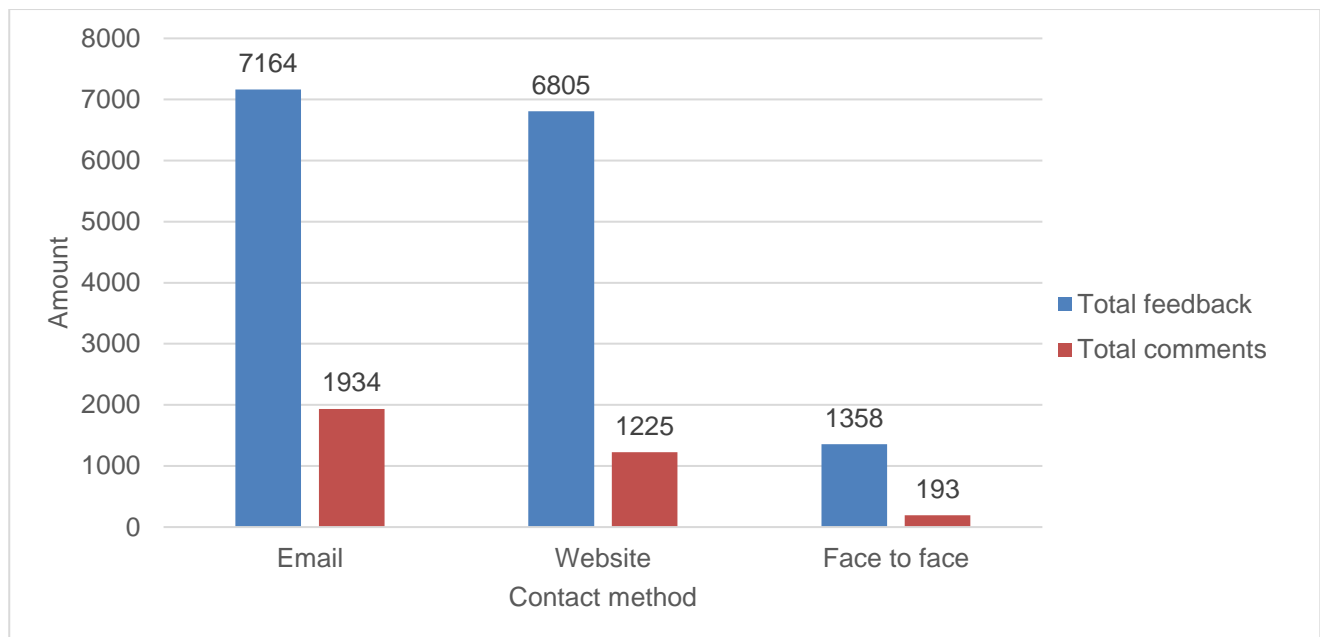
1.0 Customer Feedback in 2019/20

1.1 The collection of feedback from customers using our website, receiving email correspondence and visiting Council buildings has continued to assist structured monitoring of customer satisfaction across the Council and to provide valuable data which informs service improvements. The feedback collected in relation to our website has added value to the Council's ambition for customers to self-serve as much as possible, while striving for a high level of customer service.

1.2 Headlines for customer feedback in 2019/20:

- We received over **15,300 ratings** across all feedback surveys.
- We also received over **3,300 (22%)** verbatim comments from customers.

Graph 1 – Volume of customer feedback and comments, 2019/20



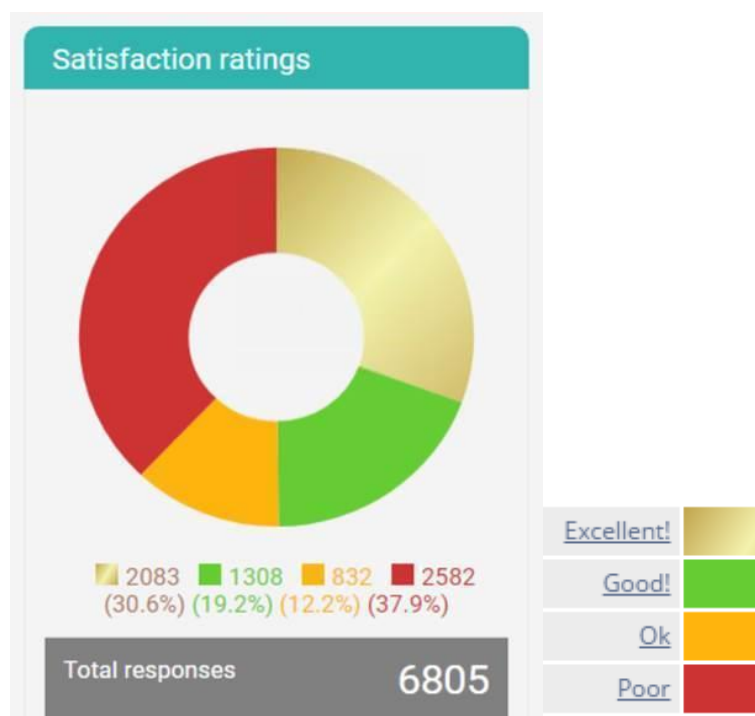
2.0 Website feedback 2019/20

2.1 Key takeaways:

- The website feedback is well used, even after being a regular fixture for nearly three years.
- Our website feedback increased by 5.5%, with over 6,800 pieces of feedback in 2019/20.
- Customer satisfaction rating was 62%, which remained the same as 2018/19.
- Feedback surveys are available on 553 webpages, that's 18% of the ESCC website.
- Some website content is not appropriate for feedback surveys, such as landing pages.
- We received over 1,200 comments as part of customer ratings (18%).
- Customer comments are especially useful in highlighting where to make improvements.
- We created a simple '[You said, we did](#)' webpage to capture the improvements we've made so customers know their feedback is important to us.

2.2 In further developments in 2020/21, the Customer Services Team (CST) will investigate where there are 'pockets' of content that consistently perform below the 62% average for overall customer web satisfaction. The reasons customers visit our website are wide-ranging and we need to consider that it will include visits related to a certain level of dissatisfaction with the range of services we are able to provide in the context of many years of reductions in government funding, or some of the policy and enforcement decisions we take. In order to provide better context, CST will benchmark our website satisfaction rating with similar authorities (and including our partnered councils), in order to get a sense of where feedback satisfaction levels typically fall for local authorities. Out of 13 councils we contacted, eight do gather similar feedback. However, conversations have been temporarily halted due to authorities redirecting staff resources to Covid-19, and we will pursue further discussions when appropriate.

Graph 2 – Customer Thermometer ratings: Website, 2019/20



2.3 Examples of improvements made from feedback we received from our customers:

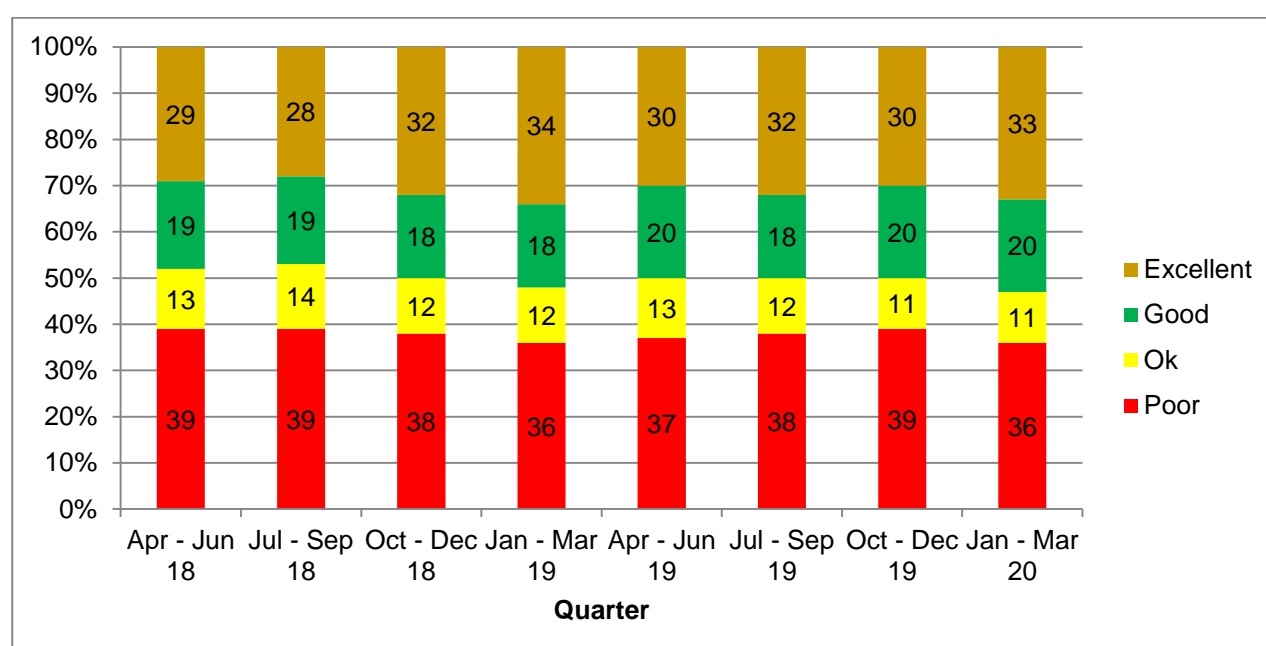
Table 1 – Improvements from customer feedback, 2019/20

Topic / when	Feedback from customers	Changes made	Difference made
Adoption October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of date information about prospective adopters' events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future events presented more clearly New action for staff to keep events dates up-to-date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further negative comments received on this topic.
Apply for a school place December 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customers were confused by the information and they were unable to find where to apply for a school place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced content Broke down into easy steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor ratings have reduced by six times.

Sheltered housing January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link did not direct customers to most suitable information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link altered to re-direct customers to relevant district and borough housing departments across the county 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comments of this nature have ceased
Covid-19 March 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information could be clearer or presented elsewhere on the website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific changes made to certain services' content Addition of 'Latest box' on more pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negative comments have reduced.

2.4 Having two full years of customer feedback, the graphic below indicates the trends of feedback of the last two years has been consistent.

Graph 3 - Website satisfaction ratings: Two-year comparison 2018/19 - 2019/20

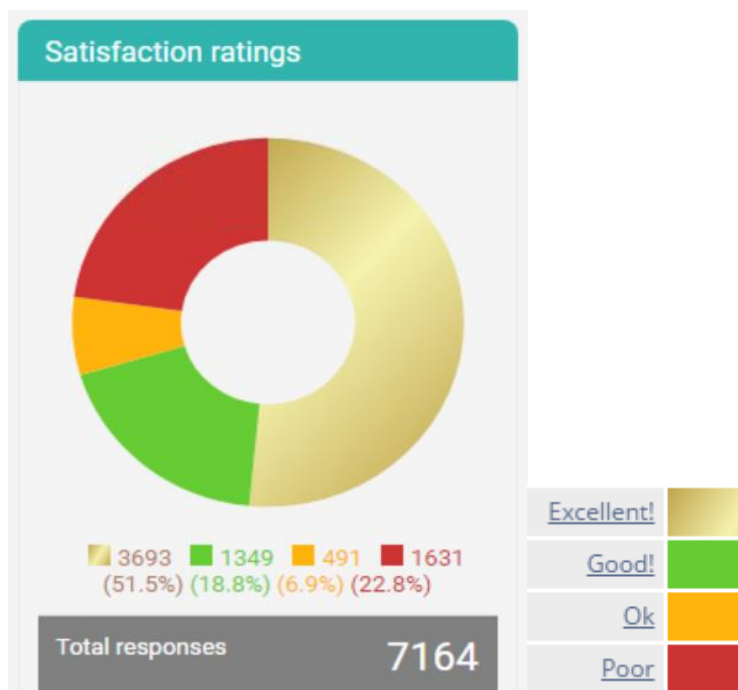


3.0 Email feedback 2019/20

3.1 Key takeaways:

- We received over 7,100 pieces of feedback, that's a 60% increase from 2018/19.
- Three more teams started using the email feedback surveys, totalling 13 teams in 2019/20.
- The Learning Disability Team is the first team in Adult Social Care to collect email feedback.
- Overall customer satisfaction rating for emails was 77%, down from 85% in 2018/19.
- Poor ratings have increased as we widened the range of services which have more challenging customer bases than we had previously collected feedback from.
- We received over 1,900 comments (27%) with customer ratings.
- Comments left with 'poor' ratings continue to mostly relate to a decision made rather than the customer service received.
- However, 'excellent' ratings provide compliments about staff, congratulating them on their good customer service.

Graph 4 – Customer Thermometer ratings: Email, 2019/20



3.2 Managers continue to advise they see the benefit of having a tool that can provide customer insight and the assessment of the quality of email correspondence that is not available through other sources. Comments left by customers provide management with intelligence in relation to possible amendments to their service offer but also, critically, specific praise of a response and/or member of staff. This type of feedback is especially welcomed.

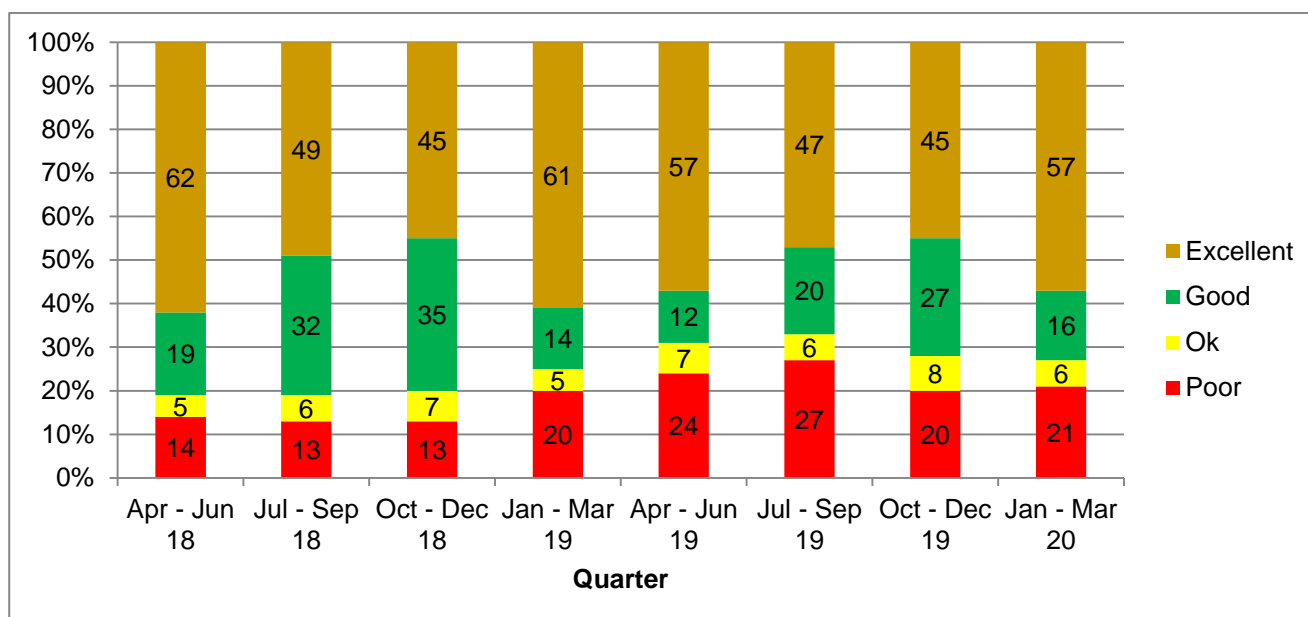
3.3 Examples of some feedback provided from managers includes:

- The feedback contributes to a quarterly summary report which is shared with departmental management and all comments related to business processes are considered for business development.
- Data collected is used to identify issues with training and performance of staff as well as areas where services and systems could be improved.
- As a team, little positive feedback is provided by customers, but Thermometer (feedback) provides a valuable source getting this and reminds the team that the majority of customers are happy with the service they have received.
- The feedback assists us to keep track of the performance of our service offer and has been used as evidence of the high standards of the service.
- Helps identify areas of web content or standardised correspondence that require reviewing.

3.4 Despite the reduction in overall satisfaction in 2019/20, satisfaction levels for email correspondence remain higher than those for our website, as has been the trend since collection of feedback started in 2017.

3.5 Email satisfaction ratings have fluctuated more than their website equivalents over the two full years of feedback collection, as highlighted in the table below. Assessment of service specific feedback suggests that this is related to seasonal campaigns, deadlines or decisions.

Graph 5 - Email satisfaction ratings: Two-year comparison 2018/19 - 2019/20

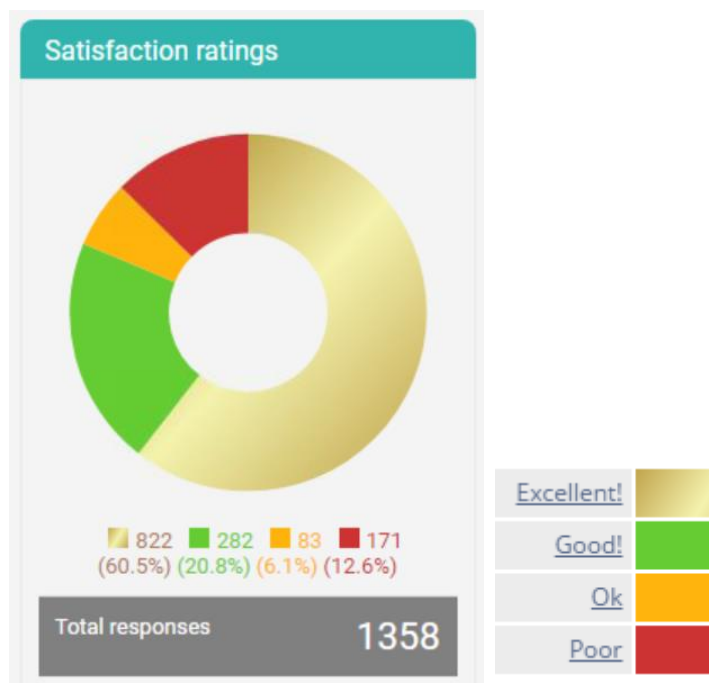


4.0 Face to face feedback 2019/20

4.1 Key takeaways:

- There are five face to face survey devices across the County: Eastbourne and Hastings Libraries, and St. Mary's House, Ocean House and County Hall reception areas.
- We ran face to face surveys from August 2019 until Covid-19 lockdown, 23 March 2020.
- We received over 1,300 pieces of feedback.
- Overall, 87% of customers were satisfied with the customer service they received, 11% higher than 2018/19, although a different software and weighting was used in the previous year.
- We changed the survey in 2019/20 to ask one question ('How would you rate the customer service you received today?') and an option to leave a comment. Previously it was four questions with no comment.
- Staff feedback tells us that customers appear more willing to provide feedback when asked only one question.
- We received 193 comments (14% of surveys completed).
- Library sites continue to receive significantly more feedback than devices in reception areas.

Graph 6 – Customer Thermometer ratings: Face to face, 2019/20



4.2 It should be noted that the 11% increase in customer satisfaction, when compared to last year, could be related to the change in software. However, this feedback is still overwhelmingly positive and does highlight that customers are typically pleased with the service they are receiving when visiting council buildings. Feedback does vary from site to site, as highlighted in Table 3 below.

Table 2 – Face to face survey statistics, 2019/20

Services	Surveys answered	Poor	Ok	Good	Excellent
County Hall	145	7%	3%	10%	80%
St Mary's	17	29%	0%	6%	65%
Ocean House	286	27%	6%	23%	44%
Eastbourne Library	470	8%	6%	21%	65%
Hastings Library	440	10%	6%	24%	60%

4.3 The comments are largely positive and relate to specific members of staff or the service offer in general. As with email feedback, this collection of feedback gathers customer feedback for teams not previously gathered and is well received by managers.

5.0 Telephone feedback

5.1 As highlighted in last year's report, we discontinued the collection of feedback from telephone customers due to technical issues and low levels of staff and customer engagement.

5.2 During 2019/20, East Sussex Highways was the only service to continue collecting feedback by telephone. They use the telephone surveys as part of a suite of measures that make up the customer satisfaction performance indicator for Highways Contract.

5.3 There were 484 customers who provided feedback from August 2019 to March 2020, and 92% of customers who completed the survey were satisfied with the service they had received. The table below highlights customers satisfaction with different elements of their experience.

Table 3 – Telephone survey statistics: East Sussex Highways, 2019/20

Services	No. surveys answered	Overall satisfaction	Satisfaction with:			
			Time taken to respond	Helpfulness and politeness of staff	Fully understood your needs	Quality of information and advice given
Highways (CET)	484	92%	84%	95%	96%	93%

5.4 In early 2020/21, Highways were able to automate the surveys so all customers will have an option to complete the survey if they continue to hold at the end of their calls. This removes staff

asking customers to complete it. It is anticipated this will significantly increase the volume of completed surveys.

6.0 Customer Service Network

6.1 The Customer Services Network is a permanent part of our customer experience remit, providing a working group to feed back to the Customer Experience Board from customer-facing staff and services.

6.2 The group members indicate that the network provides a useful forum to highlight issues that have arisen in their service area, which can be discussed with colleagues from across the Council. Some issues have been resolved in the meetings and others have required work outside of the group.

6.3 The group has welcomed speakers from Council services to provide advice and information to members and to cascade to their teams. In 2019/20 the group received updates from:

- Facilities Management Team: Switchboard and reception enquiries
- Customer Services Team: Data protection best practice
- Communications Team: Increased importance of social media

6.4 This group continues to provide a valuable forum to update colleagues about new or existing developments related to customer experience. Over time, it has also provided an increasingly useful forum to gather intelligence in relation to issues facing teams from across the Council and to feedback to the Customer Experience Board.

7.0 Conclusions

7.1 Gathering customer feedback, across different modes of engagement with our customers, continues to provide us and colleagues across Council services with valuable insight into customers' opinions and their needs that we previously did not gather.

7.2 We now have a large amount of data, which provides a useful benchmark that can help us to understand how customers view their interaction with the Council and improve our customers' experience, whichever service they are accessing.

7.3 We will continue to increase the number of places where customers can complete a survey, where possible, for existing feedback surveys (website, email, face to face), in order to continue to provide valuable information for evaluating and improving our services for customers.