

Customer Service Excellence

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Where has it come from?

- The Charter Mark was an award demonstrating the achievement of national standard for excellence in customer service in United Kingdom public sector organisations. Introduced in 1991, it was replaced in 2008 by Customer Service Excellence standard, with the last issued Charter Marks expiring in 2011.



What is Customer Service Excellence?

- A practical way of driving customer-focused change within organisations such as local authorities.
- A unique improvement tool to help those delivering services put their customers at the core of what they do.
- A focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.
- An emphasis on developing customer insight, understanding the user's experience and robust measurement of service satisfaction.

We have achieved the standard every year in Oxford City Council since it was introduced in 2013 !!

CSE operates on a 3 year cycle with 2 light touch assessments and 1 full assessment covering all elements in each criterion

Next assessment is a "light touch" planned for November this year



How does it work?

- **There are 5 Criterion areas as follows:**
 - Customer Insight (11 elements)
 - Culture of the Organisation (11 elements)
 - Information & Access (12 elements)
 - Delivery (13 elements)
 - Timeliness & Quality of Service (10 elements)
- **There are 57 elements that sit under all of the criterion**
 - Organisations must achieve full compliance or compliance plus in at least 80% of the elements contained in each criteria
 - No more than 2 “partial” compliances allowed within each criterion



How does it work?

Customer Service Excellence is designed to operate on three distinct levels

As a driver of continuous improvement

- By allowing organisations to self-assess their capability, in relation to customer focussed service delivery, identifying areas and methods for improvement

As a skills development tool

- By allowing individuals and teams within the organisation to explore and acquire new skills in the area of customer focus and customer engagement, thus building their capacity for delivering improved services

As an independent validation of achievement

- By allowing organisations to seek formal accreditation to the Customer Service Excellence standard, demonstrate their competence, identify key areas for improvement and celebrate their success.



What are the benefits?

- **Better understanding of customers needs and preferences**
- **Identification of more effective and efficient ways of working with customers**
- **Opportunities to show where customers needs are being met**
- **Opportunities to show where departments are excelling in their service delivery**
- **Improved Services in general**



Compliance Plus Guidance

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- Evidence should relate clearly to requirements of a specific element
- Must show how you are “Exceeding the standard” going beyond basic requirements
- Needs to show exceptional practice/delivery
- Should be an “Exemplar” to others – displaying elements of best practice

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Assessors Comments

“At the end of the last review, the Council had achieved 13 compliance plus scores (Compliance plus is awarded when there is evidence of going above and beyond the criteria where it is found to be embedded across the organisation) – this has increased this time to 16 !!

This is an amazing result, given the year that we have all endured. To continue to show compliance with the standard would have been good – showing that you still warrant 13 CP scores would have been great – but showing that you also warrant an extra 3 is fantastic and is a real testament to the quality of staff that you have in place. Everyone on the day was remarkably upbeat, excited and motivated by what they do, and that in itself was quite a surprise as I expected people to be feeling a little jaded and flat. I think it says a great deal about the string culture that you have built over recent years and I am sure that this will continue to take you through the challenges coming up in the next year”



Other key points flagged

- Development of the Clark's family model to illustrate the range of issues that customers might face and the more holistic approach that staff might need to take to deal with these effectively – much more 'joined up' approach and seeing people as individuals rather than as issues
- Lots of work has been done to identify the most vulnerable and to make sure that they are provided with the services they need
- Development of new and effective approaches to food support, working with others and making sure people have timely access to quality food
- Lots of evidence of staff volunteering to work outside their normal areas of competence to help deliver services during the pandemic
- A lot of training has been adapted to enable it to be provided remotely so that learning and development can still continue
- Developed range of local hubs to provide effective services during the pandemic, including providing effective IT infrastructure
- Support for local businesses – both with the pandemic and beyond – eg development of co-working space
- Levels of complaints have been generally lower than in previous years
- Supporting local landlords to improve the quality of housing that is available
- Performance data provided shows that services are being largely maintained despite the challenges of the pandemic



Development Areas

- Ensure that the road map out of the pandemic is clear, effective and shared effectively with staff and with customers
- Implement findings of work with traders in the covered market. Staff said that 2021 will be used to identify what they need from the Council and work will start to be implemented in 2022. It would be good to re-visit this at the next visit
- Ensure that the service integration plans are implemented effectively in ways that can be shown to meet the needs and expectations of customers (both internal and external)
- Think about what support staff might need as they move into the new 'business as usual'
- Consider how the concept of the internal customer could be developed more explicitly across the piece. There is some evidence that this is happening in some areas, but not all. Are there ways that you might apply the holistic approach embedded in the Clark's family model?
- Think about ways to continue to identify possible latent demand and to meet this. There have been areas where the challenges of the pandemic have shown needs that weren't necessarily known before – could this be done in a more structured way?





Compliance Plus Breakout Rooms

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Discuss areas of work you have been involved in over the last few months that you think would fit into Compliance Plus status

Remember:

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- Needs to show exceptional practice/delivery
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Q & A

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