

What our customers told us and how we responded



“Over the course of the year I have received many messages from members of the public who have been so pleased by the service that they have received that they have felt inspired to write and thank us. It is easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day detail of our jobs, but these messages remind me that what we do, whether working in direct contact with customers or not, has helped to make millions of lives better over the past year and will continue to do so. I personally take great pride in that and I hope that you do too.” Terry Moran – CEO



Customer feedback

We welcome our customers' views on our service and how we can improve.

In 2008/09 the top five areas of reported positive feedback were:

- our staff (44 per cent);
- information (19 per cent);
- advice (18 per cent);
- telephone access (3 per cent); and
- correspondence (2 per cent).

In 2008/09 the top five areas of reported negative feedback were:

- you take too long (42 per cent);
- you've got it wrong (10 per cent);

- the DWP policy is unfair – information provided not used (7 per cent);
- the information you have given me does not suit my needs (7 per cent); and
- unable to access the system (4 per cent).

Customer survey

Our surveys measure customers' attitudes towards, and satisfaction with, the service we provide.



Our disability customer survey results show that customers remain highly satisfied with the overall service they receive from us, with nearly four in five customers (78 per cent) satisfied.



Our pension customer survey (undertaken in 2007) showed that 85 per cent of customers were satisfied with the service they received.

We are looking to introduce a new Pension, Disability and Carers Service Quarterly Satisfaction Monitor later in 2009/10. This will replace the previous customer surveys.

Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping provides an independent assessment of the quality of service provided by our pension, disability and carers centres.

Our results highlight areas where we can improve and also help to assess how well we are meeting published standards of customer service.

In 2008/09:

- staff throughout the agency continue to be praised for treating customers professionally. Staff were described as helpful, polite and easy to talk to with 99 per cent of mystery shopping callers feeling they were treated with respect by pension centre staff;
- in disability benefit centres and the Carers Allowance Unit, mystery shopping callers described call agents as being respectful of callers (89 per cent) and effective at keeping the customer informed of what is happening throughout the call (91 per cent);
- disability benefits centre and Carers Allowance Unit telephone calls achieved the lowest performing scores overall and customers preferred face-to-face contact over other forms;

- a clear gap in results has developed in pension centres between telephone and leaflet assessments against languages and text phone. Callers requiring a second language in particular are receiving consistently less accurate information than any other group; and
- the completeness of information provided by pension centres improved throughout the year, giving a year to date score of 52.6 per cent – an increase of 18.4 per cent.

Improving customer service

While we strive to be an exemplar of public service, we do not always get it right. We take customer feedback, positive and negative, seriously.

In 2008/09, we aimed to reply to:

- general correspondence/enquiries from customers within 10 working days – our performance was 85 per cent; and
- negative feedback from customers within seven working days – our performance was 95 per cent.

We have listened to what you have said about our service and in 2008/09 we have:

- reworded the Winter Fuel notification to make it clearer to customers that they need to notify us of any change of circumstances;
- put a new process in place to advise widows earlier of the cessation of Widows Benefit when approaching 65; and
- introduced a new general benefits information leaflet which better clarifies the qualifying criteria for Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance.

Parliamentary correspondence

During 2008/09, we got better at replying to correspondence and maintained a consistently strong level of performance against Cabinet Office targets.

The Cabinet Office reporting period for Parliamentary correspondence is the calendar year January 2008 to December 2008.



MP letters to Ministers – Delegated to Chief Executive for reply with 90 per cent cleared in 20 days. 1,178 replies issued with 98 per cent cleared in 20 days.



MP letters direct to Chief Executive with 90 per cent cleared within 15 days. 1,961 replies issued, with 98 per cent cleared in 15 days.

