

Policy and Resources Select Committee

The new approach for improving Customer Contact

March 2020



Hampshire
County Council

www.hants.gov.uk

Background - Hantsdirect

- Created in circa 2007, Hantsdirect is the County Council's contact centre;
- When implemented, the model was ahead of its time;
- Provided a simpler route for Hampshire Residents to route their enquiries, whilst enabling economies of scale to be delivered, and freeing up front-line services;
- Hantsdirect manages the majority of in-bound contact by phone and email;
- Teams within Hantsdirect (aligned to service departments) action and respond to enquiries on behalf of departments where they can;
- Where unable to respond, these are directed on to the relevant service team.

A changing landscape

- The way in which our front-line services are delivered has changed, and continues to do so;
- More services and information, which were traditionally supported by Hantsdirect, are accessible on-line;
- This is changing the extent to which people want or need to speak directly to the County Council for help or guidance, as people make greater use of digital channels and services;
- Often more complex queries received by Hantsdirect need to be referred on to front-line service teams, causing hand-offs and delays;
- Over time, the value Hantsdirect once provided is diminishing;
- Crucial that a customer's first point of contact can integrate seamlessly into the relevant service / departments operating model to enable:
 - Efficiency in our end-to end-processes, ensuring enquires are resolved right, first time;
 - Ability to redesign contact services around developing digital services, whilst ensuring those that need help can continue to access this quickly and more effectively;
 - Continuous improvement culture for customer service;
- We need to ensure the County Councils contact model is fit for purpose within a changing environment – it needs to be agile and responsive to the differing needs of our services.

A changing landscape

- Technology already available (through investment in our digital platform) has opened up opportunities to provide contact services in a different way, whilst still retaining a single identity for the County Council:
 - It's no longer necessary for everyone to be sat in one office in a contact centre model;
 - We have the ability to handover and track in-bound and out-bound contact within and across different contact centres;
 - Investment in our digital platform, including our web pages, enables us to continue to build on our existing on-line services (including web chat), providing greater choice of channel and ways to transact with the council to our customers - which are also more cost effective;
 - Data and insight available to us on in-bound and out-bound contact within our contact centres, as well as on-line, is helping us to further identify 'first point of contact' failure demand, and therefore opportunities to improve these (and our end-to-end) services;

Putting research in to practice

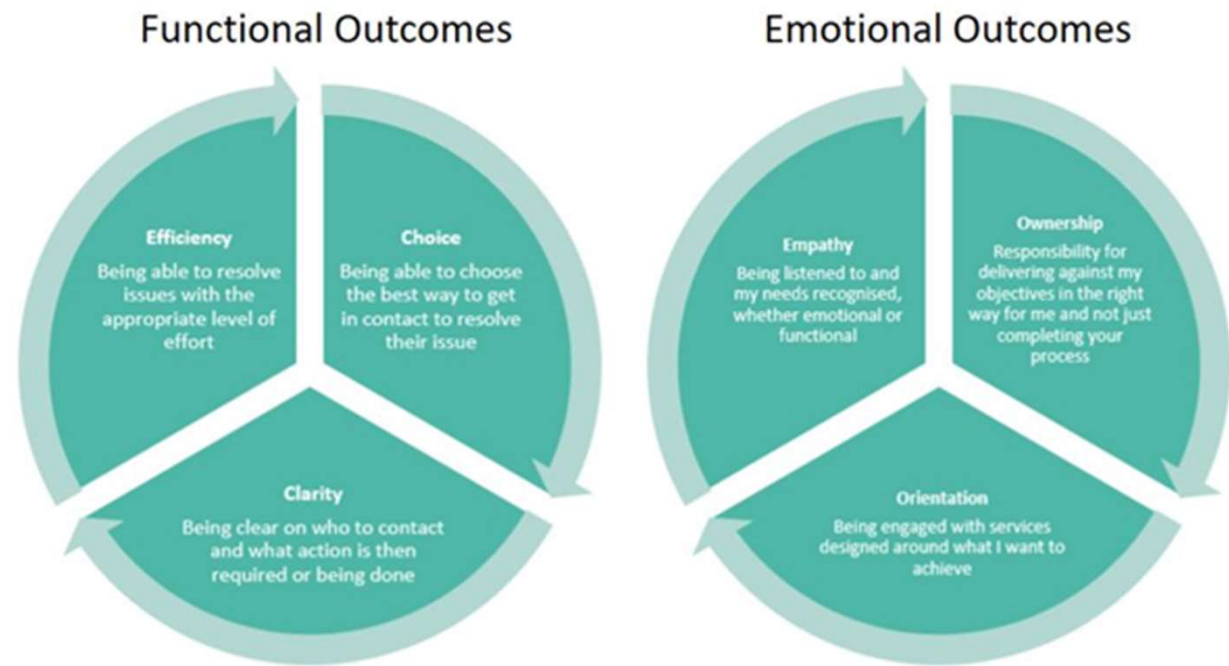
- Research based review completed 2018 – this included:
 - interviews, focus groups and surveys with internal and external stakeholders and customers (including HCC Councillors and Town & Parish Councillors and Clerks);
 - Call listening at Hantsdirect;
 - Demographic research;
- The review sought to identify what (was perceived) to work well, or not, within the current contact approach, and where opportunities existed to improve / make the model more efficient and effective;
 - The review established:
 - No clear principles existed for deciding how contact should be managed;
 - Hantsdirect is only one part of a highly complex array of contact and communications channels that have evolved over time between HCC and service users.

Putting research in to practice

Designing for success

Functional and emotional customer outcomes (or principles) underpinning our future approach for contact across HCC have been agreed:

- Functional – how customers wish to interact
 - Choice
 - Clarity
 - Efficiency
- Emotional – the way contact feels, the true driver of success
 - Ownership
 - Empathy
 - Orientation



These principles seek to provide a common customer experience across the Council within a devolved model, which keep the importance of a good 'customer experience' at the heart of any new contact model

The new approach

- Disaggregation of the current Hantsdirect contact centre, repositioning these contact services into each department's respective management structure;
- This will provide the foundation for departments to redesign their broader service contact strategies and operating models to suit their individual business requirements, but within the framework of the agreed Customer Contact design principles;
- Enables full integration with the departments front-line services, providing them the best opportunity to:
 - Reduce the existing costly failure demand and duplication
 - Design and manage their contact services in a way which better supports their broader service model, and the accurate and timely resolution of enquiries for their customers;
- Staff consultation on the proposals was undertaken during January and February 2020;
- Implementation of the new model will take place during **May 2020**;
- No impact for residents contacting the County Council – current contact channels (including telephone numbers) will remain in place as part of this initial implementation.

The new approach

