

Transport Delivery Committee

Date	7 January 2019
Report title	Customer Services Performance Report
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Report has been considered by	Councillor Kath Hartley, Lead Member for Putting Passengers First

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

- To note the contents of this report.

1. Purpose

1.1. To report matters relating to the performance of the Customer Relations and Ticketing Services Teams. This report includes:

Section 2	Background
Section 3	Telephone Performance
Section 4	Customer Relations Case Performance
Section 5	Email Performance
Section 6	Breakdown of Customer Contact
Section 7	Ticketing Performance
Section 8	Social Media Performance
Section 9	Customer Satisfaction
Section 10	Future Developments
Section 11	Financial Implications
Section 12	Equalities Implications
Section 13	Legal Implications

2. Background

2.1. The Customer Services Team serves as a single point of contact for all customers wanting to contact the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This includes a range of contact channels including social media, telephone, email and written communication.

2.2. Performance of the Customer Services Team is closely measured to ensure high levels of service to customers.

As detailed in the last report to this Committee in June 2018, during this financial year the Customer Services Team has been reshaped to provide an improved focus on delivery. This has involved creating a dedicated Customer Relations Team to specialise in complaint handling and supporting the broader agenda of the WMCA and a separate Ticketing Services Team which has combined all customer ticketing activities into one team.

2.3. During the last six months, both teams have been training and reorganising resources in order to transition to the new ways of working. This has also involved establishing new arrangements with Midland Metro Ltd to provide customer service support under contract

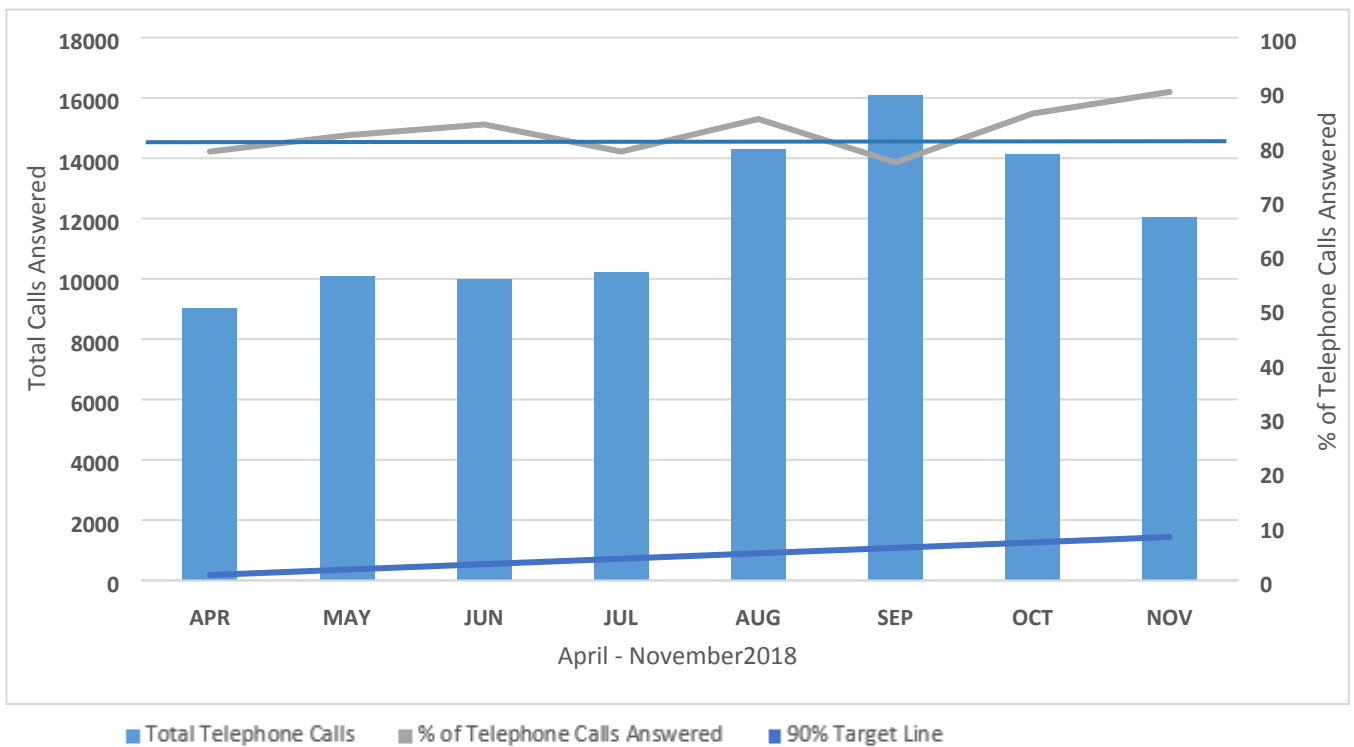
to the tram operator. These arrangements include complaints, enquiries and managing the Direct Debit scheme for tram customers.

2.4. The contents of this report tracks the performance of these teams during this transitional period.

3. Telephone Performance

3.1. The Customer Services Team provide an inbound contact centre for customer enquiries relating to transport, ticketing and WMCA activities.

FIGURE 1 TOTAL TELEPHONE CALLS ANSWERED



3.2. Figure 1 shows the number of telephone calls answered since April 2018 against the 90% key performance metric. The graph shows that performance has steadily improved since the team changes were implemented in May 2018, the exception being September, where telephone call demand increased by approximately 30%. Overall performance is on track to reach 90% average answer rate by December 2018 and reflects the positive impact the new ways of working are having now they are embedded into the teams.

3.3. Since April 2018 a total of 119,000 calls have been answered, with a sharp rise in demand in September. This reflects a seasonal pattern linked to customers returning to work after the holiday period and the start of a new academic year.

3.4. In terms of weekly patterns, customer demand is at its highest on Monday mornings.

3.5. From August 2018 and as part of the transition to the new arrangements, customers can now contact a member of Customer Services on Saturdays between 0900-1300. Weekday opening hours have also been extended from 0800-1800 with all of these

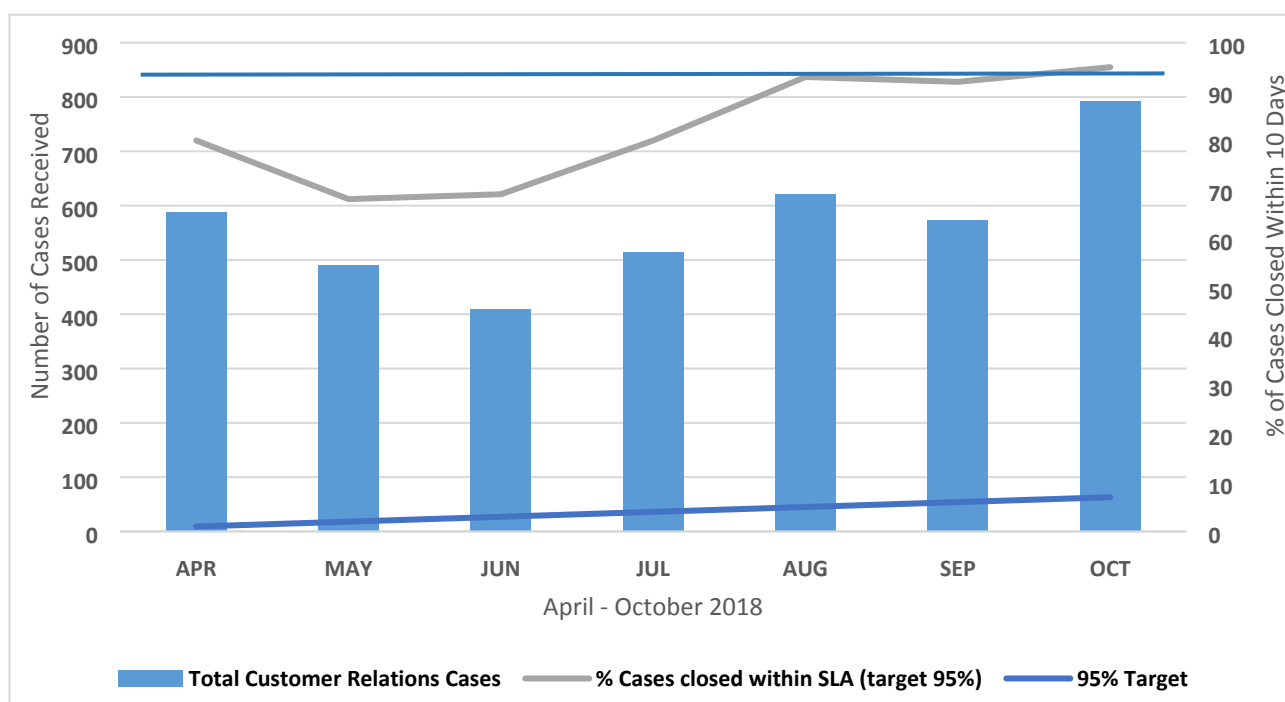
changes aimed at providing improved choice for customers and to assist with better distribution of calls across the day/week.

3.6. Ticketing related enquiries dominate the telephones calls that are received by the Customer Services Team, on average 78% of calls are attributed to ticketing, 10% to the corporate switchboard and the remaining 12% to transport and the wider work of the WMCA.

4. Customer Relations Case Performance

4.1. The Customer Relations team oversees the management of complex investigations including petitions, subsidised bus service queries, appeals regarding the siting of bus shelters and consultation relating to network service changes and ad hoc schemes. The team also increased their remit this year to support the wider WMCA and Mayoral Office. The nature of these enquiries routinely requires liaison with other departments and stakeholders in order to ascertain specialist detail to resolve the enquiry.

FIGURE 2 CUSTOMER RELATIONS CASE PERFORMANCE

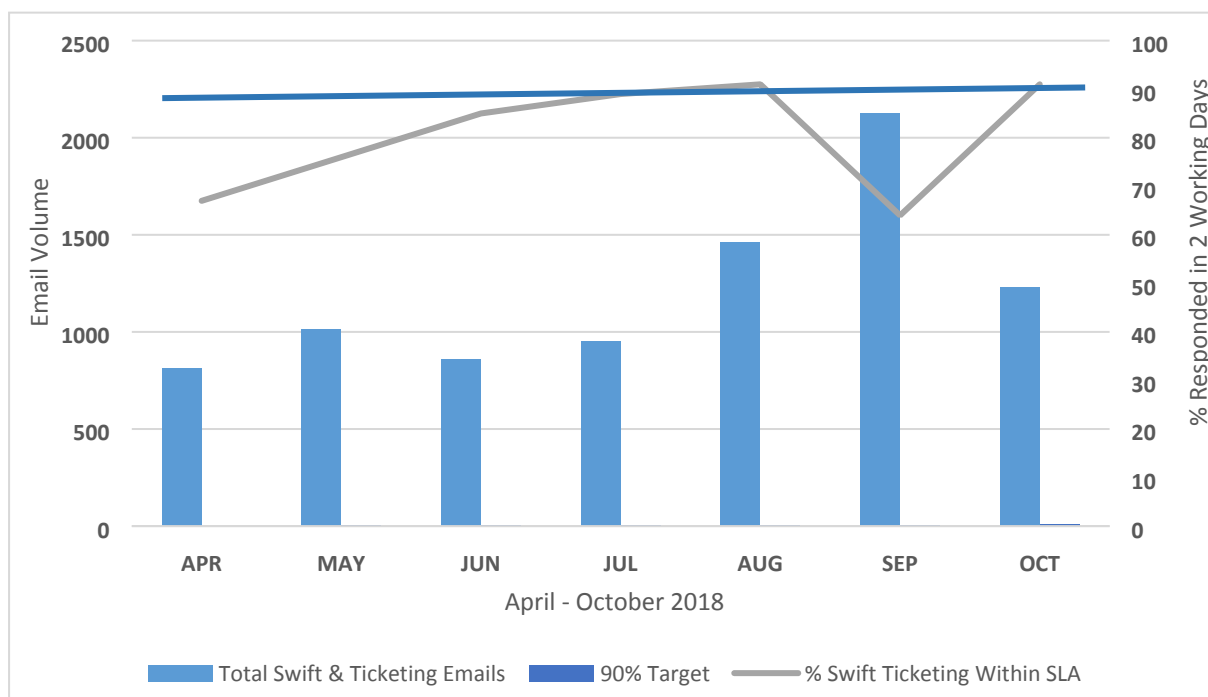


4.2. The percentage of enquiries resolved within 10 working days is a key performance metric for the team with the target set at 95%. Customer Relations case handling performance since April 2018 is 86.4%. The new working arrangements and dedicated resource for complex enquires is having a positive effect on performance, with a marked improvement month on month from July onwards, this is set against a backdrop of an increase in the number of cases being received. This increase in case workload is linked to a number of consultations, bus route changes and WMCA activity.

5. Email Performance

5.1. Alongside telephone calls and cases, the Customer Services Team manage customer email correspondence. The vast majority of email correspondence sits within the Ticketing Services Team and relates to general ticket enquiries.

FIGURE 3 TICKETING AND SWIFT EMAIL PERFORMANCE



5.2. Figure 3 shows Swift and Ticketing email volumes against the performance metric. The key performance metric for email responses is two working days.

5.3. The number of emails received by the team is increasing. There is a trend that customers are preferring to use digital methods of contact, as customers view this being a more convenient way to make contact outside of opening hours.

5.4. The number of Swift and Ticketing emails increased sharply in September, this is directly linked to the start of the new academic year and customers applying for 16-18 photocard. The increase in demand had an impact on response times and performance metrics for September, this matches to the same period when telephone calls also increased.

5.5. In August 2018 the 16-18 photocard scheme used by students in full time education to access reduced fares on public transport was refreshed to allow all young people aged 16-18 to qualify. The changes to the scheme removed the £10 fee and extended the validity of the photocard, so customers only have to apply once. This change increased customer contact into the teams as the process and media the photocard was printed on was different to previous years.

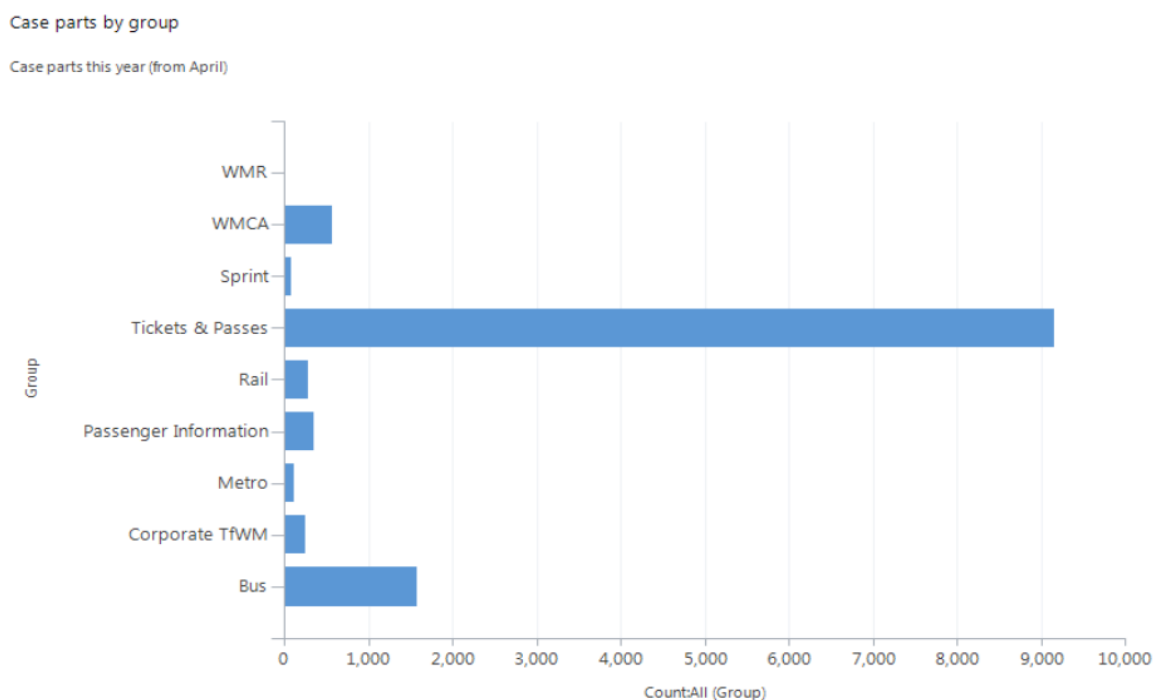
5.6. In addition to the above, Ticketing and Swift emails a further 2864 emails from customers using a legacy email address have also been processed. These currently sit outside of

the reporting system and work is taking place to integrate these emails into the main system to provide a single view of this workflow.

6. Breakdown of Customer Contact

6.1. Figure 4 highlights since April the vast majority of written enquiries relate to tickets and passes, followed by bus and then the WMCA. This supports the methodology of creating a Ticketing Services Team to process the requests that are high volume with fairly low complexity, allowing the Customer Relations Team to focus on the more in-depth and detailed responses.

FIGURE 4 BREAKDOWN OF CASES AND EMAILS BY SUBJECT



7. Ticketing Performance

7.1. A number of concessionary and commercial ticketing schemes delivered direct to the customer are managed by Ticketing Services. Key activities include ticketing account set up, validation, assessment and account management in response to customer requests. The team is also responsible for all fulfilment activities including production and dispatch of products. Commercial ticketing schemes are delivered on behalf of transport operators who pay commission on products retailed.

7.2. The target for processing Blind and Disabled travel pass applications is 95% within 30 working days. Since April, on average 900 applications are being processed by the Ticketing Services Team every month. Currently, 92% of all applications are being processed within the 95% metric, failure to meet the target in September resulted in the drop in performance.

7.3. The target for processing Older Persons Concessionary pass applications is 95% within 20 working days. This target is always exceeded and 100% of all applications are processed within this timeframe. The wait for customers can be decreased through an

online application which is being promoted as the application method of choice alongside more traditional paper based forms.

7.4. Customers continue to utilise the online portal for their Older Persons application and renewal, which makes for an efficient and faster service for customers. For Older Persons travel pass renewals, customers who have an email address on their account receive up to two emails inviting them to renew their pass online before it expires. 52% of pass holders renewed online in the period of June 2017 – November 2018. With over half of all customers renewing using the online portal, this has reduced the cost of the renewal process by reducing the number of physical letters that have to be printed and posted to pass holders.

7.5. First time applicants for the Older Persons Concessionary pass also have the choice to make either an online or paper application. Online applications are being promoted as the channel of choice which has resulted in increased take up of this method of application at over 62% of all new applications received. This is an increase of 2% from the previous year. Traditional paper based applications are still available for those who need or prefer them. Overall, the rate of applications is similar year on year.

7.6. Figures 5 and 6 show the number of pass renewals and first time applications for the Older Persons Concessionary pass including whether these were made via paper or online applications.

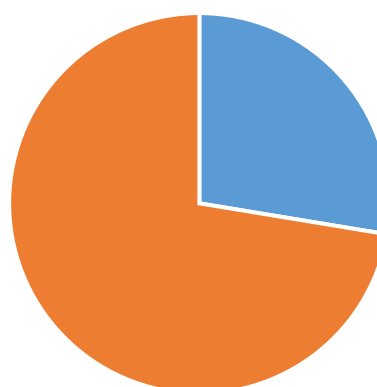
FIGURE 5 AND 6 OLDER PERSONS RENEWALS AND NEW APPLICATIONS

Older Persons Pass Renewals Breakdown by Method June 2017-November 2018



■ Online Renewal 50573 52% ■ Paper Renewal 46683 48%

Older Persons New Pass Applications by Method June 2017 - November 2018



■ Online Applications 6976 62%

8. Social Media Performance

8.1. The process of responding to customer comments on Twitter and Facebook moved into the Customer Relations Team in April 2018. This is a new area of work for team and formed part of the reorganisation of Customer Services.

8.2. Twitter - Since April the team have responded to 4831 messages. The key performance indicator for the team to respond to these messages is 60 minutes. Currently the team are taking on average 78 minutes to reply.

8.3. Facebook – Since April the team have responded to 2497 messages. The key performance indicator for the team to respond to these messages is 120 minutes. Currently the team are taking on average 99 minutes to respond.

8.4. There was a rise in the number of social media requests between August and September. This peak formed 49% of messages received since April. This is explained by the increased number of 16-18 year olds applying for their 16-18 photocard at that point in the year, as this group is more comfortable using social media for correspondence.

9. Customer Satisfaction

9.1. As members of the Institute of Customer Service, the Customer Service team take part in cross-sector business benchmarking. Customers are asked to complete a short survey to rate the level of service they have received when contacting the Customer Service Team. The results form part of the UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI) which compares the results of the survey to other companies and industry leaders.

9.2. The department's UKCSI score was 74.9% for 2018, this was below the all-sector average of 77.9% but above the transport average of 72.5%. The results of the survey highlighted that customers rated highly the helpfulness and competence of team members they interacted with.

9.3. As part of the survey, customers were also invited to share the areas of the service that could be improved. The results recommend the department focus on ways to improve how complaints are handled.

9.4. In November 2018, a quality framework was introduced across Customer Services. The quality framework monitors the quality, performance and productivity of team members to ensure the best possible service to customers.

10. Future Developments

10.1. In 2019 new contact centre telephony technology will be procured and implemented in the Customer Services Team. This investment will allow for an improved customer experience, better data and analytics to aid performance management and include the capability to offer live chat as an alternative contact channel to assist.

10.2. Working alongside the Institute of Customer Service the Customer Services Team will continue to take part in the UKCSI business benchmarking exercise. This will provide insight into the level of service provided by Customer Services and compare it to external organisations. The 2019 survey will be used to measure the improvement achieved compared to the results outline in paragraph 9.2 above.

10.3. The creation of the WMCA has been the catalyst for change in the nature of the contact that the organisation has with members of the public. Traditional transport based 'customer contact' is now being complemented by a broader range of enquiries including housing, skills and significant schemes/events for example the Commonwealth Games. The shift in subject matter was particularly noticeable following the appointment of the

West Midlands Mayor in May 2017 and the increased profile of WMCA which followed. In 2018 the focus was on people to establish scalable teams to support the remit of the WMCA (Customer Relations and Ticketing Services). In 2019 the focus is on systems and processes, working on integrating disparate systems and processes to allow Customer Services to accommodate future requirements of the WMCA.

10.4.Replacement pass requests are one of the biggest service requests from customers. To reduce this demand on the telephones and to provide a choice for customers, work is taking place to expand the online replacement service, presently this is only available for Concessionary customers.

11.Financial Implications

11.1There are no direct financial implications as a result of this performance update with funding for the planned new telephony system for the contact centre built into 2019-20 budget requirements.

12.Legal Implications

12.1.Legal and procurement support will be required to secure the necessary technology required to deliver the proposed services referred to in paragraph 10 of this report. in order to comply with the necessary procurement processes and procedures and to agree appropriate terms and conditions, early engagement with the Legal and Procurement teams is advised. If external legal support is required in order to meet client expectations then the costs will need to be factored into the budget.

13.Equalities Implications

13.1.There are no equalities implications in relation to this performance update report.