



Communities Scrutiny Commission

Citizen Services

Customer Services Review Report - Appendix 1
14th January 2019

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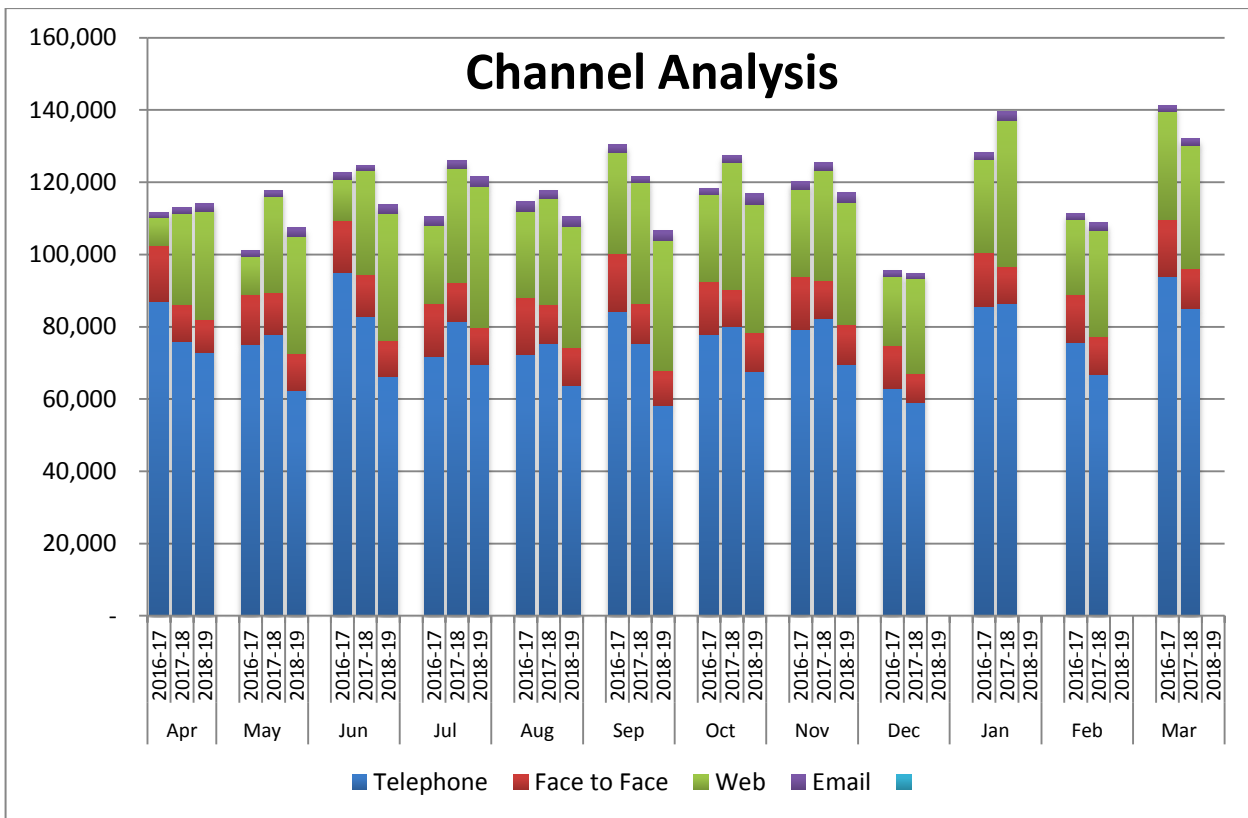
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1.0 Summary

This Report sets out, as requested at the Communities Scrutiny Commission (CSC) planning meeting held on 27 November 2018, information on the further progress of the development, implementation and evaluation of the council’s approach to effectively managing citizens’ contact with council services, as well as the ability of Citizens Services to analyse the levels and types of contact made in order to drive continuous improvement.

2.0 Channel Analysis

Citizen Services has the ability to measure data across a number of channels. The volumes across all channels are as follows:



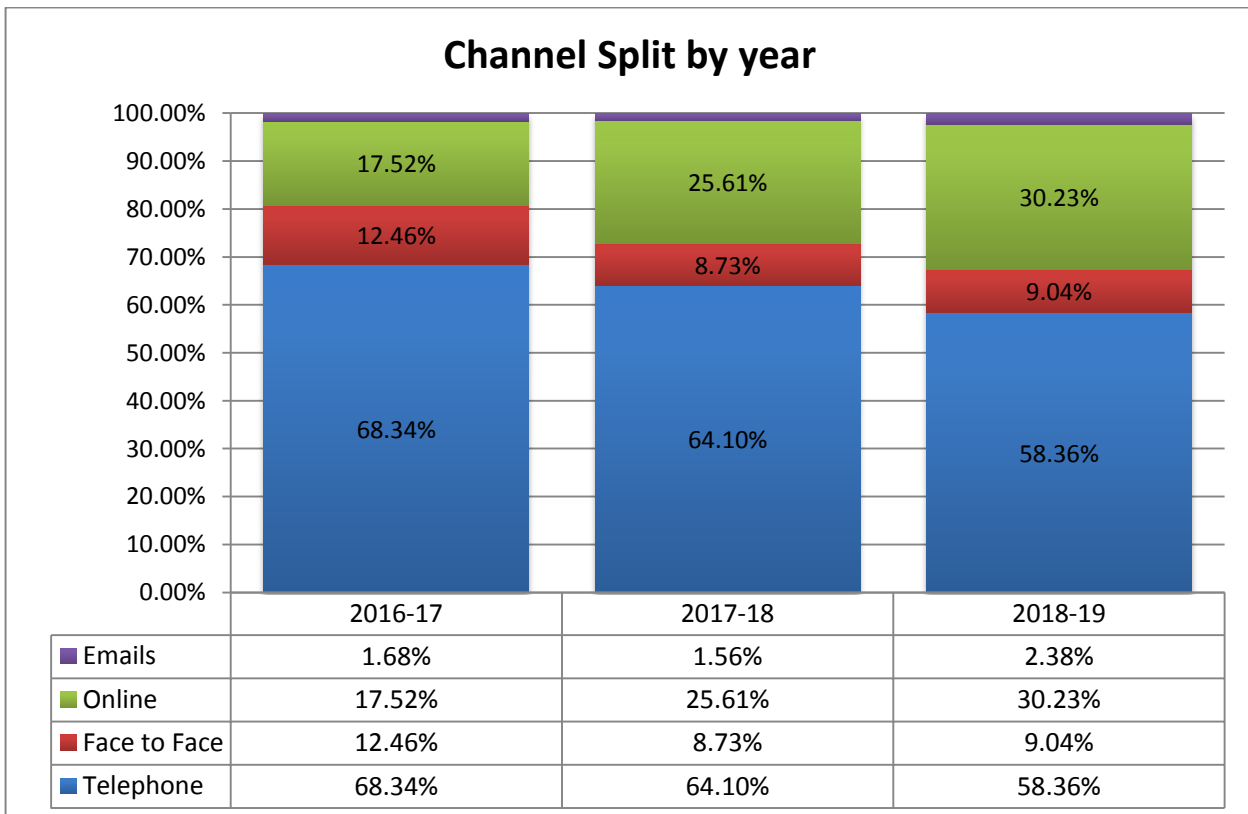
The detailed channel breakdown by year can be seen below:

Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	2018 -19	114,110	107,431	113,806	121,618	110,653	106,598	116,871	117,197	-	-	-	-
Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
Calls Offered	55.17%	55.74%	58.32%	57.12%	57.74%	54.52%	57.77%	59.41%					57.01%
Auto telephony	8.59%	2.24%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%					1.34%
CSP Footfall	8.04%	9.68%	8.65%	8.61%	9.50%	9.28%	9.32%	9.29%					9.04%
Online - integrated	20.88%	23.71%	25.19%	26.41%	24.69%	26.79%	23.47%	22.22%					24.16%
Online - non-integrated	5.42%	6.35%	5.68%	5.50%	5.46%	6.75%	6.80%	6.64%					6.07%
Emails	1.90%	2.28%	2.16%	2.37%	2.61%	2.66%	2.64%	2.44%					2.38%

2017 -18	Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	Calls Offered	59,569	65,258	69,037	68,538	64,197	65,512	70,217	69,500	51,021	75,329	57,844	71,605	787,627
	Auto telephony	16,370	12,648	13,793	12,845	11,145	9,979	9,827	12,934	8,114	11,033	8,918	13,534	141,140
	CSP Footfall	10,182	11,595	11,638	10,809	10,702	11,037	10,309	10,395	7,894	10,395	10,524	11,023	126,503
	Online - integrated	18,637	19,609	21,823	23,243	22,131	23,345	23,899	22,515	21,149	32,727	22,265	25,844	277,187
	Online - non-integrated	6,630	6,977	6,991	8,449	7,295	10,114	11,231	7,974	5,157	7,541	7,221	8,235	93,815
	Emails	1,682	1,566	1,452	2,134	2,144	1,611	2,062	2,039	1,379	2,572	2,054	1,949	22,644
		113,070	117,653	124,734	126,018	117,614	121,598	127,545	125,357	94,714	139,597	108,826	132,190	1,448,916
	Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	Calls Offered	52.68%	55.47%	55.35%	54.39%	54.58%	53.88%	55.05%	55.44%	53.87%	53.96%	53.15%	54.17%	54.36%
	Auto telephony	14.48%	10.75%	11.06%	10.19%	9.48%	8.21%	7.70%	10.32%	8.57%	7.90%	8.19%	10.24%	9.74%
	CSP Footfall	9.01%	9.86%	9.33%	8.58%	9.10%	9.08%	8.08%	8.29%	8.33%	7.45%	9.67%	8.34%	8.73%
	Online - integrated	16.48%	16.67%	17.50%	18.44%	18.82%	19.20%	18.74%	17.96%	22.33%	23.44%	20.46%	19.55%	19.13%
	Online - non-integrated	5.86%	5.93%	5.60%	6.70%	6.20%	8.32%	8.81%	6.36%	5.44%	5.40%	6.64%	6.23%	6.47%
Emails	1.49%	1.33%	1.16%	1.69%	1.82%	1.32%	1.62%	1.63%	1.46%	1.84%	1.89%	1.47%	1.56%	

2016 -17	Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	Calls Offered	61,228	56,840	72,799	53,720	58,988	62,609	60,118	62,961	50,537	72,168	65,065	77,626	754,659
	Auto telephony	25,808	18,123	22,203	17,988	13,455	21,646	17,836	16,314	12,455	13,516	10,667	16,277	206,288
	CSP Footfall	15,454	13,862	14,546	14,620	15,728	16,108	14,576	14,767	11,728	14,874	13,111	15,817	175,191
	Online - integrated	5,893	8,881	9,640	14,026	16,686	17,733	15,480	16,461	12,787	17,972	14,062	19,103	168,724
	Online - non-integrated	1,785	1,741	1,701	7,701	7,120	10,012	8,489	7,417	6,372	7,725	6,849	10,738	77,650
	Emails	1,367	1,724	1,847	2,466	2,793	2,327	1,886	2,405	1,654	1,857	1,600	1,629	23,555
		111,535	101,171	122,736	110,521	114,770	130,435	118,385	120,325	95,533	128,112	111,354	141,190	1,406,067
	Channel	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total
	Calls Offered	54.90%	56.18%	59.31%	48.61%	51.40%	48.00%	50.78%	52.33%	52.90%	56.33%	58.43%	54.98%	53.67%
	Auto telephony	23.14%	17.91%	18.09%	16.28%	11.72%	16.60%	15.07%	13.56%	13.04%	10.55%	9.58%	11.53%	14.67%
	CSP Footfall	13.86%	13.70%	11.85%	13.23%	13.70%	12.35%	12.31%	12.27%	12.28%	11.61%	11.77%	11.20%	12.46%
	Online - integrated	5.28%	8.78%	7.85%	12.69%	14.54%	13.60%	13.08%	13.68%	13.38%	14.03%	12.63%	13.53%	12.00%
	Online - non-integrated	1.60%	1.72%	1.39%	6.97%	6.20%	7.68%	7.17%	6.16%	6.67%	6.03%	6.15%	7.61%	5.52%
Emails	1.23%	1.70%	1.50%	2.23%	2.43%	1.78%	1.59%	2.00%	1.73%	1.45%	1.44%	1.15%	1.68%	

Telephone is still the most popular method of contact, online transactions have been increasing over the past 3 years are now the second most popular method of contact. The charts below show a comparison of channel split by year.

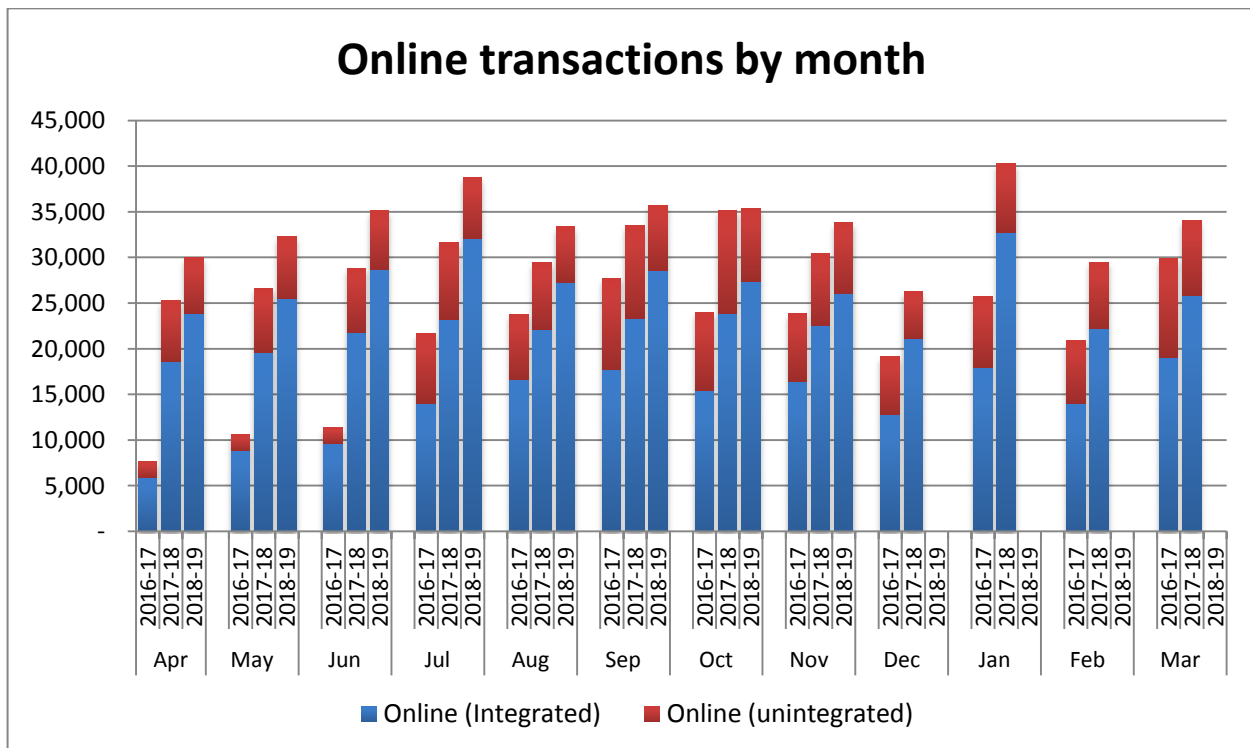


A proportion of the telephone contact was previously handled by the automated telephone system, the system was introduced in 2015 as a tactical solution to assist with an anticipated increase in call volumes, however, it was not popular with Citizens. A decision was taken to remove the automated telephony earlier this year; all contact is now handled by advisors.

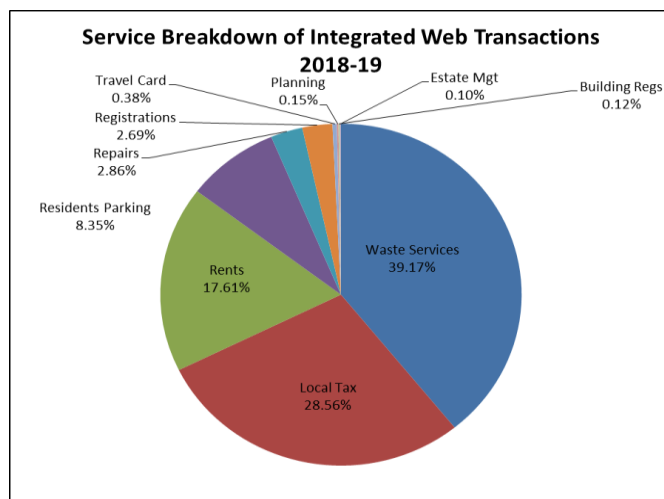
The volume of Face to face contacts is decreasing (although proportionally compared to other contacts it shows a slight increase) and online contact is increasing every year.

On 6 June 2018, the contact centre introduced a new telephony system which will bring new opportunities for centralising calls from other services and will allow the contact centre to explore future options of introducing web chat, home working etc.

Online contact has been increasing every year.



The chart below shows a breakdown of online contact where the transaction integrated either directly with the back office system or required no further input from an officer. Unintegrated contacts require intervention from an advisor to input the job into the system.



3.0 Contact Centre (CSC)

3.1 CSC Breakdown

When citizens ring the CSC, they are routed to one of 4 teams dealing with 25 services across Housing, Local tax and Benefits, Street and Protection issues or Adult Care. Each CSC team has a number of advisors who are cross-trained to handle at least two services and as many as 7. Citizens are greeted by the Citizen Advisor who will establish the reason for the call and will either offer self-serve options or aim to resolve the query at the first point of contact. If the query is complex or it requires input from the service area, then it will be referred to the relevant teams. If the citizen's needs suggest that a face to face appointment is needed, this will be booked in the CSP.

Work is currently underway to develop a knowledge database that will enable the join up of the four main teams and provide a higher % of first-time resolutions, whatever route they take into the CSC. Work has also begun to expand the number of services, starting to gather information on call volumes and other relevant metrics.

Citizen Services is also introducing greater options for Citizens needing help by offering more channels through the Omni-channel project. The Omni-channel project which will enable advisors to deal with web chat, SMS, email, social media and calls all through the same platform, is anticipated to be completed by April 2019.

3.2 Demand

The CSC is able to monitor, track and report on the number of calls received through the contact centre. Inform 360, the automated telephone system, was disabled on 11 May 2018 and the new telephony system Avaya was successfully implemented in the week commencing 4 June 2018. This has resulted in more direct access through the phones for citizens i.e. no lengthy automated information and direct access to advisors. To date, there has been no change in the increase of calls to advisors against what is expected, and the team have been coping well with the demand.

The new telephony also delivers improved options around automated callbacks, meaning a better call experience for Citizens, reducing the need to stay on the line for long periods when all advisors are busy. All Citizens who choose this option are called back within 30 minutes on average.

The table below shows the top enquiries for November as an example of the level of detail captured by Advisors at the end of each call which can then be used by the service to analyse the demand and/or identify service improvement opportunities.

Top enquiries

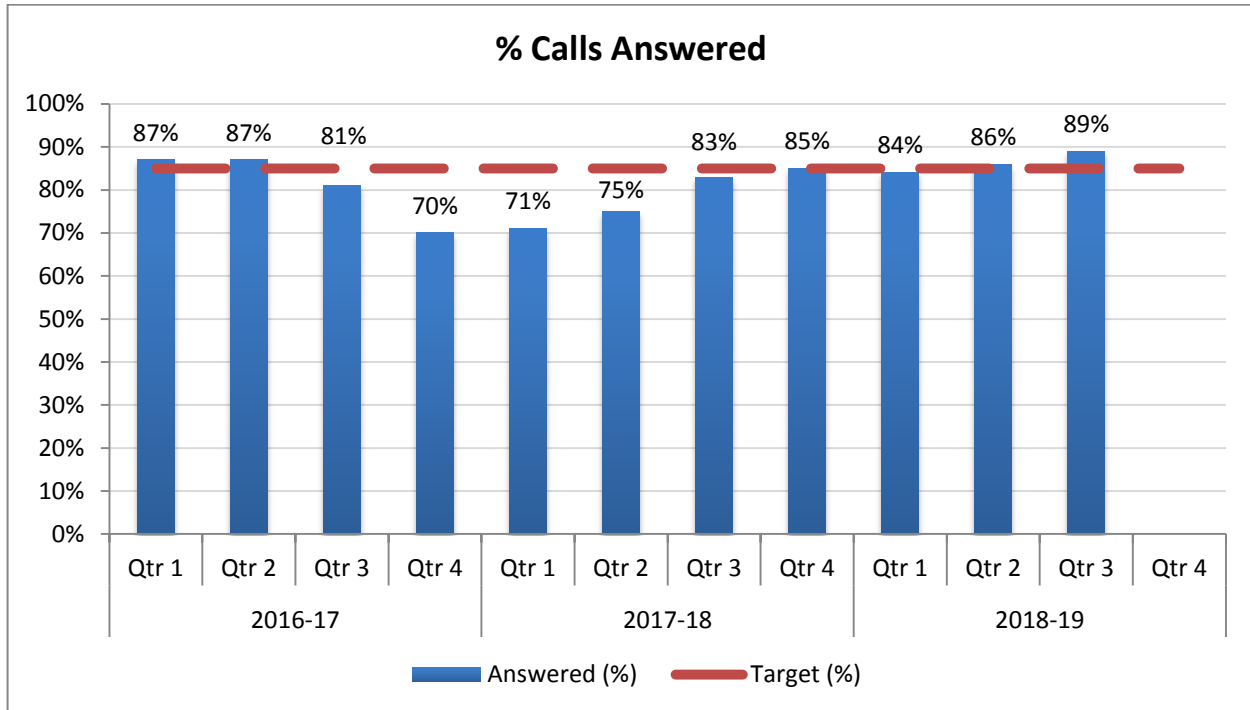
Service	Enquiry type	No. of enquiries
Local Taxation	General Bill Enquiry	3842
Repairs & Maintenance	Report Standard Repair	2575
Rent Management	Make a Payment	2302
Repairs & Maintenance	Report Emergency Repair	1973
Local Taxation	Setup Payment Arrangement	1568

3.3 Performance

The contact centre has two main key performance indicators, these are % of calls answered (target >85% of calls answered) and average wait time (target <2 minutes). By monitoring the % calls

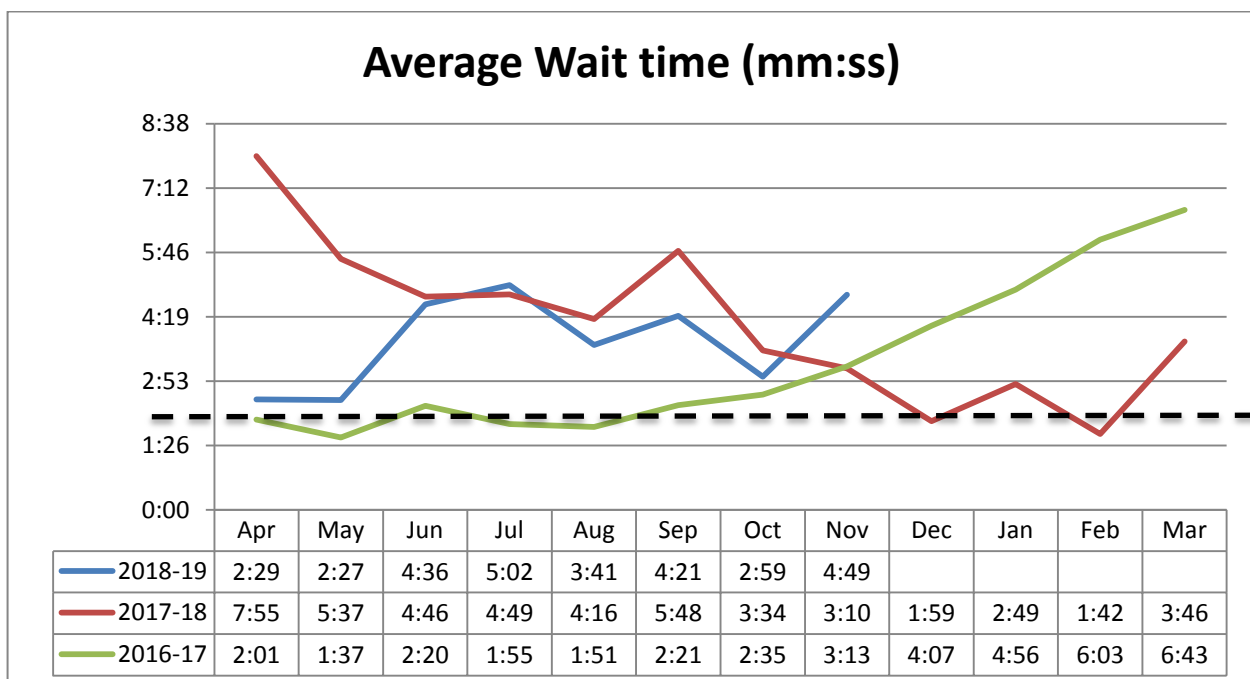
answered and average wait time, the CSC can ensure it is delivering a consistent level of service every month.

The chart below shows the % of calls answered broken down by quarter since April 2016.

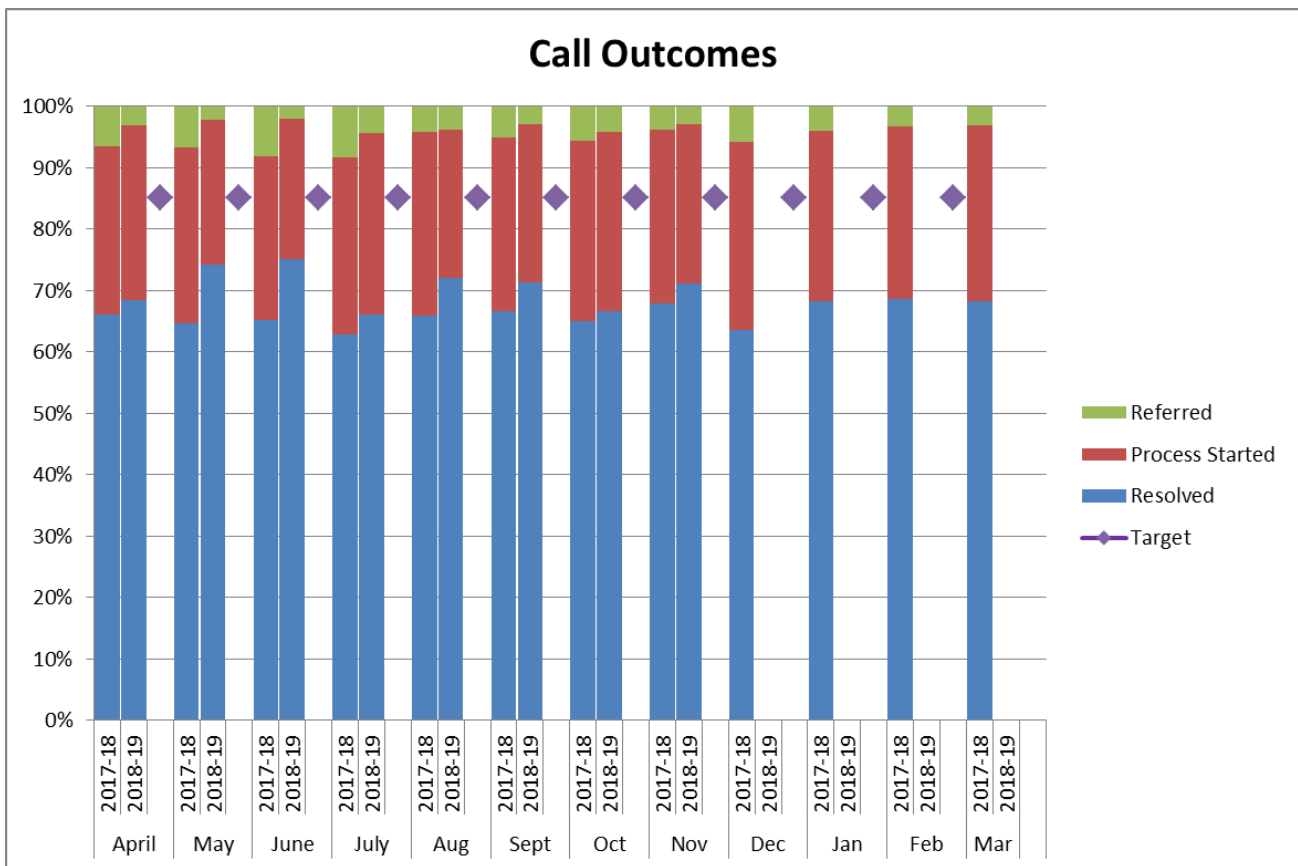


Performance this year against calls answered has been greatly improved on the previous two years and there has been an improvement since the introduction of the new telephony. The difference can be mainly attributed to having a full establishment and a reduction in calls on last year.

The chart below shows the average wait time:



3.4 First Contact Resolution



The CSC aims to resolve the citizens’ enquiry at the first point of contact where possible, to measure this; Customer Advisors capture an outcome at end of every call which enables us to measure the First Contact Resolution rate across each service.

Customer Advisors choose one of the following outcomes for each call:

- **Resolved** – This is where a citizen contacts us and the advisor has been able to fully resolve everything that they requested over the phone without the citizen needing to contact the council again regarding this enquiry.
- **Process Started** – This is where a citizen contacted Citizen Services and the advisor has been able to initiate a process that needs to be handled by another service area to deal with their request. The citizen should not need to contact council again regarding this enquiry.
- **Referred** – This is where a citizen contacted Citizen Services but their query is one that can’t be resolved by the advisor and therefore must be referred to another service area in order to be resolved, they may need to contact the citizen.

The CSC has a target of 85% first contact resolution, where First Contact Resolution = (Resolved + Process Started) / All outcome types.

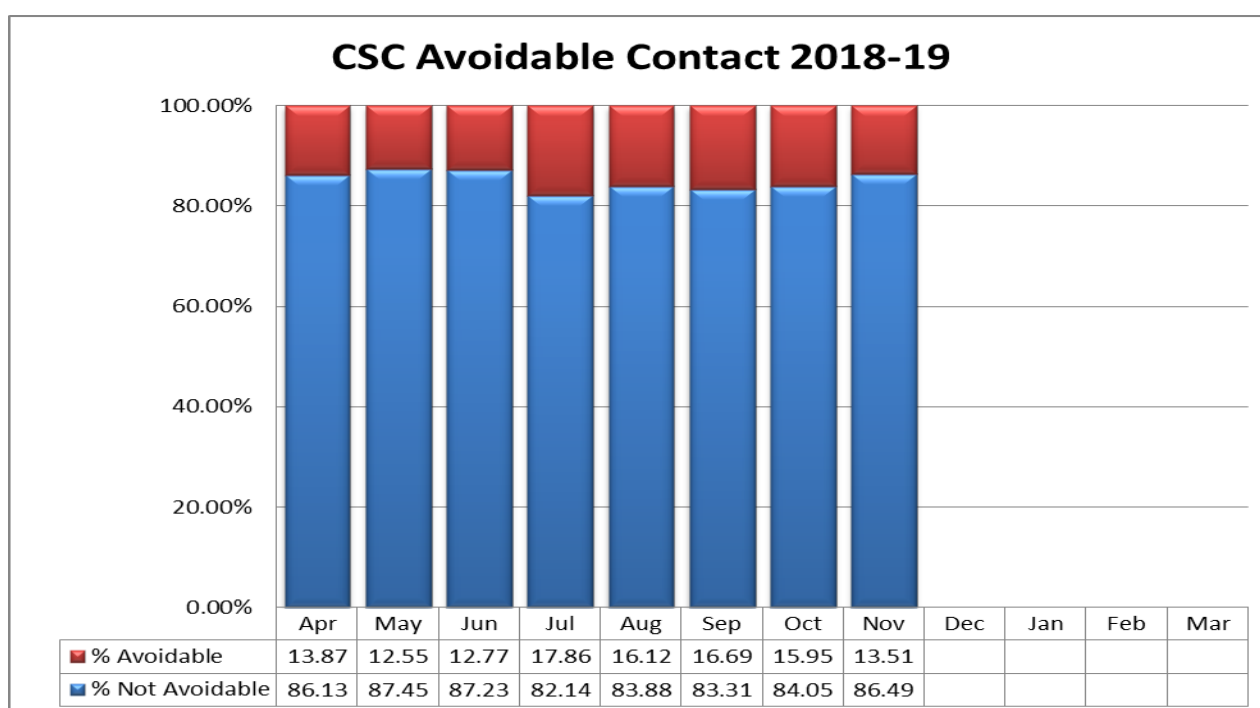
Citizen Services continues to track the results on a month by month basis to enable us to identify areas where there are high levels of referral and to produce accurate reporting on transactions resolved at first point of contact, transactions resolved for citizens, and those transactions that are referred onwards to another service area.

3.5 Avoidable Contact

Avoidable contact presents a large cost to the business and it is imperative this is reduced where possible as it adversely affects citizens; the council’s organisational reputation and trust; our call wait times and service targets; and departments providing services throughout the council.

Citizen Services continue to monitor what is needed to be done in order to reduce this contact. A regular point of contact meeting already takes place with Team Leaders and departmental managers as well as quarterly meetings with Citizen Service Managers and Heads of Service where issues are discussed.

The chart below shows a breakdown of overall avoidable contact: a gradual reduction in avoidable contact can be seen. Further detail can be found on the in-depth breakdown by service. The detail for each service will highlight the main contact reasons for each service.



Avoidable contact varies from service to service and will sometimes be seasonal. Citizen Services work with the service areas to reduce avoidable contact and target processes that may be generating call volumes / visits unnecessarily. The table below shows the top avoidable queries for November 2018.

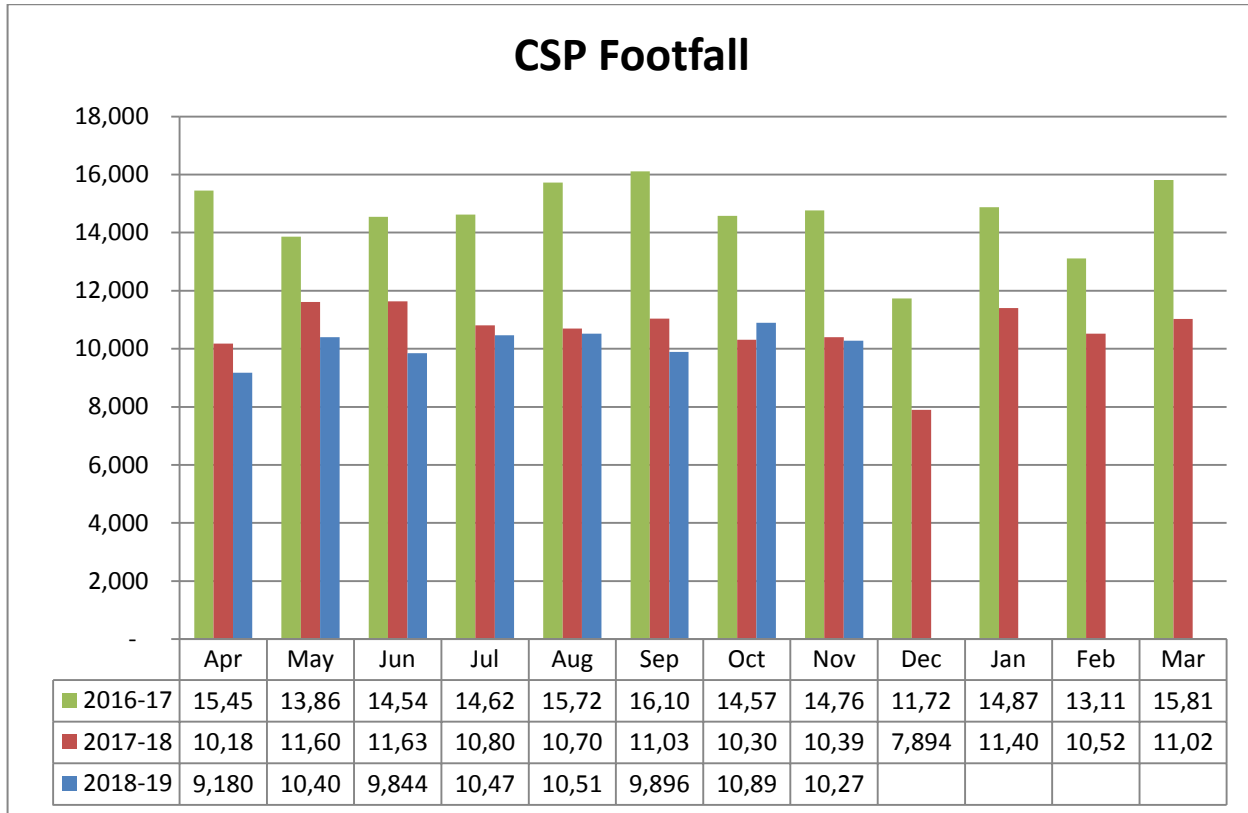
Top avoidable enquiries

Service	Enquiry type	No. of enquiries
Benefits	Wrong department - council tax	1039
Benefits	Why is claim suspended	766
Local Taxation	Wrong dept - Other	627
Estate Management	Mutual exchange enquiry/application	597
Highways	Wrong Dept - Other	277

4.0 Citizen Service Point (CSP)

4.1 Demand

The chart and table below show the CSP footfall.



The figures for 2016-17 include the outlying CSPs which closed at the end of March 2017.

4.2 Performance

At Temple Street CSP, the primary focus is on a holistic service with first contact resolution, moving away from speed of resolution. Where appropriate, advisors spend time showing citizens how they can access council service by using the self-service computers, providing guidance so that the citizen is able to access services by themselves from any location with access to the internet. By doing this, advisors have more time to spend with those that are either vulnerable or require face to face assistance.

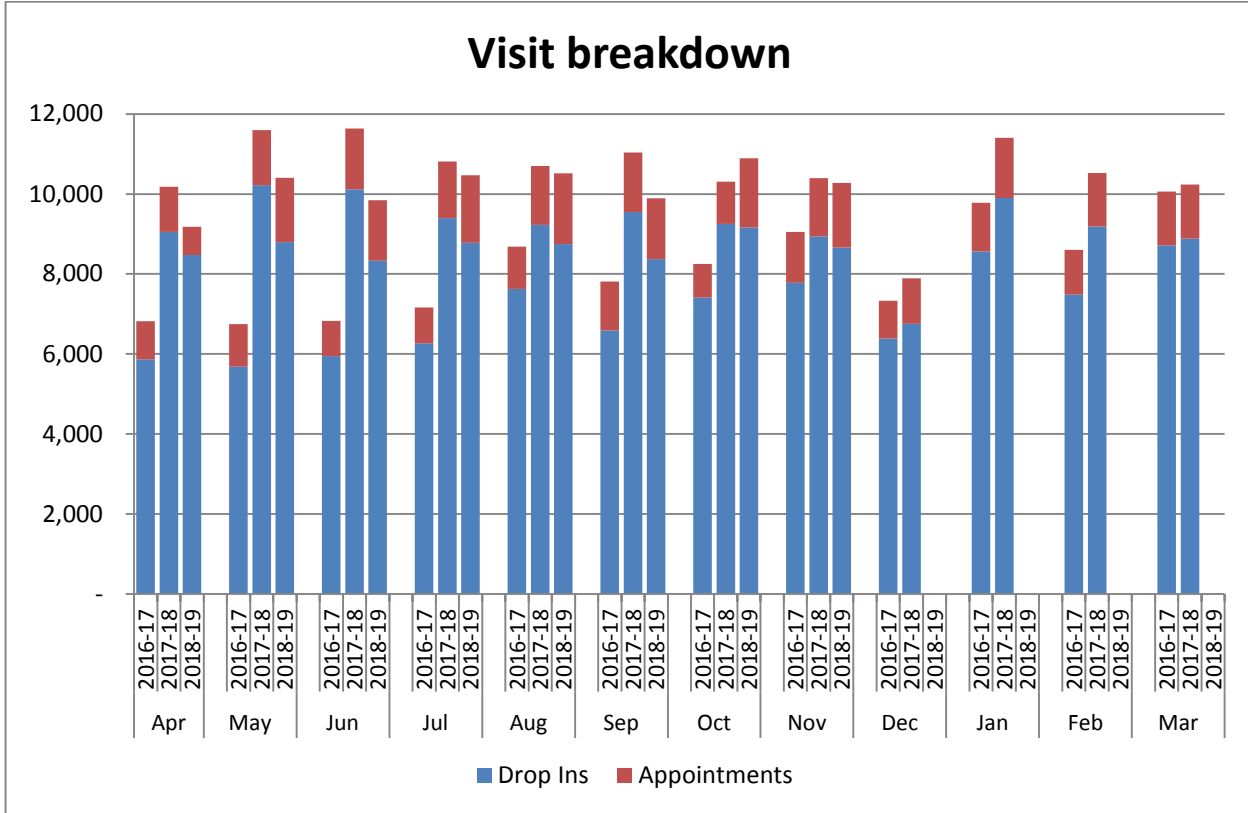
4.3 Service breakdown

When citizens visit the CSP, they are either attending a pre-arranged appointment or they are dropping in unannounced. On entering the CSP, citizens are greeted by a Citizen Advisor who will establish the reason for the visit and will either offer self-serve options or aim to resolve the query. If the query is complex or it requires input from the service area then an appointment will be made.

Following the redesign of the ground floor at Temple Street, and the arrival on site of the DWP, the CSP and DWP are now working closely together. There is a significant amount of crossover in regard to the services that citizens need to access and being in the same space has made this easier for everyone involved.

Comments received from citizens have been very positive and that they find the space and people welcoming.

The majority of visits are drop-ins, as seen below:



		April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	Total
2018-19	Total visits	9,180	10,404	9,844	10,470	10,516	9,896	10,892	10,277					81,479
	Drop Ins	8,475	8,796	8,334	8,777	8,750	8,373	9,166	8,661					69,332
	Appointments	705	1,608	1,510	1,693	1,766	1,523	1,726	1,616					12,147
2017-18	Total visits	10,182	11,595	11,638	10,809	10,702	11,037	10,309	10,395	7,894	11,404	10,524	11,023	127,512
	Drop Ins	9,050	10,218	10,114	9,392	9,224	9,551	9,249	8,936	6,752	9,903	9,188	8,886	110,463
	Appointments	1,132	1,377	1,524	1,417	1,478	1,486	1,060	1,459	1,142	1,501	1,336	1,352	16,264
2016-17	Total visits	6,820	6,749	6,825	7,165	6,685	7,813	8,248	9,054	7,329	9,780	8,607	10,064	97,139
	Drop Ins	5,868	5,686	5,950	6,263	7,630	6,586	7,407	7,781	6,384	8,564	7,479	8,719	84,317
	Appointments	952	1,063	875	902	1,055	1,227	841	1,273	945	1,216	1,128	1,345	12,822

Footfall in the CSP increased from 2017 primarily due to new services being such as Licencing being delivered at 100 Temple Street. The footfall in 2018-19 is less than the same period last year.

5.0 Cost per transaction

The cost per call / visit is way of understanding how the contact centre budget is divided between incoming contacts. The cost per call / visit doesn't describe the total amount of expenditure but how expenditure relates to the workload.

	Cost per call	Cost per visit
2014/15	£7.00	£10.46
2015/16	£6.41	£9.03
2016/17	£5.69 (incl. Care Direct) £5.46 (exc. Care Direct)	£9.02
2017/18	£6.11 (incl. Care Direct) £6.05 (exc. Care Direct)	£7.97

Comparing cost per contact with other contact centres is very difficult as it varies depending on what has been included within the calculations; there is no universal agreement over which elements of cost to include for this metric. The cost should include all operational costs including those deemed as below the bottom line.

Every year, Citizen Services responds to the UK Contact Centre HR and Operational Benchmarking Report: this is a major annual report studying quantified and HR aspects of UK contact centre operations. A detailed structured questionnaire was answered by 213 contact centre professionals between June and September 2018. The results are then shared with all respondents.

The findings from the report regarding Cost per call are:

- 52% of this year's respondents reported inbound call costs of under £4.00
- The mean average was £4.27, the median average was £3.78
- The first quartile was £6.00 and the 3rd quartile was £2.51

The benchmarking report has chosen to display figures based on frequency of each call as figures will vary even within the same sector. For example, respondents within the public sector may post vastly different cost figures, as one respondent may deal with mainly high volume complex queries (for which costs will be considerably high) whereas another could be handling simple interactions.

6.0 Conclusion

The Communities Scrutiny Commission will see from the information provided in this Report that good progress is being made towards improving the citizen experience when they contact the council.

Next steps include an on-site visit for members of the Commission to the Temple Street base to see for themselves the work of the Citizens Services team, in order for the Commission to have a first-hand understanding of both the benefits but also the continuing challenges in the changed approach to delivering contact and support to Citizens. Further Reports will be provided as required to the Commission as the planned changes to future support referred to in this Report are implemented.