

# **CSP Review of the One Number Service**

## **1. Why we chose the One Number Service**

The One Number Service was updated in Autumn 2019 after its initial implementation in 2017, with the aim of improving the customer experience by enabling customers to access a wider range of information and support at the first point of contact. As this is a vital service for many customers, we wanted to review its effectiveness. In 2022 Stockport Homes will review their Customer Access Strategy and our findings will contribute to this review.

## **2. Scope of the review**

Following a briefing from staff on the One Number Service we chose the following areas for review:

- Ease of access to the service
- How effectively enquiries are dealt with
- How the service obtains, measures and uses customer satisfaction
- How the quality of service is monitored.

## **3. Our approach to the review**

We used a variety of methods to gather a range of information and evidence in relation to the service.

The following activities were undertaken:

- Briefing from staff on the service
- Logging our experiences of using the service in real time
- Listening to a random selection of call recordings
- Reviewing webchats
- Reviewing customer satisfaction survey methodology and the results.

Each member of the CSP assigned themselves to specific scrutiny tasks and reported their evidence to the panel. This evidence underpins our judgements and recommendations detailed below.

## **4. Overview of CSP findings**

We have found that overall, One Number is an effective, responsive service that resolves many enquiries at the first point of contact. Daily customer surveys demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the service and a range of mechanisms are in place to ensure that the quality of service is continually monitored.

We feel that some areas of the service could be improved; these include providing a general enquiries option on the telephone menu, promoting webchat, improving

# CSP Review of the One Number Service

customer communication when enquiries are referred to other departments and increasing the number of satisfaction surveys undertaken.

## 5.1 Ease of Access to the Service

To access the service we logged our customer experiences of using One Number and looked at how customers can access the phone number and webchat for the service.

### 5.1.1 Strengths

The service is easy to access via telephone, the telephone number is widely available and calls are answered promptly and politely. If lines are busy customers can choose to access the call back service rather than waiting on the line.

When calls are answered customers are treated in a polite manner and staff are helpful to customers. In March 2021, 90% of surveyed tenants felt that the member of staff they spoke to was polite and 84% thought they were helpful. This correlates with our own findings from logging our own customer experiences.

Webchat is an easy and convenient service to use for those customers who use the website. We reviewed 30 webchats and found that 87% of issues were resolved using webchat and 97% of the responses received were clear, understandable and jargon free. Our own experiences of using the service have found it to be a fast, responsive service.

### 5.1.2 Areas for improvement

If a customer is unsure of what service they require when they call, there is no option to select for a general enquiry. Customers are required to select a service option and the menu of options is continually repeated until a service option is selected. This may prove frustrating for customers who do not know what service to select.

Webchat is a useful tool that could be used more frequently by customers. Whilst there was good initial take up of the service numbers have now plateaued. We note that webchat opens automatically on the 'My Rent' page to prompt customers to use it, we would support this approach being taken on other pages of the website to encourage customers to use the service.

### 5.1.3 Recommendations

1. Enable customers to have the telephone menu option of accessing a Customer Service Officer for a general enquiry.
2. Consider how to encourage more customers to use the webchat service. For example, featuring customers who have used the service in the newsletter and

# CSP Review of the One Number Service

on social media to explain how it works. Extending automatic webchat pop ups across the website.

## 5.2 How effectively enquiries are dealt with

We analysed thirty calls and thirty webchats to see how effectively enquiries were dealt with. We also logged twelve of our genuine experiences of using the service.

### 5.2.1 Strengths

The telephone service is effective at responding to customer needs at the first point of contact. Our call listening analysis shows that 70% of calls were fully responded to at first point of contact and a further 23% were resolved partially.

Webchat is a useful service that can resolve many queries for customers. Our review of 30 webchats found that 87% of customer issues were resolved fully or partially at the first point of contact.

### 5.2.2 Areas for improvement

One Number do not advise customers on when they can expect to receive a response or acknowledgement if their enquiry is passed on to another service.

Customers do not always receive a timely response if their enquiry is passed from One Number to another service. Eight of the enquiries that we recorded were passed on to other services, of these, three were not responded to and five were responded to after a week or more.

### 5.2.3 Recommendations

3. Provide customers with a timeframe of when they can expect to receive a response or acknowledgement if their query has been passed to another department.
4. Consider how to ensure that all enquires that are passed on from One Number are responded to in a timely manner.

## 5.3 How the service obtains, measures and uses customer satisfaction information

We reviewed the methodology for conducting the customer satisfaction survey and the results of the survey.

### 5.3.1 Strengths

## **CSP Review of the One Number Service**

The customer survey is easy for customers to complete using their telephone keypad and asks relevant questions.

### **5.3.2 Areas for improvement**

The survey is limited in the number of customers it reaches as it is not offered to all callers. Only customers who call before 1pm each day are called to take the survey, this is to give enough time for the survey to run each day. This is reflected in the current response rate for the survey which is around 10%. Customers receive three calls to take the survey, if they are unable to take the call then a survey will not be completed. There is no option for customers to complete the survey at a time that suits them, for example via text message or online.

### **5.3.3 Recommendations**

5. Consider offering the survey to all customers who contact the One Number service throughout the day and not just those who call before 1pm. This will increase the number of opportunities that customers have to complete a survey
6. Consider offering the survey via text message to enable customers to respond at a time that suits them

## **5.4 How the Quality of Service is Monitored**

We reviewed all the mechanisms currently in place that monitor the quality of service. These included call monitoring, audits and the customer satisfaction survey.

### **5.4.1 Strengths**

The quality of service is effectively monitored, and improvements are made where needed. The service uses a range of information to assess customer satisfaction this includes the customer satisfaction survey, managers listening to calls to assess quality and an audit of calls that have been handed over to other departments for resolution. This ensures that the service is customer focused and seeks to continually improve.

## **6. Support provided for the scrutiny**

We would like to thank Martin Saunders, Jonathan Kelly and Alison Gray for their support and assistance with this scrutiny review.

We have been assisted by Jayne Boote from Engage Associates who has acted as our independent mentor. Jayne has provided advice and guidance on scrutiny activities and facilitated the production of this report to ensure our independence.

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