

Appendix 4

Areas of Compliance Plus from the 2021 Customer Service Excellence Review

Element – 2.1.1 - There is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers.

During the assessment there was evidence from all directorates that this is consistently the case across Warwickshire County Council.

I would like to quote one of your colleagues who described what you have done as a team as the 'The Art of the Possible', which you seem to have applied as much as you could and made it happen.

Examples include:

- The enhanced working with Edible Links and the WFRS- a public and 3rd sector informal partnership given the full support of leaders to meet the needs of the citizens of Warwickshire. Getting food and essentials to those who may otherwise have fallen through the gaps. This is currently an informal partnership but appears to have been given the status of a formal commitment - maybe this will continue going forward.
- The release of the Customer Service Centre to be able to deliver and coordinate the Shielding Hub combined with the deployment of community development workers to lead the response on the ground.
- The mobilisation of support for care homes with the current Expert Advisory Group -Warwickshire wide- an integrated support pulling together information.
- The shielding hub hotline and the immediate ability to capture data and triage delivering this service seven days a week at the outset of the pandemic.
- The innovative approach to the councils COVID risk assessment for funding, enabling organisations and families to get funding for laptops wi-fi for school work and to enable digital inclusion.
- The prioritising of employee well-being and support for early access to the vaccine for employees
- Freeing up resource for WFRS to increase the number of community safety contacts and checks and supporting more hospital to home events.
- The preparedness for agile working – the fact that the Council was already leading the way in this, pre-pandemic, enabled a swift response to the situation.

- The approach to having highly trained employees - in particular the fire prevention team members breadth of training to support customers holistic needs e.g., the dementia training and dementia bus
- Your understanding of the effects of furlough and the crisis on families and pre-empting the huge increase in numbers of children qualifying for free school meals and seeking to inform them how to apply. You are also seeking to advocate for these customers, via financial inclusion partnerships, to change the system so that those qualifying with national benefits would automatically receive free school meals.

Element – 2.1.6 - We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.

There are many examples of where employees have been supported and encouraged to achieve this. This is something which was not as evident at the previous assessment and appears to be a real improvement. Colleagues are working together and communicating strongly across the organisation. Some of this is due to the Covid-19 response but is now seen as embedded and a positive outcome from these challenging times.

The contributory events to this element include:

- Strategic Directors weekly live broadcasts including the section called 'shout outs' to celebrate good work and a thank you to individuals and teams
- The staff e magazine Working for Warwickshire – focusing on staff well-being - regularly sharing staff stories and experiences
- The STAR AWARDS - delivered online reaching more colleagues than ever before
- Corporate Board sharing their own message to all staff regularly
- The 'You're extraordinary - thank you' video from Corporate Board to WCC staff
- Your flexible approach to engagement, taking on board the skills and experience of front-line customer facing staff
- The enhanced joint working between internal teams e.g. Family Information Service and the Welfare Team, WFRS and Edible Links and Home from Hospital, Schools and free School meals and Apettito.
- The use of your established welfare information and welfare schemes and sharing of information, resulting in better data and more streamlined ways of working going forward

Element – 3.2.3 - We have improved the range, content and quality of verbal, published and web- based information we provide to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers.

This is primarily in acknowledgement to the superbly coordinated communications during the Covid19 crisis.

The message was strong clear and 'branded' in a way that captured the eye and ear of all customer groups and stakeholders and was appropriate for all channels.

Using the key message 'Let's do what's Right for 'Warwickshire' gave it an overarching feeling of inclusivity and, when used locally for groups or geographical areas, this inclusion and buy-in just strengthened. Every angle was thought through and it was ably 'tweaked' to suit the current message.

It was a customer focused yet professional approach which caught the interest of others who sought permission to copy it- and did.

This was combined with a corporate commitment to ensure information was going both ways with all the key services taking on board customer need and changing demands

Other good examples are:

- Your use of social media not just the 'usual' but also targeting younger people through Snapchat to reach the hard to reach with a strong message
- The delivery of the 'Are You OK 'initiative through schools – a mental health campaign based on customer needs.
- The use of the one-minute guides
- The development of the Directory for COVID merging with other information improving corporate data going forward
- The electronic newsletter bi weekly and use of social media keeping communications as a priority
- The communication with schools and business support teams offering support throughout COVID. The head teachers' weekly meetings and briefings which are very well received (an observation is that the timing of these may not be on the right day for head teachers going forward)

Element – 4.2.4 - We have developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation, and we publish our examples externally where appropriate.

You have many examples of learning and developing from best practice and

sharing this with others

For example:

- Your approach to communications on Covid19 campaign was shared widely and used by other organisations
- Your approach to engagement was flexible and not one size fits all reverting to traditional method of face to face with good results – the effectiveness of this was shared with others.
- You have had a proactive approach to supporting the care services in your county with access to PPE and advice on Covid19 risk assessment - an approach then followed by others.
- You set up the 'Blue bed' discharge facility to minimise risk of infection and ease the pressure on NHS –this was then followed by others.

Areas of Good Practice

1. Your Customer Experience Strategy, which will raise the profile of the “customer” throughout the organisation, with the stated aim being ‘to ensure that our plans, decisions, actions and overall culture, are customer centric and by working together, we can ensure that we make Warwickshire the best it can be.’
2. Your engagement with adopters and the production of a video of adopters talking about their experience
3. The volunteer ‘buddies’ for adopters and fostering offering peer support ACE Hub Buddy scheme.
4. Your annual survey of over 700 adoption households
5. The reduction in the time taken to complete digital applications for school Admissions
6. The availability of all publicly related application forms, live, on your website.
7. The joint working with Contact to establish a new Parent Carer Forum (Warwickshire Parent Carer Voice)
8. The issuing of EHC plans within the statutory timeframe. In 2020, 89% of EHC plans were issued within this timeframe compared with a national average of 55%.
9. The new quality assurance framework for EHC introduced in January 2021. The aligned survey resulting in over 90% return with over 60% scoring the process at 7 out of 10 or higher. 68% reporting that they felt fully involved in the planning process

10. Your Local Offer website developed with customers as part of the SEND & Inclusion Change Programme.
11. Sharing learning via debriefs and daily meetings throughout the pandemic. For example, the emerging trends meeting to shape the service for domestic abuse teams; constantly learning and changing to meet customer need from data captured and case studies
12. Building on existing partnerships to work together in the crisis. Partnerships strengthened during covid and a legacy for the future, also resulting in less duplication of delivery since this closer collaboration.
13. Developing new partnership e.g., working with local pharmacies to reach those who are hard to reach
14. The switch to delivering services in a virtual manner yet still meeting customer needs and customer focus e.g., online MARAC meetings; virtual carers forum.
15. The innovative approach by the Library service to virtual events, virtual support and flexibility in service delivery based on customer demand.
16. The increase in delivery of safe and well checks for people isolated in the community
17. The use of customer insight to identify families needing extra practical support including white goods and laptops
18. The increase in resource to enable more social workers to deal with customer demand in seeking support
19. The use of insight to identify all those most in need of food parcel support and not just accepting the data on those stated as shielding
20. The introduction of parent champions and the parent and family board
21. The innovative use of arts-based interventions to get the message across and support people at this time
22. The Christmas shared event - good use of insight - identifying those customers who were not necessarily on the radar as being in need for support at Christmas
23. The improved understanding of customer needs regarding those children who were not on a register for school. Using a targeted approach and existing intelligence to achieve positive results and greater insight of customers to feed into improvements
24. The high profile of your Registrars at the West Midlands regional meetings sharing and learning from best practice

25. The befriending service, born from the realisation of the impact of isolation on customers - described as a life saver by many of those interviewed