



Southend-on Sea Borough Council

Equalities Report 2016/17

(Data 1st April 2016 to 31 March 2017)

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Introduction:

This report looks at service user experience when engaging with the Council through its three main channels, which are;

- Customer Service Centre - service users can access information face to face, on-line in a dedicated area and over the telephone
- Telephone – to Customer Service Centre staff
- Internet (Web) – Southend-on-Sea Borough Council website

Information is recorded against the following protected groups/characteristics

- Gender (Sex)
- Race (Nationality and Ethnicity)
- Age
- Disability
- Religion or Belief
- Sexual Orientation

This narrative looks at the overall experience of service users when engaging with the Council through the website or Customer Service Centre; examines any key learning and identifies opportunities to continue providing a positive experience for all the communities which make up Southend when engaging with the Council.

As customer equality feedback is provided with an assurance of anonymity, it is not possible to distinguish multiple ratings, perhaps on different occasions, from the same person. Therefore, for statistical purposes in the following narrative, each instance is assumed to relate to a different individual.

This report supports the Council in considering how the decisions we make, and the services we deliver, affect people who share different protected characteristics.

Demographic information about the population of Southend can be found [on our website](#)

Data Source and Usage

When customers contact us, whether face to face, on the telephone or through our website, letting us know how they felt about the service we give plays an important part in helping us improve and maintain our standards of service.

Govmetric is a system which provides a quick and easy way for customers to provide us with feedback. It is completely anonymous unless the customer chooses to provide contact details.

Visitors to our Customer Service Centre on the ground floor at the Civic Centre will find a touch screen in the waiting area. At the conclusion of their visit, they can press the screen to show what service they have used, how they rate the service received, their reason for that rating and a comment. They can also supply data regarding their protected characteristics.

When telephoning our Customer Service Centre, at the end of the customer's call they will be offered to be put through to the Govmetric telephone survey system. If they agree, they will then be connected to an automated system where they use their telephone keys to give feedback. The questions should take less than 60 seconds to complete and there is an option to provide more detailed feedback by leaving a voice message. They can also supply data regarding their protected characteristics.

When using our Website, there are Govmetric "smiley faces" on the web pages. To give feedback on a web page, customers simply click on the appropriate face. This takes them to a short survey where reasons for their rating will be requested. They also have the option of leaving a more detailed free-text comment and supplying data regarding their protected characteristics.

The Govmetric system compares the responses received over a given period and provides a Good, Average or Poor rating.

To compile this report, the above data is collated and then examined in relation to each protected characteristic.

The Benchmark rating given throughout the tables below is the rating arrived at when feedback from all users is taken into account, regardless of protected characteristic.

The Overall Service rating refers to the product of data from all three service channels.

Ratings in relation to each protected characteristic are then compared with the Benchmark. Where ratings fall below the benchmark, Govmetric data is further interrogated to identify whether there appears to be a connection between the protected characteristic and the reason for rating.

Gender

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
Male	Average	Average	Good	Average
Female	Good	Average	Good	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

Female customers are slightly more satisfied with the Face to Face service than Male.

The biggest cause for dissatisfaction for Males with that service was using the self-service computers. None of the comments left by Males rating the Face to Face service as Poor indicate a connection between their dissatisfaction and their gender.

Nationality

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
British	Average	Good	Not recorded	Average
English	Average	Good	Not recorded	Average
Irish	Average	Average	Not recorded	Average
Northern Irish	Average	Average	Not recorded	Average
Scottish	Average	Average	Not recorded	Average
Welsh	Average	Good	Not recorded	Average
Other	Average	Average	Not recorded	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	N/A	Average

Those who specified their nationality rated the service lower than the Overall benchmark figure (Average rather than Good). This does not relate to an equality issue but is because numerically the majority of good ratings come from the telephone service and for telephone callers nationality data is not recorded.

All customers were at least as satisfied as the benchmark level with the Face to Face service with those who are British, English or Welsh being most satisfied. There is no discernable reason for the dissatisfaction of those who are not British/English/Welsh and no comments indicate a cause related to nationality.

All nationalities were at least as satisfied as the benchmark level with the Web service.

Ethnicity

(Data collected for broad ethnicity groupings is shown in bold type; sets within the broad groupings are shown in italics.)

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
White	Good	Good	Good	Average
Mixed	Good	Average	Good	Average
<i>White and Black African</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>White and Black Asian</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No data</i>
<i>White and Black Caribbean</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No data</i>
<i>Other Mixed Background</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
Asian or Asian British	Average	Average	Good	Average
<i>Bangladeshi</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>
<i>Chinese</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>No data</i>
<i>Indian</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Pakistani</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Other Asian Background</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
Black or Black British	Average	Average	Good	Average
<i>African</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Caribbean</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
<i>Other Black Background</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Poor</i>
Gypsy/Irish Traveller	Average	Average	Not recorded	Average
Other Ethnic Group	Average	Average	Good	Average
<i>Arab</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Not recorded</i>	<i>No data</i>
<i>Other Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

On first examination it appears to be of concern that those who identify themselves as Bangladeshi have rated the all services as Poor. Examining the ratings individually, this rating applies to 3 Face to Face customers (1 x Average, 2 x Poor), 1 telephone customer (Poor) and 1 Website user (Poor). Their accompanying comments relate to specific service provision and do not indicate a link to ethnicity.

Those who identify as 'Other Black Background' have rated the Web service as Poor. This relates to 3 customers, of the two comments recorded, both are service specific with no apparent link to ethnicity.

I have examined all comments from those who have not identified themselves as White and who have rated the service received as Poor. None indicate an ethnicity-related aspect to their rating.

Age

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
17 and under	Average	Good	Good	Average
18 to 29	Average	Average	Good	Average
30 to 39	Average	Good	Good	Average
40 to 49	Average	Good	Good	Average
50 to 59	Average	Average	Good	Average
60 to 64	Average	Good	Good	Average
65 to 79	Average	Average	Good	Average
80 and over	Average	Average	Good	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

All customers who specified their age were at least as satisfied with each channel as the benchmark level.

Those least satisfied overall were the 18 to 29 age group. This is in relation to the Face to Face service and the Website. None of the recorded comments indicate an age-related aspect to the rating.

The highest volume of ratings were recorded by those in the 29 to 59 age range, reducing by approximately half between 60 to 79 and dropping severely at the age of 80 plus. This is in line with expectations of users of web services. There are a small number of ratings from those under 18, this is to be expected as this group less likely to be users of Council services.

Disability

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
Yes	Good	Average	Good	Average
No	Good	Average	Good	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

Both those who said they had a disability and those who did not were at least as satisfied across all services as the benchmark level.

There are two recorded comments relating to mental health and the Face to Face service. One person had found the Housing Benefit service stressful as it had been slow and involved answering questions to which they had not been sure of the answer. Another person felt that there should be more help with using the self-service computers for those with mental health difficulties.

Another customer reported that with a hearing impairment and no use of their hands, it was difficult for them to communicate by telephone, as they had been required to do.

A customer commented that in relation to their housing and council tax benefits, the process had been discriminatory because it had not fully taken into account their disabilities.

Another customer asked that it be made clear on the website that the Face to Face scanning service is only available during certain times. As a disabled person they had found it difficult to travel to the Civic Centre and had then found the service to be unavailable. Another customer said that the design of the scanning desk had not taken account of their needs as a wheelchair user.

A customer with visual impairment commented that there had been no clear in-page link on the website to an event she was seeking to find.

Two customers complained that the newly introduced box for paper recycling was too heavy when full to lift.

These comments were referred to the various service areas for consideration.

Religion

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
Buddhist	Average	Average	Good	Poor
Christian	Good	Good	Good	Average
Hindu	Good	Average	Good	Good
Jewish	Good	Good	Good	Average

Muslim	Average	Average	Good	Average
Sikh	Average	Average	Good	Average
No religion	Average	Average	Good	Average
Other	Good	Good	Good	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

All customers who specified their religion were at least as satisfied across all channels as the benchmark level except those who identified themselves as Buddhist, who rated the website as 'Poor'. There is no indication in the accompanying comments that this rating relates to the user's religion.

Those identifying themselves as Muslim or Sikh have rated the overall service below the benchmark level. The associated comments do not indicate a religious link to dissatisfaction.

Sexual Orientation

	Overall Service	Face to Face	Telephone	Web
Heterosexual/Straight	Good	Average	Good	Average
Lesbian or Gay Woman	Average	Average	Good	Average
Gay Man	Average	Average	Good	Average
Bisexual	Average	Average	Good	Average
Other	Average	Average	Good	Average
Benchmark	Good	Average	Good	Average

Those identifying their sexual orientation as non 'Heterosexual/Straight' were less satisfied with the Overall service. The associated comments do not indicate that the dissatisfaction with the service specified is linked to sexual orientation.

Glossary

Protected Group/Characteristics:

Age

This refers to a person belonging to a particular range of ages (e.g. 18 - 29 year olds).

Disability

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Race (Ethnicity)

This refers to the protected characteristic of Race, that is, a group of people defined by their race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), ethnic or national origins.

Religion and belief

Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g. Atheism). Generally, a belief affects life choices or the way a person lives for it to be included in the definition.

Sex

A man or a woman

Sexual orientation

This refers to whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

You can see a more in-depth definition of these protected characteristics on the [legislation.gov.uk website](https://legislation.gov.uk)

We do not collect Govmetric data in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- Gender re-assignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity