



Merton Registration Service Customer Engagement Strategy – 2017

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Purpose

The purpose of this Customer Engagement Strategy is to set out the framework that the Registration Service has in place to help understand its customers, enhance relationships with our customers and to offer the opportunity to involve them in shaping the service in future.

At Merton Council we put the customer at the heart of everything we do. We want our services to be accessible to all and responsive to the needs of our customers. This is an important part of Merton's commitment to a Fairer Merton

Service User Profile

In 2014, Merton's population is projected to be 203,200¹ Population density tends to be higher in the east wards of the borough than in the west ward

Just over half the borough is female (50.6%) and the borough has a similar age profile to London as a whole The ethnic composition of the borough is forecast to change, with the proportion of people from a Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) background increasing from 37% in 2014 to 40% in 2020. The GLA population projection data for 2014 shows Merton's current BAME population to be 76,188.4 population At the time of the 2011 Census, BAME groups in Merton made up 35.1% of the population. This was lower than the percentage for London (40.2%).

However Merton Registration Service does not just provide services to residents of the borough, many people opt to give designated notices, marry or use one of the checking services provided by Merton regardless of where they live. Currently over 40% of customer who marry in Merton come from other boroughs. These service users must also be considered in any changes to the service.

What is Customer Engagement?

Customer engagement can be hard to define. It is a connection, effect or reaction felt by customers using Registration Services. We want to hear about our customers' experiences and perceptions of our services, demonstrating our commitment to develop and enhance our customers' experience. To do this, we actively seek customer views and consider them before final decisions or plans are made.

Aims

This strategy seeks to deliver two distinct outcomes:

1. **Customers are able to influence key decisions, strategies and service standards:** we will provide customers with the opportunity to comment the decisions and strategies that shape the Registration Service they experience. We will consider customer comments and incorporate their suggestions, where appropriate.
2. **Customer feedback is integral to service improvement:** We will ensure appropriate processes are in place to routinely obtain and analyse customer

feedback on their experiences, and use this to influence and change service delivery where appropriate.

In order to develop our services in a customer-focussed manner, we follow the principles set out in the [Customer Service Excellence Standard](#)'s business improvement model.

Objectives

Our objectives are the measurable steps we will take in order to achieve our aims. These are:

1. To engage with stakeholders about the service, balancing the needs of the organisation and the customer whilst considering reasonableness, proportionality, legislation and cost, whilst making best all the tools for customer engagement offered by Merton Council.
2. To engage with customers on relevant Registration Service issues which directly affect them.
3. To routinely use customer feedback to drive forward service improvement.
4. To engage with customers in a range of ways that meets their needs.
5. Where relevant, to ask customers about proposed service developments to gain an understanding of appetite for changes to services e.g. opening times, new discretionary fees, etc.
6. Where applicable and where a Customer Experience measure is developed, and published, for this to be documented with an indication of the volume of survey forms, dates of survey and indicative return rates.

Methodology

We measure our performance against key performance indicators outlined by the General Register Office and additionally performance indicators decided locally by Merton Council.

We recognise that not all methods will capture the feelings of a community as diverse as Merton's and therefore will use a variety of method to seek the views of our service users.

Further a large number of our service users come from outside the borough and their input into how we deliver the service will be just as important as our residents.

The method we indent to use will include but not be limited to:

- Online customer surveys
- Postal customer surveys
- Comment cards*
- Focus groups
- Engagement with partner services e.g hospital bereavement services
- Trend analysis – providing an indication of customer satisfaction levels over a period of time to determine the direction of travel
- Publication of satisfaction levels, waiting times, performance indicators/service standards
- Benchmarking

- Complaints, comments and compliments
- Social media
- Formal and informal consultation in line with the Council’s budget consultation mechanisms

*We have a numerical measure of customer experience/satisfaction with our services. Our performance in relation to customer satisfaction measures is published and sample sizes, return rates and survey dates are documented.

Customer Engagement Method	Frequency or Date	Results	Outcomes
Online Survey Births	From 1/5/2017	Results will be released when a statistically meaningful sample has been collected.	
Online Survey Notices	From 1/5/2017		
Online Survey NCS/SCS	From 1/5/2017		
Online Survey Marriages	From 1/5/2017		
Optional postal survey deaths	From 1/5/2017		
Comment cards	From 1/5/2017		
Monitoring Social media comments	Ongoing		
Benchmarking against other authorities	Ongoing	To be published May 2017	

Reporting performance

Performance levels against targets will be published on the Registration Service web pages of Merton Council's internet site annually to ensure that sufficient data is collected to be statistically meaningful.

Training

It is vital that each member of our staff understands and implements our customer engagement processes appropriately. This leads to better decision making, improves relations between staff and customers and leads to more satisfied customers.

Training includes:

- customer care
- legal responsibilities for delivery of registration services under relevant legislation
- working well with individuals and groups
- importance and benefits of participation
- how participation works in practice
- ways to become involved
- good practice

Accessible Services - How will we ensure we achieve our aims?

Equalities – we are committed to reducing inequality and advancing equality through the decisions that we make and through our policies and practices. You can see what approach we are taking to help meet these objectives at:

<https://www.Merton.gov.uk/about-the-council/equality-and-diversity>

We ensure that customers who identify with a protected characteristic (as defined in the Equality Act 2010 and any subsequent updates) are not disadvantaged in any way. Our services are designed to maximise accessibility and we continue to make changes and improvements in response to customer needs.

In order to ensure we are meeting customer needs, we will:

- Provide evidence of timeliness to meet statutory requirements and customer expectations.
- Ensure our customer base is appropriate and proportionate to the wider local customer base and demographics.
- Ensure our services are available to those who wish to or who need to use them by providing accessible information in a range of ways (e.g. written information, online services).
- Seek the views of the local community and make adjustments to our service delivery when appropriate, based on customer feedback, to improve the service going forward. Where feedback cannot be acted upon, an explanation will be given.
- Engage with our stakeholders.
- Make best use of social media.
- Seek and use website feedback.

Continuous Improvement

Merton Registration Service is committed to developing and improving our services through a wide range of stakeholder consultation. We can demonstrate we are continually seeking to improve our services by:

- Responses to specific feedback will be published along with the lessons learned and action taken.
- Monitoring and reviewing our action plans and lessons learned based on customer feedback, comments and complaints
- Explanation where service cannot change due to legislation, corporate policy etc.
- Achieving our aims for service improvement as documented in our annual Service Plan
- Evidence of impact for staff training and development
- Benefits analysis (customers, service and/or organisation)
- Sharing of Best Practice; and
- Learning from Best Practice in other organisations, especially where customers highlight the quality of other services.

Corporate Complaints

Corporate Complaints are an integral part of our customer service review cycle. All customers' complaints will be dealt with within the Merton Council Complaints Process.

While it would be inappropriate to publish individual complaints and the outcome from such complaints, we will publish the number of formal complaints made each year and the number of complaints upheld against the service. As part of our reporting will report on the broad areas which drew complaints e.g. "booking ceremonies" so that customers know which areas we have to work on to improve the service they receive.

We see complaints as an opportunity to improve the service for users and prevent future failings which might adversely affect members of the public.

Officer Responsibilities

All staff members will:

- be responsible for providing excellent service to customers and stakeholders.
- be trained to the highest level of competence for their roles.
- ensure that, where appropriate, administrators and assistants on telephones or reception are requesting that customers and stakeholders complete the various surveys and other means of engagement to ensure any process improvements are based on a proportional level of participation.

The Registration Service Manager will be responsible for:

- the collection of feedback and for the analysis of data
- discussing the data and engaging with their teams to implement service improvements
- identifying further qualitative information from actions discussed
- presenting this information to all stakeholders through the appropriate channel as documented above

Ownership of the Customer Engagement Strategy

This strategy is owned by the Proper Officer for Registration and the Registration Service Manager

Day-to-day management of this process has been delegated to the Registration Service Manager with support and advice from the Proper Officer and Head of Service, alongside stakeholders from across the business.

Strategy owner: Proper Officer for Registration/Registration Service Manager

Last updated: January 2017

Next review: June 2017

Annex I Questions from Online Surveys

Customer satisfaction survey questions

Notices

Is Merton your local borough?

Yes No

If no, why did you choose to use Merton to give notice?

Closest Designated register office

Short waiting time for appointments

Morden Park House is our wedding venue

Other Please specify

How did you book your appointment?

Online

By Phone

In person

Did you find the information you needed easy to find and understand?

Yes

No

If no, why and what could be better?

NCS

How did you find out about Merton Nationality Checking Service?

Recommended By Friend/Family Member

Council website

Facebook

Government website

Other Please specify _____

Why did you choose Merton Nationality Checking service?

Recommended by Friend/Family member

Short waiting time for appointments

It is my local service
available

Evening and early morning appointments

Other Please specify _____

Citizenship

Is Merton your local borough?

Yes No

If no, why did you choose to use Merton to complete your ceremony?

I used Merton Nationality checking service

Short waiting time for a ceremony

Other Please specify

Did you enjoy the ceremony?

Yes

No

How would you improve the ceremony? Please explain

Weddings

Why did you choose Morden Park House for your ceremony?

Attended a wedding at MPH in the past
Member
The Location

Recommended by Friend/Family

The Building and Gardens

The Price

The Capacity of the rooms

Other Please specify

How satisfied were you with the choices of enhancements for your ceremony?
(Vows/readings/music etc)

Very satisfied Satisfied Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
Dissatisfied Very Dissatisfied

Did you feel that the ceremony was personal to yourselves as a couple?

Yes No

If no, please indicate what we could do to make the ceremony more personal for couples in the future

Would you recommend Morden Park House to another couple looking to get married?
Yes No

Annex II Customer Comment Cards

Comment Card



Merton Registration Service

If you have any comment on our service or suggestion to improve it please complete a card

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Thank you, for your feedback!

Annex III Postal Bereavement Survey

Death Registration

How quickly were you able to get an appointment?

Same day

Within 1 day

Within 2-3 days

Within 4-5 days

More than 5 days

How satisfied were you with the service you received? (Both on the phone and during the appointment)

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

Do you feel that you were supported and provided with enough information to continue with funeral arrangements and to deal with the estate?

Yes

No

If no, what could we do to improve? Please explain
