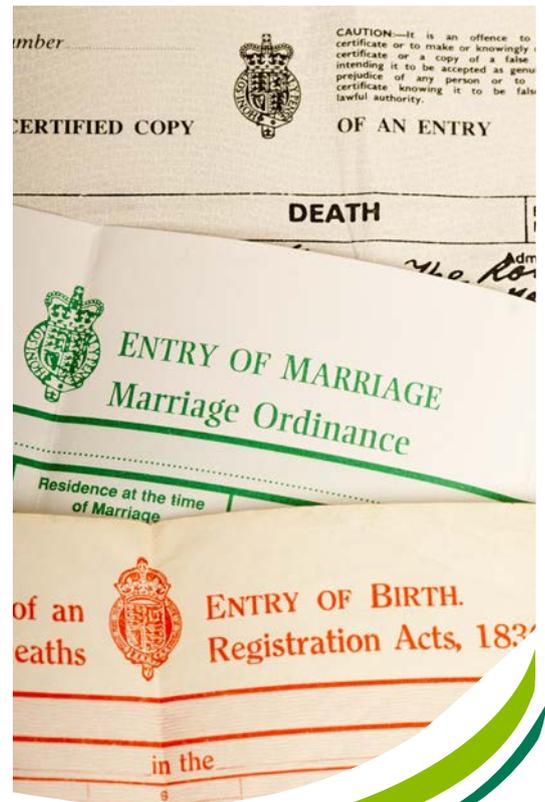*Caerphilly Registration Service*

Customer Engagement Strategy

A greener place to live, work and visit
Man gwyrddach i fyw, gweithio ac ymweld

CAERPHILLY
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
CAERFFILI

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

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1 Introduction and Background

Civil registration is a vital service that affects everyone at some point in their lives. It provides a name and identity within society; a facility for marriage and civil partnership; evidence of parentage; and evidence of entitlement to inheritance.

It also plays a vital role in securing and protecting basic human rights and in supporting community wellbeing and social inclusion. The statistical information derived from civil registration is important to policy making and in allocating national and local resources and information from death registration is essential to the monitoring of the health of the nation.

The activities of the registration service also underpin and support the Home Office's priorities of protection from terrorism, reducing crime and tackling immigration abuse. It is essential therefore that the local registration service continues to record high quality information and plays its part in protecting human life and upholding the rights of individuals on access to information.

The Caerphilly Registration Service (CRS) is committed to providing customers with high quality registration services at key times in their lives, reflected in the facilities provided within the register office and the skill and dedication of staff.

The public are served in accordance with relevant legislation and regulations and the principles outlined in Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)'s policies and procedures. The service is totally customer focused and the high standard of service delivery achieved reflects positively on the local authority. This Customer Engagement Strategy will facilitate effective customer participation.

To maintain a high level of customer service success, it is vital to understand the needs of our customers as well as their views on the services and products that we provide. This will assist in maintaining the high level of service reputation that Caerphilly Registration Service holds. We can achieve this understanding by ensuring regular dialogue with our stakeholders is established and maintained as part of the day-to-day business.

We aim to provide opportunities for all our customers to actively engage in the delivery of services. Not just by using the service at those various points in their life when there is a legal requirement to do so, but also by encouraging users and potential users to contribute to its development and direction both locally and nationally.

Caerphilly Registration Service submits Annual Performance Reviews to the Registrar General confirming adherence to the Code of Practice, key service developments and performance indicators. Evidencing our Customer Engagement is part of this Code of Practice; Customer Engagement has always been part of our Service Delivery Plan and this document has been created to formalise our customer engagement strategy.

The values outlined below are paramount to the aims of Caerphilly Registration Service:

- To put people at the heart of what we do and to value their view.

- To listen to and involve our customers and be responsive to their needs.

- To make the best use of resources, being innovative and creative and seeking continuous improvement.

- To develop and support staff, cultivating enthusiasm and commitment and recognising achievement.

- To work with others to improve the quality of service providing high level services that give value for money and are based on best practice.

- To develop and retain highly skilled and valued officers who are empowered to deliver our goals.

In order to deliver on these objectives, the Registration Service Manager (RSM) pursues a number of initiatives in consultation with all members of the registration team and with our customers and stakeholders:

- Continuous customer consultation to ensure services are developed and delivered in accordance with customer demand.

- Utilisation of the Good Practice Guide to test service provision against other providers in the region.

- Review of the processes within the district to ensure that best use is made of the resources available.

- Development of our partnerships with other local and central government departments.

2 Objectives / Aims of the Strategy

The aims of this document are to detail:

- Who are our customers?

- What is customer engagement to the Service?

- When should customer engagement be considered?

- What types of engagement activities do we undertake?

- How do we use the outputs from customer engagement activities?

- How do we feedback results and actions to our customers from their engagement with us?

In promoting participation we will:

- Meet our statutory, regulatory and contractual duties and comply with legislation and codes of practice.

- Comply with the relevant guidance.

- Encourage involvement of all customers regardless of age, gender, race, religion, marital status, political or sexual orientation or disability.

- Monitor the effectiveness of our performance and provide feedback to all customers.

We will work closely with service users and support services to ensure that we are helping achieve the outcomes that they require. We will:

- Make participation easy and accessible to everyone.

- Promote real opportunities for participation.

- Provide resources for participation.

- Make sure the views and priorities are reflected in the services we provide or procure.

- Develop capacity to be involved in the development, assessment and reporting on the quality of the services provided.

It is essential that the services we provide are the services that our customers want to receive. We want to the deliver the right services, in the right manner and at the right time.

3   What is Customer Engagement?

The local authority is committed to delivering a service that meets and where possible exceeds the national standards in all areas. A continuous programme of improving service by adapting policy and procedure to reflect the needs of users is part of the Public Protection service area's Service Improvement Plan. Council Members are asked to consider policies and new services that should be adopted to give the best possible registration and celebratory services.

We consider customer engagement to be about being involved with people and their ideas in order to understand them better. Engaging with our customers helps to build a connection between customers and the CRS.

Having a Customer Engagement Strategy helps us to:

- Improve the range of services we provide.

- Improve the standard of the service across all aspects of our work.

- Identify problems and work together to develop solutions.

- Be more accountable to our customers.

- Give people more control over the services they receive.

- Promote a greater sense of community.

- Empower people to get their voices heard and build their confidence and skills.

- Understand better our customers' needs and expectations.

- Strengthen our relationship with customers and stakeholders.

By taking time to participate in engagement activities that are available, our customers have the opportunity to:

- Shape future customer experiences.

- Improve communications between policy makers, service deliverers and service users.

- Further understand laws, policies and regulations that affect standards.

- Be involved in process improvements and influence decisions about local and national policies.

- Identify innovative solutions that will exceed the expectations of our customers.

We recognise that as well as regular feedback surveys, our customers provide their thoughts on our services through multiple routes and existing internal processes.

These include, but are not exclusive to:

- telephone calls;
- letters;
- emails;
- web portal processes;
- visits to the register office
- attendance at presentations;
- complaints and compliments.

4 Who are our customers and stakeholders?

Whilst not an exhaustive list, the CRS considers the following stakeholders as customers within this customer engagement strategy:

- Members of the public for statutory and non-statutory registration services provided locally, regionally or nationally;
- General Register Office (GRO);
- Home Office;
- UK Visas and Immigration;
- Caerphilly County Borough Council and other local authorities;
- Central Government Departments;
- Office for National Statistics;
- The Coroner Service;
- Funeral Directors;
- Clergy of the Church in Wales/Church of England;
- Ministers and members of other Religious Denominations;
- General Medical Practitioners;
- Hospitals, Nursing and Care Homes;
- Approved Venues (for marriage and civil partnership) Operators;
- Genealogists and other Researchers.

5   How do customers get involved?

What we need to do is ensure that we listen to everyone and ensure that the feedback we receive is representative of all customers and potential customers, not just a few.

Customers can:

- respond to telephone, postal or email surveys
  (Registration Service specific or Council Resident surveys);

- respond to the annual household survey;

- use social media to keep up to date with our activities
  and to engage with other customers;

- discuss issues in person at the register office;

- make comments and feedback through the website;

- use our complaints and feedback procedure;

- attend consultation events or public meetings;

- join a council customer focus forum.

6   When should customer engagement be considered?

It is essential that all staff are able to recognise feedback when it is given. Every opportunity for the collection of feedback data should be maximised.

From time to time, there will be instances where specific engagement is crucial. Implementation of new or different processes following legislative or regulatory change requires engagement with key stakeholders to assist in shaping how we respond.

Staff will engage as follows in order to build an understanding of the strategy, the benefits of engagement for both the service and our customers and the processes followed to ensure the full potential of each opportunity.

- staff briefing sessions;

- one-to-one training;

- workshops;

- involvement in project groups;

- and shadowing opportunities.

7   What types of engagement activities do we undertake?

Customers can be asked to comment on many aspects including in-person customer service, the quality of written material, online communication, as well as gathering data on how customers believe they are treated. Customer engagement is embedded in to the culture of the CRS and will include various techniques.

The range of customer engagement activities that are or can be used to record feedback on many aspects of customer service is diverse, and includes:

- surveys (sent or given to customers after every direct contact with the service);

- customer comment cards at reception;

- online via the website pages;

- using CCBC customer forum provisions;

- a robust complaints process which is monitored by the council's corporate section;

- a compliments system where data is captured regarding customer compliments;

- a customer programme which ensures stakeholders are informed on how any changes to our internal processes benefit our customers;

- and during face-to-face contact, for example:

  - at an event like a wedding fayre;

  - at presentations to interested parties;

  - to visitors to our register office or other venues we attend.

We operate a continuous customer survey of all members of the public using the registration service.

They give us a lot of valuable information about the services we provide and cover:

- Registering a birth;

- Registering a death;

- Corrections or Re-registrations;

- Giving notice of marriage or civil partnership;

- Statutory Ceremonies and Registration – Marriage/Civil Partnership/Conversions;

- Citizenship Ceremonies;

- Certificates;

- Non-statutory ceremonies – Naming and Re-affirmation of Vows.

In addition to the continuous customer survey and in order to capture the views of other users and stakeholders on any changes to the registration service and future provision, CRS can access established panels and the relevant forum providing consultation facilities.

In these circumstances, questionnaires may be sent to:

■ Funeral Directors

■ Venues licensed for ceremonies

■ Council Members and Officers

■ GP practices and Hospitals, Nursing and Care Homes

■ Coroners

■ Bereavement Officers

■ Registration Officers (local and neighbouring authorities)

■ Other local authority departments

■ Central and Welsh Government stakeholders

More formal consultation questionnaires would be made available in all council reception areas and an electronic format of the consultation would be placed on the registration service's web page throughout any consultation period.

Current channels of communication are used, such as the Council's newsletter, the local press, Caerphilly's website and other social media such as Facebook and Twitter and stakeholder meetings are arranged where appropriate.

8   What do customers want?

We believe our customers want us to:

■ Act on what they say - listening and responding decisively;

■ Continue to improve how and when we communicate;

■ Be clear, to the point and open in our communication;

■ Deliver our services within a time and to a quality agreed with those customers;

■ Involve them in reviewing how we and our support services perform locally, regionally and nationally.

9   How do we use data from our customer engagement activities?

It is essential that customer engagement is not used as a 'tick-box' exercise. The output from any engagement activity should be seen to be used by the service in order to improve the customer experience that we provide.

Analysis for the previous quarter feedback data will be compiled and reported within Ffynnon, the council's corporate performance monitoring programme, for members and officers.

The Head of Service reports to Scrutiny Committee as part of the Directorate's commitment to performance delivery and review. A report providing analysis of feedback can be incorporated into these reports, into the Public Protection Service Improvement Plan and also into the Caerphilly Registration Service Delivery Plan, which are available publicly via the website.

The Superintendent Registrar/Registration Service Manager will submit an annual summary report to the Proper Officer.

Details of what we've been told and what we will do are also incorporated into the Annual Report to the Registrar General.

Following the reviews of feedback, the following actions will take place:

- ■ All feedback is shared with staff via email or in staff briefing sessions.

- ■ All feedback and actions decided by scrutiny committees or wider council is reported to managers, staff and customers.

- ■ Employer/employee data will be fed back to the Registration Service Manager and Head of Service who will liaise about particular positive/negative feedback they wish to investigate further through informal discussion or other service or corporate mechanisms.

- ■ Overview of all feedback to be added to a 'How did we do?' page on website (currently just incorporated in Service Delivery Plan), which is accessible via website.

- ■ Registration Service Manager to identify any areas for further actions from feedback analysis.

Similarly, it is important to note that decisions can not only be made solely on customer feedback. An approach considering both business needs and customer feedback should be taken regarding any decision which would affect our customers.

Key performance indicators (KPIs) will be used to monitor the success of improvements that have been implemented. We will also use feedback results from previous years as a benchmark to monitor continued satisfaction and ensure that areas where we excel continue to grow.

10   How do we communicate results and actions?

The CRS will provide feedback on how customer engagement data has been used in the most practical means, including:

- Our website page.

- In the Annual Report to the Registrar General, Registration Service Delivery Plan and published accounts.

- In electronic mailings/newsletters.

11   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.

12 Our Commitment to Equal Opportunities

Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities, residents, elected members, job applicants and workforce. Communication will be clear, understandable and relevant and in the customer preferred format.

The legislation that underpins this includes:

- Equality Act 2010.
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages 1992.
- Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006.

We work to create equal access for everyone to our services, irrespective of:

- Ethnic origin;
- Sex;
- Age;
- Marital status;
- Sexual orientation;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Religious beliefs or non-belief;
- Use of Welsh, BSL or any other language;
- Nationality;
- Responsibility for any dependants;
- Any other reason which cannot be shown to be justified.

13   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.

14   Ownership of the Customer Engagement Strategy

Strategy owner: Proper Officer for Registration / Registration Service Manager

Last updated: April 2020

Next review: March 2021