

Northampton Borough Council

Scrutiny Panel 3 – Customer Services

Northampton Leisure Trust

Question 1

- I. Feedback surveys are run throughout each business year. Some are generalised to ask an overview of Trust and others more specific to events the Trust host.
- II. There are many avenues for customers to feedback their views and opinions. A 'Tell It Like It Is' Customer Comments, Compliments and Complaints Scheme operates at each site and a Quarterly Customer Forum operates at each leisure centre. Regular meetings with Front of house staff help gain a view on satisfaction as they receive most verbal feedback from people.
- III. Competitor analysis is undertaken to ensure the Trust is pricing competitively within the Borough. Business Development Manager and Marketing Officer work to ensure all activities are good value whilst remaining financially viable.
- IV. Quarterly Employee Forums allow staff to voice their opinions on the services we provide. Regular team meetings throughout the business allow all to verbalise opinions on service and value.

Question 2.

Northampton Leisure Trust currently uses the NBC website to advertise all promotions and activities offered by Northampton Leisure Trust. This can be accessed through the 'northampton.gov' website or directly at the 'nleisure' web address. Customers can download all Trust literature via this website and also join the Trilogy membership scheme online. By joining the direct debit system online the customer receives the latest promotions and incentives. The staff verbally direct people to the site to receive offers and we can give access to a computer at all three facilities.

A range of activity programmes can be downloaded from the website and in recent months each centre has developed an embedded timetable that shows each swimming pool programme and can also be amended to announce closures and any alterations. Customers can also sign up to receive a monthly electronic newsletter from the Trust that is sent to them advertising all upcoming events and news.

NLT also advertise and update through Face book- there are 3 different pages- Trilogy Northampton, The Forum Cinema and Sport and Play Development. The Trilogy page has over 1000 followers. This is used to advertise and promote all activities- holiday clubs for children to fitness events and also we highlight any operational problems. Members can upload information and it is also a forum for feedback. The online 'chat' facility is also available for questions and queries.

Northampton leisure Trust does have a twitter account. This is used to tweet information on activities. This is currently being expanded.

The Trust have joined the 'Splashpath' website which advertises all pool timetables online and via Smart phones as an Application (free to download) . On phones it is GPS related highlighting the pools you are located closest too. Splashpath is advertised in site and online. It also allows customers to undertake swimming challenges enhancing their training experience.

Customer services for the Trust now also offer contact electronically via the 3 centre email addresses. On the Trusts main website customers can also feedback via the Council feedback system. The Trust also uses the 'Survey Monkey' system to evaluate events and also conduct satisfaction surveys.

Question 3

All printed literature clearly advertises the website and trilogy membership addresses. Where the 'Tell it like it' forms are stored at each site there are also slips for the customer to take advertising the twitter, Facebook pages and the centre email address for feedback.

Question 4

Customers who do not have access to the internet can gain information about all the centres from an extensive range of printed literature detailing all timetables and programmes and activities. Most literature gives information for all three facilities with some containing more detailed information being site specific.

Customers can also obtain information and make bookings at each leisure centre reception (open from 0645 to 2200 hours weekdays and 0800 to 1900 hours weekends). This can be done in person or by telephone.

A multi-screen TV system operates at each leisure centre visually showing information on a range of activities on a rolling programme. Screens are located in reception/vending areas and with each Trilogy Fitness Suite. Multi-screen can be updated quickly to reflect any changes or new activities.

The Forum Cinema operates a recorded information line detailing upcoming film programme.

Question 5

Northampton Leisure Trust provides services and activities for a wide and diverse range of people within Northampton's Communities including the elderly, young and more vulnerable members of the community.

A brochure detailing the Trust holiday programme is circulated to schools in preparation for each school holidays period. We have also recently introduced open days prior to holiday periods to give children the opportunity to try a wide range of activities for a nominal fee.

The MEND Scheme (to combat childhood obesity) is promoted by GP's, School Nurses and Teachers and is also advertised through the central MEND website with links to programmes in all areas of the country.

The Trust Sport and Play Development Team actively promote activities out in the community, hosting and advertising a range of free or funded activities for all from the under 5's through to health walks for the over 50's. The Northampton Street Football Project is delivered by the Trust and reaches young people in areas of deprivation across Northampton encouraging them to both participate and also in some cases to train as a volunteer leader.

Information on our Activity on Referral Scheme is advertised within NHS practices and local Primary Care Trust Organisations. Doctors refer patients to the leisure centre who need to participate in physical activity for health reasons.

Members of our Membership Sales Team visit colleges and the University to encourage students to be more active and join the Trilogy Community.

Activities for distinct user groups will be advertised by working in partnership with relevant groups, and organisations and advertising in relevant media. For example parent and child magazines, age concern UK, Northamptonshire Sport, Northamptonshire Federation of Disability Sport.

Question 8

Customers can contact NLT Customer Services as follows:

- 'Tell it like it is' feedback forms
- Email
- By Telephone (direct extensions available)
- Letter
- Facebook
- Via the NBC website feedback form
- Via the NBC contact centre phone line
- Via a staff member
- Verbal Feedback Books

Question 9

The Trust has many avenues for customers to contact regarding their views on the centres and how they operate. This information, where relevant, is used to improve services and adapt the business to suit the requirements of the customer. A simple example of this would be altering a swimming session to add lanes for those training.

Sport and Play analyse every event and it is reviewed for improvements to ensure we aim meet the service standards expected for the next time the event occurs.

A Customer Charter is available that outlines what we believe to be the service levels we aim to provide to customers and this is reviewed regularly.

Through careful monitoring and recording of all feedback, trends can be identified for investigation and to be resolved. This helps the trust highlight areas of importance where service is required by those attending, what they believe should be provided to them and how we can look to accommodate it.

Question 10

The most used system in terms of feedback about the Trust facilities is by 'Tell it like it is' forms.

Question 11

Each facility operates under the guidelines of its NOP (Normal Operating Procedure) and EAP (Emergency Action Plan). There are set procedures for emergency situations and the health and safety of customers and staff will be prioritised at all times. The Trust has a service level agreement with NBC Health & Safety who will give advice and guidance as required.

In the event of an emergency situation, contact would be made with the NBC Communications Team to ensure the necessary press requirements are followed to communicate with our customers.

Question 12

Example

Recently maintenance work was being undertaken in the studio at Danes Camp. The information was misunderstood by staff that prematurely relayed this to the customers. The customers believed we would be cutting the aerobic class size down by half and were aggrieved as classes were currently at full capacity.

Customers were verbally complaining and also started a petition, stating that we had not consulted on the works that they believed would be detrimental to their memberships. Through word of mouth this escalated very quickly, with staff receiving verbal complaints some of a heated nature. Many were threatening cancellation of membership. The class size was only being reduced whilst work was undertaken for a period of a few days.

All customers were contacted and the situation clarified. More specific signage was put in place and all staff made aware of exactly what was happening.

Customer Services Identified that communication amongst staff had been at the root of this problem. Steps have been taken to ensure that in future, projects are communicated more effectively to staff and advertised with more of an open forum for questions from customers. Signage must be clear and precise and displayed in an appropriate time frame.

Question 13.

Complaints are all recorded on a spreadsheet relevant to the stated centre. This overview provides customer details with brief description of complaint, contact details and the staff member the incident was reported to and details of the Customer Services Officer or staff member who responded.

Secondary to this all communication is given a reference number, each case is completed and all communication is compiled and then filed away in order. All copies are also stored electronically against their reference numbers in folders for each site.

All complaints are first sent to the Customer Services Officer. They evaluate the complaint and determine the severity of the issue raised. This is then referred to the relevant operational team member for the centre/area complained about. The complaint would be investigated. During the recording, it would be determined if previous feedback has highlighted the issue already. The Customer Services Officer would refer to Senior Management if required.

The complainant would then be contacted by the Customer Services Officer or another team member (Centre Manager) for more information if necessary. If the complaint is resolved or there is explanation to be given, the Customer Services Officer would relay this to the customer. If lessons learnt from the process, the necessary changes would then be communicated to the staff and any changes made.

Complaints are analysed quarterly and an overview for each site and the Trust as a whole are evaluated. This report contains statistics of feedback. It would be hoped that trends would be noticed and rectified before a 3 month period but if not these can then be carried forward for further investigation and outcome. The information of all complaints is available to all Managers throughout the business to ensure all complaints are upheld fairly and appropriately.

Question 14

The main avenue for contact outside of leisure business hours is electronic. Customers can access the Internet for information or email in through the methods previously outlined. Customer Services do have a direct extension with an answer machine service for customers to contact.

Question 15

A shared customer services facility can be beneficial to the customer as long as the staff employed is knowledgeable about all the services provided and the customer journey/experience is improved and not elongated.

To a certain extend Northampton Leisure Trust operate in this way in that we have a corporate customer service position which operates across the three leisure centre, cinema and also now covers our sport and play development service. We are also considering a centralised booking system whereby an operator would take bookings and provide information related to all three sites and sport and play development.

As Northampton Leisure Trust grows the Customer Service function will remain corporate and will provide a service to all branches of the business and potentially to partners.