Audit of Scottish Water Consumer Contacts

Date of Audit	26 August 2011
DWQR Staff Present	Matt Bower, Bill Byers
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Summary of Audit

Overall Summary

Overall, the audit demonstrates an improvement on the 2010 position. There has been continual improvement in all sections of the audit necessitating fewer DWQR recommendations. Whilst the Audit summary produces an overall average, in the individual cases there are examples of some excellent call handling ability and some sections where it is less so.

In the main, call Agents gathered customer information well and used various support tools to prompt appropriate questioning. There were examples of very able and confident handling of calls and of referral to Public Health and Operations expertise to ensure appropriate advice was given. There were many examples of empathising with the consumer's problem. It is also clear however, that there is a range of abilities and of experience within the Contact Centre and Scottish Water must ensure that all Agents are trained and supported to deal confidently with the range of contact types. Call Agents must listen fully to consumers to ensure a correct response is made in the field and the appropriate focus of any further investigation is applied to the consumer's concerns. There is also a need to achieve a greater consistency in the quality of feedback notes from field staff across the country on the actions taken, discussions held and outcome of investigations.

There is an opportunity to improve on the overall customer experience through accessibility to better general and area specific information on water quality issues. This is particularly relevant to complaints of discoloured water where Agents can struggle to respond adequately to consumer concerns. Expansion of the call categories to include a specific Lead investigation would ensure visibility of this issue through the Company.

Number of Recommendations:	21

Score (out of 6)
<1.5 = Unsatisfactory
1.5 - 2.5 = Weak
2.5 - 3.5 = Adequate
3.5 - 4.5 = Good
4.5 - 5.5 = Very Good
>5.5 = Excellent

Quality of Customer Information Gathered	4.8	Very good

Positives
Capture of caller details is driven by the Promise system and there were no examples of failure to fully record details. There were a number of examples of additional information taken which would aid understanding of the situation for attending or investigating staff. Calls were correctly categorised in all but a few cases.

Negatives
In some instances (lead pipes) calls required an 'other' categorisation in order that appointments could be generated on the system which causes invisibility on the system of these issues.

Recommendations
Consider expansion of call categories to make provision for Lead investigations.

Quality of Water Quality Information Gathered	4.5	Good

Positives
The quality of information gathered from consumers was good. In most cases, Agents were able to ask appropriate questions to gain a clear understanding of the problem and it's duration. Attempts were made in many examples to define the extent of the problem in a neighbourhood.

Negatives
Example of talking over the consumer while explanations being given. Some examples of inadequate questioning to gain clear description of a problem

Recommendations
Agents must listen fully to consumers descriptions and capture details to avoid initiating a standard category response which may be inadequate.

Quality of Water Quality Information/Advice Given	4.0	Good

Positives

Good use of Decision Trees for providing information to consumers. Examples of Agents referring to Team Coach and to Operations T/Ls to gain information and correct responses - carried out in professional manner. This area seems to have improved on last year with greater attempts being made to offer explanations.

Negatives

Some examples of Agents getting out of their depth and guessing at possible causes which may further alarm the consumer. Examples of inadequate information/vagueness on causes of discolouration and of milky/cloudy water.

Recommendations

All Agents should have access to clear information and advice on water quality issues, both generally and for area-specific issues. Training and coaching of lesser experienced staff in confident response to consumer concerns should be carried out.

Follow Up Action of Call Agent	4.3	Good

Positives

Generally good use of systems and of populating notes for field staff. Example of use of stock text for populating system notes to minimise delays during consumer interaction. Appropriate use of appointments and example of 'forcing' an appointment in response to an illness complaint.

Negatives

Examples of inadequate notes on system to properly describe problem and to adequately describe requirements when on site. One example of a cancelled appointment with no reason noted.

Recommendations

Agents should ensure there are full notes on system to adequately describe the problem and the requested action.

Follow Up Action of NSO	4.1	Good

Positive

Examples of thorough follow up activity by NSOs with good notes on activity and outcome. Also of good consumer interaction. Appropriate reference made to Public Health Team for further actions.

Negative

A number of examples where fuller notes providing feedback from site would assist Contact Centre Agents and others in the event of further calls from consumer(s). Some examples of chlorine residuals being measured but no values recorded on system. Example of a sample being logged-in at lab under wrong category which meant no ongoing visibility of an illness complaint. The 'Good' score in this section masks a number of calls where field notes were inadequate.

Recommendations

NSOs need to ensure full notes are made on system to record discussions held with consumer, actions taken and whether the issue is resolved. NSOs & Samplers should ensure a description of any samples taken are recorded and chlorine residuals noted.

Customer Experience	3.8	Good

Positive

In the majority of cases, the Call Agents handled the contacts ably with many examples of empathy with the consumer and consideration for their problems. Scottish Water staff are clearly doing their best to provide an excellent service to consumers.

Negative

In some instances there were occasions where an extended period of time passed with the consumer on hold whilst checks were being made on various systems. A workaround is applied in the system to enable appointments to be made for lead samples to be taken. Examples of Agents being out of their depth and of tiredness/disinterest. Examples of the essence of a complaint being lost between different Functions leading to an inadequate or inappropriate response activity.

Recommendations

SW needs to ensure their systems have a capability to deal with enquiries for lead sampling to ensure these can be tracked appropriately. Also need to ensure there is adequate information available to Agents on the causes of discolouration in particular areas/zones to enable more authoritative and confident handling of consumer concerns.