

Informal Customer Engagement Activity – Report

APPENDIX C

Purpose of the Report:

To describe the engagement activity with customers that has helped inform the Equality Impact Assessment and associated Customer Experience Strategy, including key findings from that initial engagement.

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1. Purpose of the engagement
2. Method of engagement
3. Findings from engagement

Purpose of the engagement:

Leicestershire County Council has no consistent way of receiving customer service feedback, although there are pockets of good practice. For example, the Customer Service Centre asks customers who call them whether their enquiry has been resolved successfully, and when customers complete the online “report it” form or “contact us” form there is a follow up customer feedback survey, enabling the CSC to review the experiences that customers have, and make any changes and improvements needed. There are many council services that are not part of the central front door through the CSC, and therefore gathering customer feedback across the wider organisation is not standard practice, the exercise was therefore to invite customers who have recently been in touch with the council to tell us about their customer experience.

Method of engagement:

Who? Which customers were targeted?

Online: All visitors to the council's website during July and August 2024, were invited to complete the customer experience survey which was visible on the main banner of the council website (accessible from any web page a customer lands on).

Telephone: A targeted text message using gov.notify was sent out to 3,000 customers who had called the council during a 3 week period in July inviting them to share their most recent experience with council services; customers with mobile numbers who had contacted our highest demand services were picked at random. Services included: highways, transport, waste, blue badge, concessionary travel, adult social care, school admissions, special educational needs assessment team, registration service and children's social care first response.

Paper: Posters inviting people to complete the customer experience survey were displayed in libraries and in County Hall reception, with the option to pick up a paper survey (return address details included) from these locations should a customer be unable to go online.

What? Questions asked within the survey:

Q1- In what role are you responding to this survey? (drop down list of customer types)

Q2 - Thinking about your most recent contact, what did you contact Leicestershire County Council about? (drop down list of options presented)

Q3 - Thinking about your most recent contact, what were you trying to do when making contact?

Q4 – Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the customer service provided by LCC?

Q5 – Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response/resolution from LCC?

Q6 – How important, if at all, are the following communication channels to you when contacting LCC?

Q7 - What, if anything, prevents you from contacting the council online?

Q8 – Is there anything else you would like us to consider when developing our Customer Experience Strategy?

Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13 are demographic:

- Gender
- ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability or long standing illness

When

The opportunity for customers to share their customer service experiences was open throughout the summer through July and August 2024, via the means outlined above.

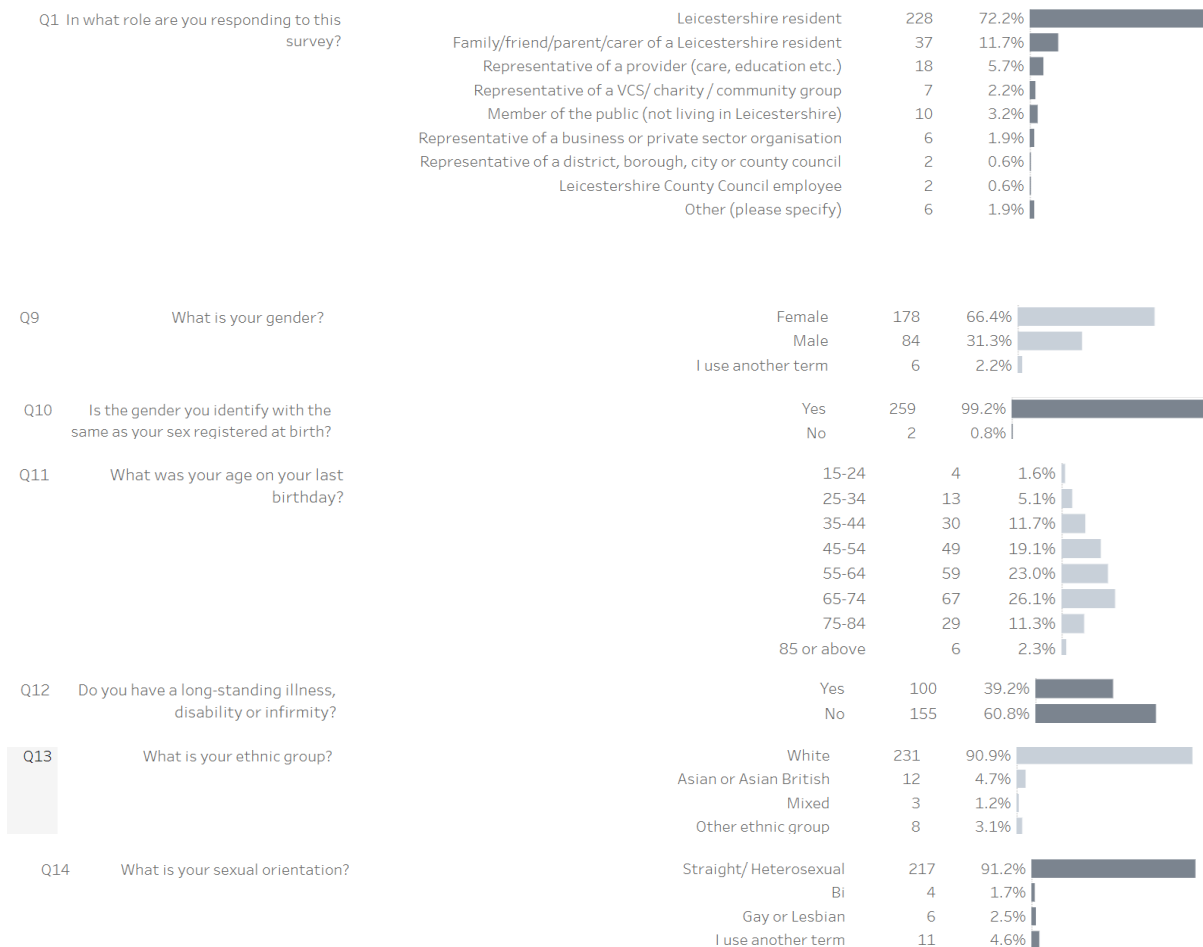
Findings from engagement:

316 surveys were returned during the engagement period, all of these were submitted online with the exception of 1 returned by post.

About respondents

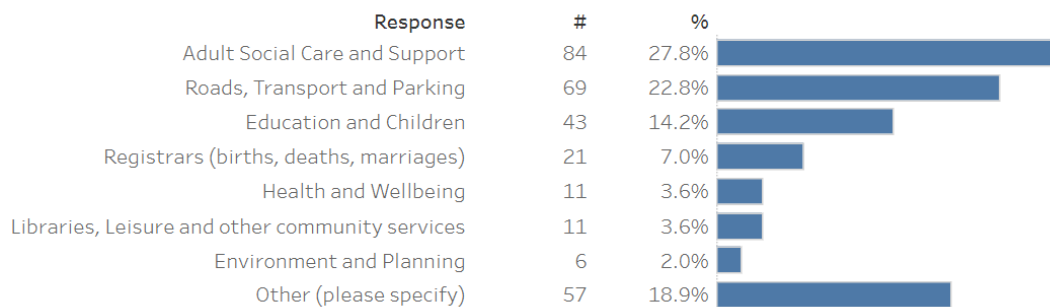
The majority of respondents were:

- a Leicestershire resident (72.2%)
- female (66.4%)
- aged between 45 and 74 (68.2%)
- did not have a long standing illness or disability (60.8%)
- white ethnicity (90.9%)



Reason for contact:

Q2 - Thinking about your most recent contact, what did you contact Leicestershire County Council about?



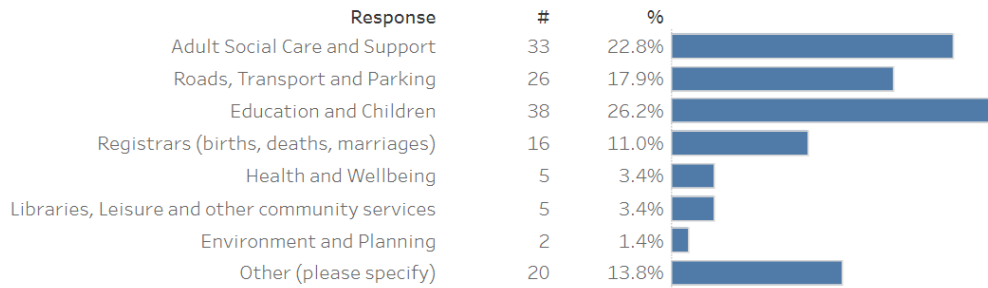
Customers who selected "other" were primarily contacting about the following services:

- Blue Badge (12)
- Older persons or disabled bus pass (6)
- Waste and recycling (5)
- Highways related matters variety (10)

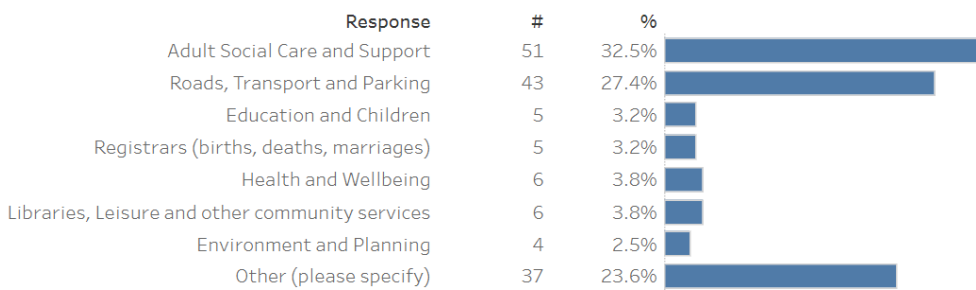
There were a handful of contacts who had used the survey inappropriately/ for the wrong reasons e.g. council tax and bin collection (district council responsibility) and other consultations (local transport plan and Charnwood contributions strategy).

The demographic for different services can vary greatly in terms of the age profile of a customer and also those reporting to have a disability or long term illness, there were no obvious trends in varying demographics of services in relation to gender, ethnicity or sexuality.

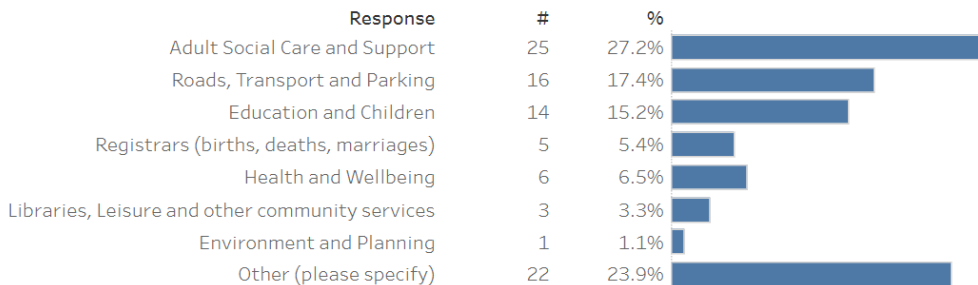
Age by service area – those reporting to be age 64 and under:



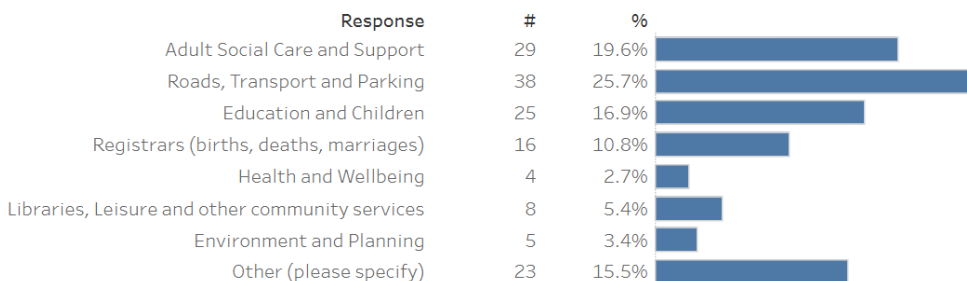
Age – those reporting to be age 65 and over:



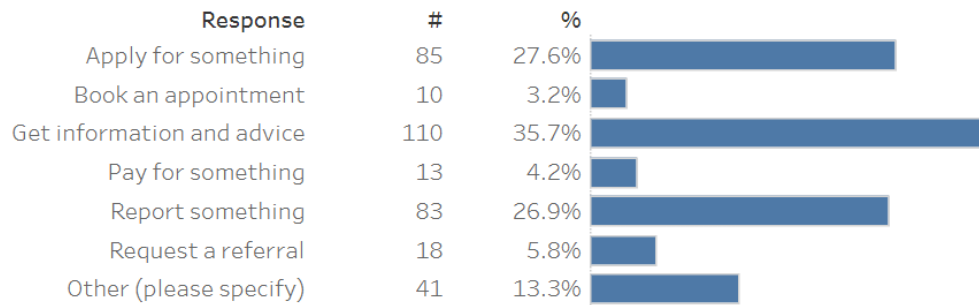
Disability - Those reporting to have a disability or long standing illness in relation to each of the below services:



No disability –



Q3 - Thinking about your most recent contact, what were you trying to do when making contact?



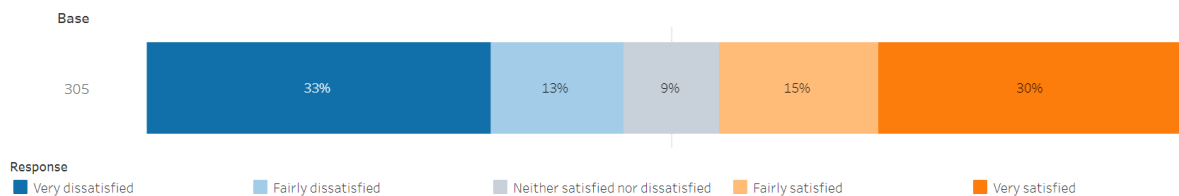
“other” was selected for a whole variety of reasons including:

- To change an appointment
- To make a complaint
- To request a paper copy
- To seek assistance applying for something
- To chase up a previous request
- To renew something
- Log into something
- Technical issue with online account

Satisfaction:

Customer service provided by LCC

Q4 - Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the customer service provided by LCC?



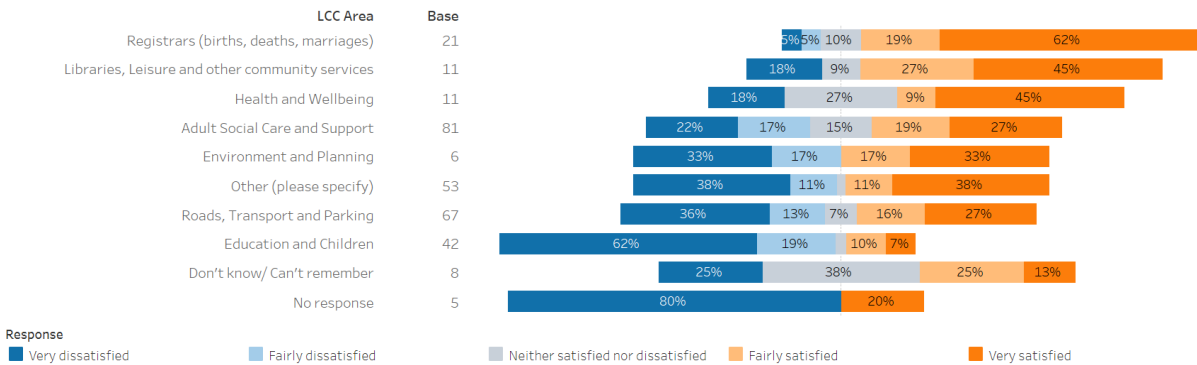
46% of all survey respondents stated they were either very or fairly dissatisfied with the level of customer service.

Service areas that faired better in reported satisfaction than the average across all respondents:

- Registrars (births, deaths, marriage): 10% dissatisfaction (2/21 responses)
- Libraries, Leisure and other cultural activities: 27% dissatisfaction (3/11 responses)
- Adult social Care: 39% dissatisfaction (32/81 responses)

Q4 - Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the customer service provided by LCC?

Click on the chart below to filter the open comments

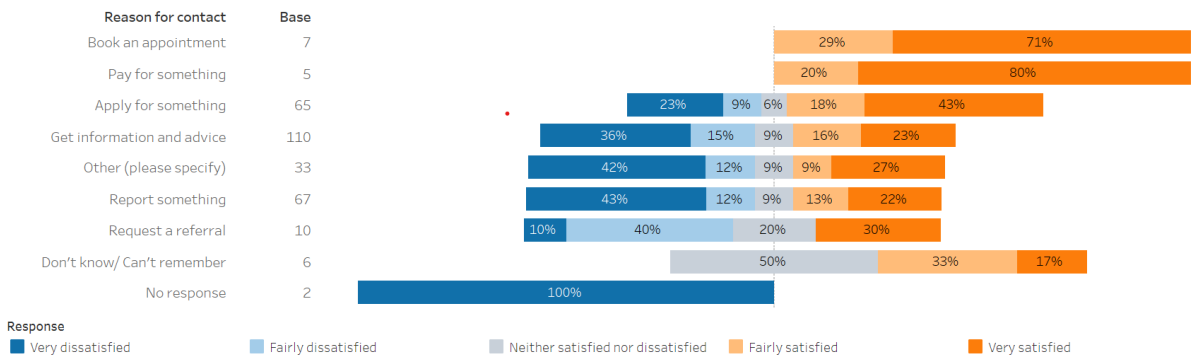


Services that faired worse than the average across all respondents:

- Roads, transport and parking: 49% (33/67 responses)
- Other: 49% (26/53 responses)
- Environment and planning: 50% dissatisfaction (3/6 responses)
- Education and Children: 81% dissatisfaction (34/ 42 responses)

Q4 - Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the customer service provided by LCC?

Click on the chart below to filter the open comments



Differences in customer service satisfaction between different customer groups:

Type of respondent:

Member of the public (not Leicestershire Resident) were the least satisfied group with 50% dissatisfaction, closely followed by residents and family/friends/parent/carer of Leicestershire resident

Gender:

Similar levels of dissatisfaction between Males and Females, those who selected that they choose another term for their gender reported higher dissatisfaction although the cohort was considerably smaller.

- Female: 42% dissatisfaction (total cohort: 73/171), accounting for 24% of all responses to the survey
- Male: 45% dissatisfaction (total cohort: 36/80), accounting for 12% of all responses to the survey

- Use another term: 67% dissatisfaction (total cohort: 4/6)

Age:

Over 85's reported highest level of dissatisfaction, although the total cohort of responses were significantly smaller.

Age	% reporting dissatisfaction	Total cohort	Comment – dominant service area causing dissatisfaction and volume
15-24	50%	4	Registrars (1), unspecified (1)
25-34	23%	13	n/a insignificant
35-44	55%	29	Education and Children (13)
45-54	54%	48	Adult social care (6), Education and Children (11), roads and transport (5)
55-64	54%	56	Adult Social Care (7), roads and transport (7), Other (8)
65-74	29%	66	Roads and transport (8), Other (6)
75-84	21%	24	n/a - insignificant
85 +	67%	7	Roads and transport (1), Other (3)

Disability:

People reported to have a disability or long term illness were not reporting higher levels of dissatisfaction compared to those who said they did not have a disability or long term illness.

Disability or illness	% reporting dissatisfaction	Total cohort	Comment – dominant service area causing dissatisfaction and volume
Yes	41%	95	Adult social care (7) and education and children (13)
No	43%	150	Adult social care (10), education and children (17), Roads and transport (18)

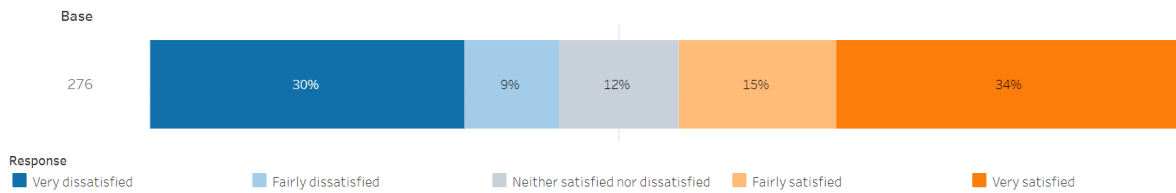
Ethnicity:

There were limited differences in satisfaction levels between different ethnic groups, albeit significantly higher levels of respondents were of White ethnic origin. There were no trends in relation to service areas causing higher levels of dissatisfaction based on ethnicity.

Ethnicity	% reporting dissatisfaction	Total cohort
White	43%	222
Asian or Asian British	50%	12
Mixed	Nil	3
Other ethnic group	43%	7

Satisfaction reported based on response provided by LCC:

Q5 - Thinking about your most recent contact, overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with the response/resolution from LCC?

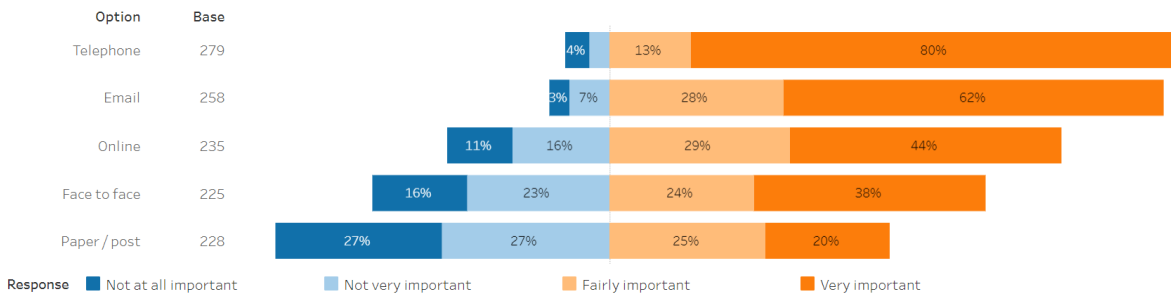


Satisfaction levels based on the response/resolution received from LCC were in line with satisfaction levels reported for Customer Service received; some customers chose not to answer the resolution/response customer satisfaction question due to perceived repetition in feedback.

Communication preferences

Only approximately 75% of survey respondents answered the question.

Q6 - How important, if at all, are the following communication channels to you when contacting Leicestershire County Council?



Service:	% of respondents stating the channel is fairly or very important to them				
	Telephone	Email	Online	Face to face	Paper/post
Adult Social Care	97%	90%	65%	78%	45%
Education and children	90%	95%	79%	46%	43%
Environment and planning	84%	100%	100%	33%	33%
Health and Wellbeing	88%	72%	88%	86%	72%
Libraries and leisure	89%	100%	44%	67%	44%
Registrars	100%	90%	79%	84%	39%
Roads, transport and parking	94%	90%	74%	51%	35%
Other	89%	90%	78%	55%	63%
Average	93%	90%	73%	62%	45%

Age:

Respondents over the age of 75 stated that telephone (93%) and email (92%) were the most important channels of communication for them, with 63% of this group also stating that online was fairly or very important.

Those aged between 35 and 44 years of age, were most likely to regard online as fairly or very important to them when communicating with the council at 89%.

Ethnicity:

Although not statistically significant due to the sample size, 89% of non white respondents considered the online change fairly or very important to them (all of these customers were aged 64 or below).

Disability:

79% of respondents reporting to have a disability or long term illness classed the online channel as either very important or fairly important to them.

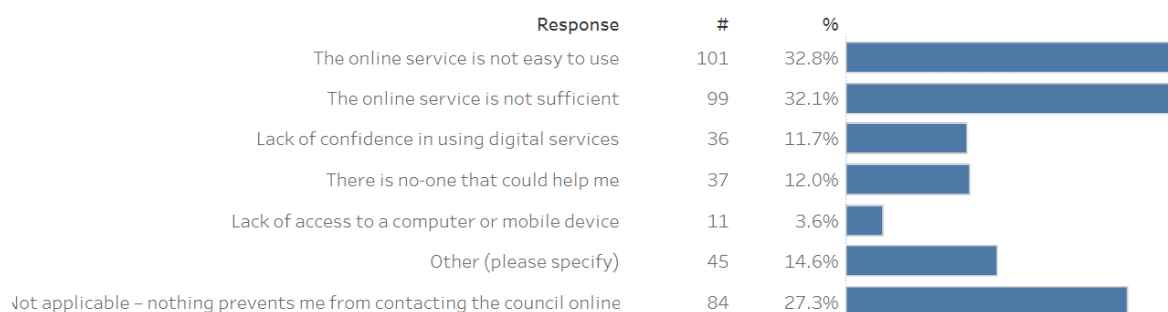
Summary of feedback on communication channels provided by customers by service area:

Service	Summary of common feedback
Adult Social Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • telephone takes a while to get answered • don't always get a response to emails • phone system designed for caller to give up • takes too long to get face to face appointment
Education and Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trying to get communication in any form is difficult (SENA) • constant changing of contact names for parents isn't satisfactory • prompt communication and responses please • staff not local so no local knowledge to be able to advise (SENA) • No transparent contact methods, and case information not kept up to date making it difficult to get any information (SENA) • Emails should be acknowledged (SENA), would like updates even if its "no update yet"
Roads, transport and parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obviously not enough workers to make the repairs requested • Telephone system can get you stuck in a loop unable to talk to someone • Thank you to your staff who are very polite and don't make you feel stupid when you can't do something
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find it easier to speak to someone • Central triage is fine but not when you get passed off and don't get kept informed what's happening • Keep me up to date via email with the outcome of my requests

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I always try online for general enquiries first before ringing • Still waiting replacement badge with no update (Blue badge)
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What prevents people contacting online:

Q7 - What, if anything, prevents you from contacting the council online?



Age:

There were limited trends in responses to the above question, although 0% of over 85s stated that there was nothing that prevented them from contacting the council, pointing to the continued need for other channels of communication to avoid this age group being excluded from council services.

Gender and ethnicity:

There were no trends associated with the gender or ethnicity of respondents in relation to the above question.

Disability or long term illness:

People reporting to have a disability or long term illness were more likely to report that there were things that actively prevented them from accessing the online offer, in particular they were more likely to state that the online service is not easy to use (37%) or that they had a lack of confidence in using digital services (19%). This is a group that are at risk of being excluded if there is insufficient support in accessing council services either online or via other channels.

Other comments invited to inform the customer experience strategy:

- Keep telephone contact, not everyone can use the internet
- Be given direct correspondence with appropriate officers

- Follow up communication is really important
- Plain English communication to make things easy to understand
- Speed up decision making
- Be up front about the things needed before completing an application for something
- Communication between staff and departments needs improving
- Customer service training for staff across the council
- Real time help online
- Consistent call answering rates across different teams

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