



2008/9 Customer Satisfaction Survey Management Summary

FINAL VERSION



a Munro group company

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

Customer perceptions of the process and procedures experienced during a tribunal case vary little compared with 2007. The majority of customers are positive on key aspects of service delivery however areas for improvement can again be identified.

Satisfaction

- In 2007, 68% of hearings customers were satisfied with their overall experience and this provided the baseline measure; in 2008/9, 65% say they are satisfied.
- While this three percent difference is significantly lower than last year, results overall appear to be very similar. Spontaneous satisfaction levels with process and procedures are consistent for successful and unsuccessful customers however this year a greater number of unsuccessful customer interviews were achieved which has had the effect of reducing overall satisfaction.
- There is limited awareness of the precise role and responsibilities of the Tribunals Service and this is reflected in the strong correlation between outcome of case and overall perceptions of service.
- Among reasons for satisfaction and dissatisfaction, winning or losing cases still appear as explanations. Other aspects associated more with the judiciary than the administrative side of the service also influence opinion, with some customers claiming they were not treated fairly or sensitively, that they felt penalised or that the tribunal was not impartial.
- As outcome of case continues to have some influence on overall satisfaction, awareness of the drivers of outcome are also important in understanding respondent views. Two key groups of customers who are more likely to be successful are those who are represented during their case and those who attend their hearing in person.

Considered satisfaction

- In the final quarter of interviewing for 2008/9 a new 'considered' satisfaction question was introduced to gauge overall opinion solely with aspects of service provided by the Tribunals Service. The overall considered satisfaction rating is higher than spontaneous satisfaction (73% versus 65%).
- Scores are significantly higher for a number of sub-group variables for considered satisfaction:-
 - both successful and unsuccessful customers
 - Employment Tribunal (ET) and Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SEND) customers
 - for Central London and Scotland areas
 - among those contacting and attending the tribunal
- Spontaneous and considered satisfaction ratings provide different and important measures of customer perceptions. Spontaneous satisfaction illustrates a 'word of mouth' opinion, that is the view of the Tribunals Service they might express if asked what they thought about their experience. This verdict may be influenced by customers' uncertainty of the role of the Tribunals Service.
- Considered satisfaction offers a more informed rating of the overall experience. It focuses on service aspects for which the organisation is actually responsible.

Priorities for improvement

- It is integral to the quality of service being delivered that the Tribunals Service can identify areas of concern or opportunities for improvement.
- In 2007, to meet this requirement, we analysed stated importance of service aspects against the gap between expectation and satisfaction scores for service and this was again conducted in 2008/9.
- While mean scores for actual experience of service show little movement over the past year for the majority of service aspects, scores for actual experience of being informed of progress leading up to a hearing and being given a good explanation for the outcome have declined since 2007.
- Three priorities identified in 2007 continue to be areas of priority this year; staff being knowledgeable, receiving a good explanation for outcome and being informed what would happen on the day. All three are identified as very important to customers but have a wide gap between expectation of and actual experience of service; that is, falling short on delivery.
 - These are the strongest drivers of satisfaction and by improving perceptions here, overall satisfaction should also increase.
- In 2007, being informed of progress leading up to the hearing was also identified as a priority. This factor does continue to have a significant bearing on overall satisfaction with relatively high importance and a wide gap in perceptions.
- Priorities are consistent across the larger tribunals with the focus on being informed. For ET, SEND and AIT customers, speed of learning the outcome is also a priority.

Comparisons with 2007

As reported above, many of the data are consistent with last year. We detail here areas of change or development in 2008/9.

Withdrawn, settled and struck-out customers

- For the first time in 2008/9, customers with a case which did not reach the hearing stage were included in the survey. On key aspects of service delivery associated with administration and process, the views of these customers are very similar to those with hearings.
- Of those withdrawing from their case or settling before hearing, a minority say that they were influenced by the tribunal, largely through information they were given.
- 58% say they are satisfied when asked for a spontaneous rating although there is considerable variation in satisfaction levels dependent on the reason for not having a hearing. Customers with a case settled or withdrawn are significantly more positive than those with a case struck-out.

Preparing for the case

- While the proportion of customers having professional representation is similar to 2007, who provides such advice and guidance does vary. In 2007, 27% had used a solicitor or barrister compared with 34% in 2008/9.
- Although aggregate results on attitudes towards the time to prepare for a case were stable in comparison to last year (most saying the time given is about right), the proportion of Criminal Injuries Compensation tribunal customers saying it was too long has declined.

Being informed

- Nearly half of hearings customers would have liked to receive updates on their case even when there were no developments but this has fallen significantly since 2007.
- Contact with a tribunal in the lead up to a case is on a level with last year, however more have been in touch to ask for additional information and fewer to check on the progress of their case.
 - While 46% of Criminal Injuries Compensation tribunal customers made contact to check on the progress of their case in 2007, in 2008/9 it is 21%.
- Among those having telephone contact with the tribunal, a positive improvement has been the perception of the speed with which calls are dealt with.
- But, speed of dealing with written correspondence and responses being knowledgeable however demonstrate a decline in opinion.
- In 2007, 81% said that they were informed by the tribunal about what would happen on the day, but in 2008/9 this has fallen to 77%.
- The number of customers making use of the Tribunals Service website has increased from 16% to 20% with the majority of users saying it was helpful to them.
- Those saying they were dissatisfied with the service received were asked why and in comparison with 2007, proportions attributing their negative opinion to staff has declined significantly.

The venue

- The proportion suggesting possible improvements to the venue has declined, from 77% in 2007 to 62% in 2008/9.
- Nearly three-fifths of customers with special needs who attended their hearing stated the tribunal made provision for their needs although access to venue buildings is a greater priority for these customers.

The findings clearly highlight areas where the Tribunals Service can focus its resources to provide the best opportunity for improving the service to its customers and raising overall satisfaction.

- Customers are overall positive about their experience of a tribunal (65%). While successful customers are more positive generally, 45% of those losing a case still show spontaneous and 56% considered satisfaction.
- Communication continues to be one of the biggest drivers of customer attitudes.
- Receiving an explanation of the outcome remains a high priority, both overall and across larger tribunals.
- Being informed what will happen on the day also has a strong influence on satisfaction.

The full report contains detailed findings from the study, including analysis by particular sub-group categories as relevant.

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