Waste Management Customer Feedback Report 2016

Household Waste Recycling Centre Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Mystery Shopping

Produced by
Kent County Council
Waste Management

Background

Kent County Council is responsible for the operation of 18 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), across the county. This service is provided through a number of Contractors who are responsible for their management and running of the day-to-day service.

KCC are committed to ensuring that customers are placed at the heart of our services. In order to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our customers through the HWRC service, Waste Management (WM) use feedback tools; Customer Satisfaction and Mystery Shopping, to understand the experiences of our customers and levels of satisfaction with the service they receive. WM collects this customer feedback through third-party contractors so that results are unbiased and give an objective view of the HWRC service.

This feedback is integral to WM, in helping us to work with our contractors to make improvements and see when we are performing well. The results collected and feedback gathered is shared with our customers, so that you are able to understand how this data is used.

We value your comments and suggestions, and thank you for providing us with your feedback. We will work, as far as is possible, to use these to improve your services.

This report details the high-level results for 2016 for Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Mystery Shopping.

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Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Waste Management undertake customer satisfaction surveys twice a year across all of its HWRCs.

DJS Research carries these out onsite, face-to-face with customers. DJS Research is responsible for undertaking all fieldwork and analysing the results and feedback. This ensures that all feedback is as objective as possible.

Feedback was gathered at two seasonal sample points in April and October to allow for seasonality in results and gain an overall picture of the service. In total, 7413 surveys were undertaken in 2016 (approximately 400 surveys per HWRC). Surveys were undertaken across a cross-section of days and times to include weekdays and weekends.

Customers were surveyed on exit / after using the HWRCs, and asked to feedback on their experience for that particular visit.

A range of aspects were tested in the surveys, as follows;

- **Customer Profile** –frequency of use, queuing times, materials disposed of/ recycled
- **General satisfaction levels** – including queuing times, ease of access to recycling points, site layout, entry into the site and site signage.
- **Staff satisfaction levels** – were the customers offered help from site staff and satisfaction levels with staff politeness, staff knowledge and staff presentation.
- **Policy knowledge and understanding**- Do customers know about the different policies regarding tyres, soil rubble and hardcore limits and the vehicle voucher scheme.
- **Suggested improvements** – were there any improvements that customers would like to see at the sites.

Data is also collected to monitor who our customers are and where they are coming from. All of this data is important because it helps to understand any changes that could be made to the service and helps tells us the best way to communicate with our customers.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Key findings

- Overall satisfaction with the HWRC service is high at 98%.
- 'Easy access' and 'helpful staff' are the most common reasons given for overall satisfaction.
- The majority of customers visit a HWRC once a month, with 30% of customers stating they visit a site every 3 months or less.
- 85% of customers did not have to queue to enter the HWRC on their visit.
- 89% of customers stated that the current opening hours suited their needs.
- The majority of customers are visiting the HWRC to dispose of general household rubbish (43%), closely followed by garden waste (39%).
- 91% of customers on the vehicle voucher scheme were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the application process.
- The most common suggestion for improvement to sites was 'improved access to and from the site', and 'improved signage' however, less than 4% of those surveyed made this suggestion in both instances.

1. Customer Profile

a) 'How often do you visit a HWRC?'

The graph below shows that **the majority of customers surveyed visit a HWRC once a month (31%).** Almost 30% of customers stated that they visit a site every 3 months or less.

Customers over the age of 65, were the most frequent visitors with 24% using facilities on a weekly basis compared with the average of 17%.

b) 'How long did you queue for today?'

85% of customers did not have to queue to enter the HWRC. A small number of customers (2%) queued for more than 15 minutes.

c) **'If you did queue- what was the reason?'**[1]

d) **'The normal opening hours for the Centre are 8am until 4:30pm on Monday to Saturday, and 9am until 4pm on Sunday. Do these times suit your needs?**

Customers visiting on a Thursday and those visiting on Saturday were the most and the least likely to feel that the opening hours suit their needs.

[1] Asked to all customers who stated they had queued for 10 minutes or more.

A high majority of customers surveyed, **89%, stated that the current opening hours suited their needs**. Of those 11% who answered 'no', the most common suggestions for a change to the opening hours was for sites to be open later- until 6pm, open later one evening a week or longer opening during the summer months.

e) 'What type of waste are you recycling/ disposing of today?'

Many customers are disposing of different types of waste on each visit however; **the majority of customers, almost 50%, are disposing of general household rubbish.**

These results show little change since 2015 in the items that customers are taking to the HWRCs. General household rubbish and garden waste are still the most frequently disposed of items.

As expected there are fewer customers disposing of other types of waste that are collected at their kerbside e.g. Glass and paper and card.

2. General satisfaction levels

Customers are asked to rank their satisfaction levels regarding a number of aspects. These rankings are from 1 to 5, with 5 being 'very satisfied' and 1 being 'very dissatisfied'.

Customers are also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their visit, on the same scale.

a) Satisfaction with site aspects

Those interviewed on a Thursday were the most likely to be very satisfied with the length of time queuing in 2016 (91%).

Customers at Canterbury and New Romney were the most likely to be very satisfied with entry into and around the site in 2016 (both 99%).

Overall, satisfaction is high on all counts, particularly in terms of queue times, site signage and the ease of access to the various recycling and disposal points on site.

b) ‘Overall, how satisfied were you with your visit to the HWRC today’.

The overall satisfaction level across the network is high- **98% of customers stated they were either ‘Satisfied’ or ‘Very Satisfied’.** This is a 4% increase since 2015.

b) **Reasons for satisfaction**

Customers were asked to give reasons for their rating for overall satisfaction. Although 54% of customers could not give a particular reason, other reasons were given as below;

“Clean and Friendly”

“Well organised and easy access...very helpful staff”

“Staff have always been extremely helpful, it’s a very well run site”

“Good facility and allows me to get rid of green waste when it suits me”

“Organised, available to me, easy parking, good helpful staff, well signed and clean”

3. Staff assistance and satisfaction levels

a) 'Were you offered any assistance on your visit today?'

Please note: *It is not a requirement for site staff to assist every customer (and indeed, at many of the bigger sites this would not be possible). What we are testing is whether there are people requiring help that did not receive it for one reason or another. This is tested in further detail in the mystery shopping programme (See Page 15).*

b) Site staff Satisfaction

Customers were also asked to rate their satisfaction with the site staff (on the 1-5 scale) looking at aspects of behaviour, presentation and professionalism. The above graph represents those customers who answered ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with these aspects.

4. Policy knowledge and understanding

a) Operating Policies

Customers were asked if they were aware of a number of the operating policies that are in place at the HWRCs. These policies are in place to limit the amount of trade waste that is disposed of at our sites, illegally.

- 39% of customers surveyed were aware of the trailer size restrictions.
- 25% of customers surveyed knew there was a 90kg daily limit for soil, rubble and hardcore.
- 39% of customers surveyed were aware that there is a disposal charge of £5 for two tyres.

Of all customers surveyed, **49% were not aware of any of these policies.**

It is important that KCC communicate these policies with their customers effectively. KCC will ensure that customers are able to access this information in a suitable way when they need it.

b) The Vehicle Voucher Scheme

KCC operate a vehicle voucher scheme for commercial type and over-height vehicles to access the HWRC's.

Of those customers surveyed, 4% had vouchers for their vehicle with **91% of these customers stating they were either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the vehicle voucher application process.**

Details of all of HWRC operating policies are available on the kent.gov website;
http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/9717/HWRC-operating-policies.pdf

5. Suggested Improvements

In general, very few suggestions for improvements were made, however of the customers who did, the most common are detailed in the table below;

Suggestion for Improvement	% of Customers
Access to/from site	4%
Improve signage	4%
Parking Control	3%
Staff to be more helpful	3%
Improved access to containers	3%
Shorter queues	2%
Bigger sites	2%
More recycling containers	2%
Longer opening hours	2%
Improved layout	2%

Mystery Shopping

In December 2015, KCC WM procured a provider to undertake Mystery Shopping across its network of 18 HWRCs.

As part of this Contract four Mystery Shops are undertaken at each HWRC every month and each 'shop' assesses five areas of the service;

- **Entering the facility**- E.g. Is the HWRC open when it should be. How long is the queue?
- **Facility standards**- E.g. This includes both site and staff presentation. Is the site tidy? Are the site staff wearing correct uniforms and easily identifiable?
- **Operating policy adherence**- E.g. Are site policies and rules being enforced, for example are staff checking commercial waste is not being disposed of. Are staff ensuring that children remain in vehicles?
- **Customer service-** E.g. How friendly are colleagues and are they available to help?

Each area is awarded a percentage score and a further overall percentage score is then given.

There is also an option for assessors to ask an enquiry question to test the knowledge of HWRC site staff concerning a particular topic, e.g. material restrictions. An enquiry question is asked at two 'shops' per month at each site.

1. Individual Service Area Results

a) Entering the Facility

Entering the facility looks at aspects like how long shoppers are waiting, and for those who are waiting more than 10 minutes, whether or not there is effective queue management in place. Sites are also scored on how well vehicles entering the facility are being monitored for adherence to site operating policies.

The results show that scores drop in the spring. This is not surprising as we know sites are busier during this time, and this is attributed to a higher amount of garden waste coming through. However, it is important that where it is safe to do so, staff manage the queue effectively and let customers know why they are waiting.

b) Facility Standards

Facility standards looks at both staff presentation (are staff recognisable, and wearing the correct uniform), and site standards (cleanliness and a safe environment being maintained for customers). The results below suggest that standards are generally very high.

However, in October 2016, a new policy was introduced to ensure site staff wear name badges so that they are identifiable to customers. This requirement was checked as part of the Mystery Shopping and the results have dropped slightly in the last two months as not all site staff are adhering to this new process.

c) Operating Policy Adherence

Operating policy adherence assesses whether or not the sites are being operated in accordance with HWRC policies. This is important because it is the enforcement of these

policies that ensure the site is being operated legally and safely. As we would expect to see, sites consistently score 100% in this area.

d) Customer Service

It is expected that site staff will, where possible, proactively offer help to customers when they can and if not are engaged in site related activities.

The results show that customer service has, in general, gradually improved over the last six months, and this is due to site staff offering to assist customers more frequently.

e) Enquiry

Enquiry questions are asked during two ‘shops’ each month. These are based upon real-life queries and cover a number of topics for example from vehicle access to paint disposal.

Whilst in general sites score high in this area, results tend to fluctuate. WM is working hard with its contractors to ensure site staff have the most up to date information. It is important that site staff are able to help customers with any questions they may have or direct them to the right place to get further details.

2. Overall Results

The graph below shows the average overall score for each assessed service area for 2016;

The results show that overall **the service is performing very well at 94%.** In particular, with regards to 'Operating Policy adherence' which shows that sites are being managed safely.

However, as detailed in the outcomes for individual service areas, the results also show that some improvements could be made to improve customer service and improve staff's knowledge so that they are better equipped to deal with customer queries.

Next Steps

- **Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

The 2016 customer satisfaction survey results will be used to inform where changes may be required to the service. DJS will undertake face-to-face customer satisfaction surveys across all 18 HWRCs in 2017, again, at two seasonal sample points. A full report and analysis of findings is expected in December 2017.

- **Mystery Shopping**

Mystery shopping reports will continue to be reviewed on a monthly basis to inform where changes may be required to the service. In 2017, Waste Management will continue to undertake Mystery Shopping across all 18 HWRCs within the network. As previously four 'shops' will be undertaken at each HWRC per month.