



NeSDS

*raising e-standards
to improve delivery*



**Customer Services
e-Service Delivery Standards v1.0**

April 2006

1. Foreword

Local authorities want to provide high quality efficient services to their local communities. The National e-Service Delivery Standards (NeSDS) can help local authorities to provide efficient and consistent levels of service to their customers.

The NeSDS is a component of the Local e-Government Programme. It has been funded by the ODPM. Since July 2005, the NeSDS project has worked closely with local authorities, national organisations and professional bodies in 8 key service areas to maximise the input into the process. The project has developed a series of national standards across a number of local authority work streams which will provide best practice and guidance in each area. These national standards will assist local authorities to benchmark the e-efficiency of the services they provide to their customers and to help develop a consistent level of customer service nationwide.

The standards have been developed as a collaboration between local authority professionals, professional bodies and practising specialists in each area. The project has made use of excellence already available in local authorities.

The e-Service Delivery Standards have been specifically designed to provide a comprehensive benchmark against which the current level of e-enablement in a local authority can be assessed and will form a building block for improving the delivery of e-services. They show what a best practice local authority should look like, how it should work, what employee roles it requires and the work processes it needs.

Local Authorities who adopt the Standards will be able to identify where to start in moving towards the delivery of more efficient services, thereby determining how much progress they have made to date. They can see what 'excellent' services look like and how far they have to go in order to achieve the delivery of an 'excellent' service. This therefore provides an opportunity to prioritise services, allowing them to focus their effort and resources on achieving the improvements needed for the priority outcomes, Gershon Agenda, and CPA.

I am grateful for all the work undertaken by the London Borough of Havering and other contributing Local Authorities on this project.



Jim Fitzpatrick MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
with responsibility for Local e-Government

2. Introduction

2.1 Overview

This document defines standards for the delivery of Customer Services within a Local Authority. These standards form part of the National e-Service Delivery Standards (NeSDS) programme which is developing “e” standards for a range of Local Government service areas. In this context “e” means all aspects of the utilisation of technology to support service delivery including the management processes required for successful implementation.

The objectives of the standards are to provide a good practice model that will deliver a modernised, effective and efficient service. They are intended to be used by Service Managers to help them understand potential developments in their own service area and the developments or support required from the other services within the Local Authority.

For each standard there are three levels. The Minimum level relates to current ‘e’ Government Targets (BVPI 157, IEG and the Priority Service Outcomes) and the associated good practice needed to achieve them. The Progressing and Excellent levels stretch the service beyond these requirements to further improve service delivery.

The standards are not an additional Government imposed target but an opportunity for Local Authorities to develop their own standards and share best practice with each other. Local Authorities should use the standards as a self-assessment tool, both to drive future developments and to demonstrate and evidence plans for service improvement.

Generally, the standards should be applicable to all Local Authorities, regardless of whether Customer Services is delivered 'in-house' or through an external service providers. Where Customer Services is delivered by an external provider, it is assumed that there is a client-side management function within the organisation that retains overall responsibility for the Customer Services and therefore would use the standards.

2.2 The NeSDS Programme

The NeSDS programme builds upon the successful e-planning service delivery standards developed by the Planning and Regulatory Services Online (PARSOL) national project in 2004. It is an ODPM funded initiative which is being led by the London Borough of Havering.

It will deliver an initial eight service delivery standards across a number of Local Authority service areas: Customer Services, Highways, Trees, ICT, Adult Services, HR, Housing and Property. In addition to these a further five sets of standards have been developed by relevant National Projects for Planning, Building Control, Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Economic Development.

The intention is that standards are developed by “Local Authorities for Local Authorities”. For each service area a Lead Local Authority and a Steering Group with representatives from all types of English Local Authorities has managed the process of developing the standards. The Steering Group has also included relevant service area Professional Bodies and Government Departments who were actively involved in developing and promoting the standards.

The NeSDS programme would like to thank the following organisations who formed the Steering Group for these standards:

- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council (Lead Authority);
- London Borough of Lambeth;
- Kettering District Council;
- Devon County Council;
- London Borough of Newham; and
- Institute of Customer Services.

Many other Local Authorities and organisations were involved throughout the process and the NeSDS programme would also like to thank them. A list can be found in Appendix A.

The following consultation process was followed to develop the standards to date:

- **Phase 1:** Draft standards initially developed by with input from Lead Authority;
- **Phase 2:** Draft standards revised and enhanced by Steering Group;
- **Phase 3:** Draft standards revised and enhanced during consultation workshops;
- **Phase 4:** Draft standards reviewed by ODPM;
- **Phase 5:** Draft standards published for formal consultation and amended.
- **Phase 6:** Final standards endorsed by eGovernment Minister and Published

2.3 Using these Standards

The NeSDS project will continue to operate for at least the next 12 months providing support for Local Authorities who wish to adopt and use the standards. This will be provided in collaboration with the esd-toolkit who will host the NeSDS website and this will include providing :

- An online self-assessment tool;
- A discussion forum;
- On-line support for Local Authorities;
- Engagement and take-up events and activities.

The on-line self assessment tool will be available to subscribed Local Authority users of the esd-toolkit and enable Local Authorities to record the level their Authority has achieved and then compare themselves with other Local Authorities.

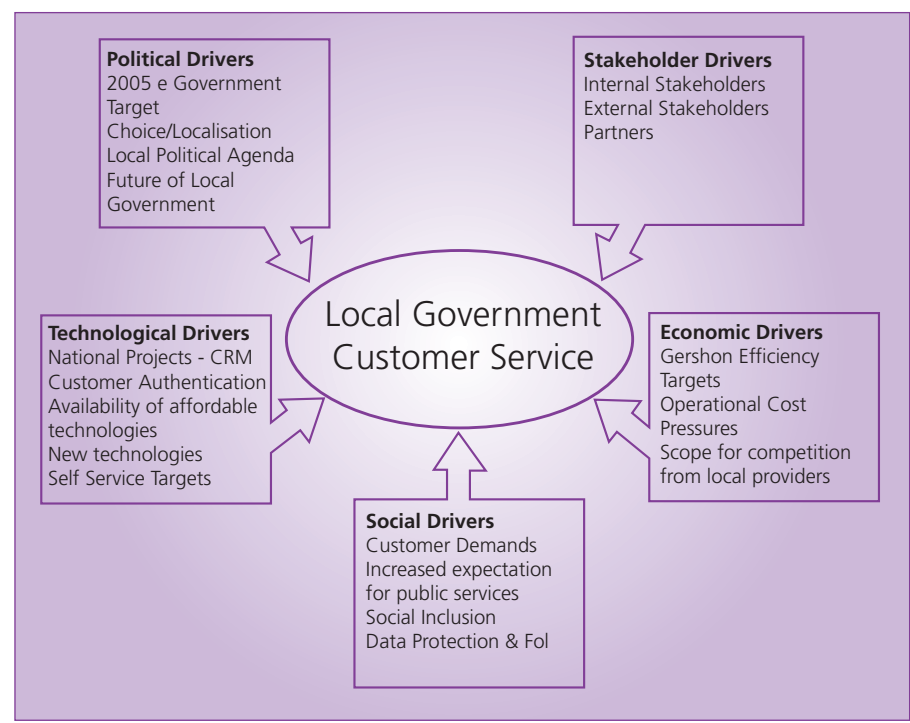
We will use a summary of this information to monitor take-up, achievement levels for individual standards and combined with feedback from Local Authorities to develop our on-going sustainability business case. Following agreement of this and subject to demand it is anticipated that the standards will be reviewed and revised in 2-3 years time according to the need to reflect changes in local government activities, the ICT industry and Government policy and targets.

If you have any queries please either contact us through the web-site forum (www.nesds.gov.uk and then follow the links) or directly by email at nesds@haverling.gov.uk

3 Customer Service 'e' Service Delivery Standards

3.1 Introduction

Local Government is undergoing an unprecedented period of change with the establishment of customer service functions to focus upon the citizen in many Local Authorities. Recently, the Modernisation and eGovernment agenda has been the most visible driver for this change. However there are a wide range of additional national and local drivers that will continue to impact the role and nature of Customer Services within Local Government, for example, the Gershon efficiency agenda is a current key driver.



Local Authority customer service must be able to respond efficiently and effectively to these drivers for change.

The standards presented in this document are, collectively, a best practice framework to describe an effective and efficient Local Authority customer service, in the context of the demands placed upon it by all its stakeholders.

There are three important principles that set the context for the application of these Standards:

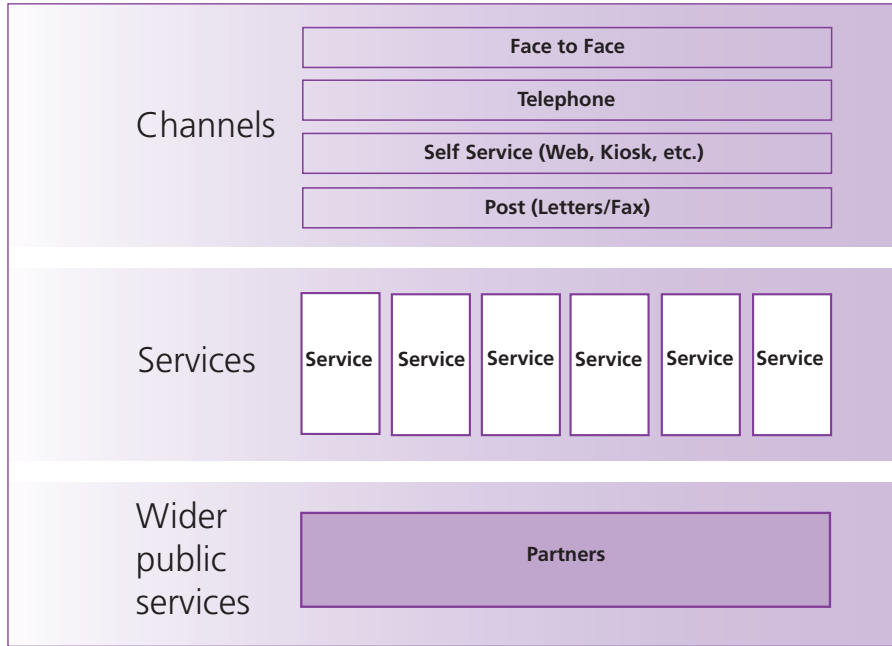
- Customer Services refers to every interaction that the customer has with the organisation whether from a customer services function or not;
- Excellent customer service will improve customer satisfaction but needs to be part of an overall programme of improvement which includes the service fulfilment;
- The Standards are applicable to all Local Authorities, regardless of size and location.

3.2 The scope of these standards

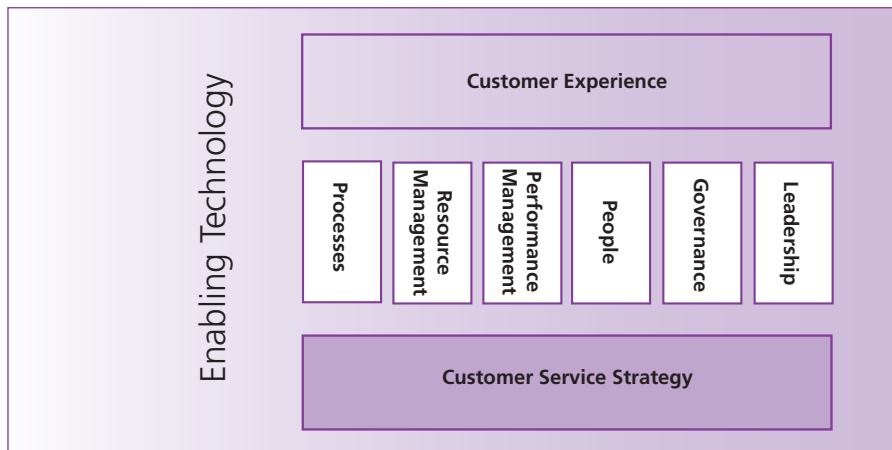
There are 25 Standards, which have been grouped into seven broad themes, in order to reflect the various activities and functions that are either led by, or involve Customer Services within a typical Local Authority.

As described above these standards cover customer service for the whole organisation as shown in the diagram. This potentially also includes partner organisations.

If a Local Authority has a different structure then they should only apply the standards which are relevant



The standards are classified in the following structure;



3.3 The grading structure

For each standard there are three levels:

- **Minimum** – A Local Authority that has achieved the minimum standard will have met all the current eGovernment targets as defined by BVPI 157, IEG and PSO and the associated good practice needed to achieve them and benefit fuller from their introduction. Not all standards will have a Minimum;
- **Progressing** – the Progressing standard is set between minimum and excellent and provides Local Authorities will a meaningful step between the lower and upper standards.;
- **Excellent** - the Excellent Standard will demonstrate that a Local Authority has achieved what is currently considered 'national best practice'. In order to reflect this 'Excellent' is set at an achievable level. The majority of standards will have an Excellent level.

The most recent and visible drivers for change in this area has been the 2005 eGovernment targets. The achievement of BVPI 157, IEG and the PSO are mandatory for all local authority services and is reviewed and considered as part of CPA. These standards, at the **Minimum** level, can be used as an evidence base for this process.

A table in Appendix B has been provided which illustrates the links between the individual Standards and the individual Priority Service Outcomes.

Naturally, the emphasis for Local Authorities will now begin to shift from delivering the eGovernment targets to other requirements, with a renewed focus on efficiency, effectiveness and reduced regulation. These standards can play a role in this and at the **Progressing** and **Excellent** levels these standards can be applied as a first step towards making a business case for the continuing development.

The standards also identify how a Local Authority service should benefit from **Government Connect**. Government Connect is an online solution that brings together existing products such as the Government Gateway and the LGOL-Net messaging system. The solution enables Local Authorities to authenticate the people and organisations with whom they communicate. It also provides a stable platform to allow linking of back office systems and will deliver secure email between local authorities and other parties. All Local Authorities should have installed and be using Government Connect by March 2008. The benefits of Government Connect are:

- Secure messaging infrastructure;
- Authenticated citizens, employees, businesses, community groups;
- Secure email;
- Standards;
- Approval processes for suppliers and implementers;
- Community of trust;
- Long term governance and sustainability; and
- Realisation of benefits/efficiencies across the public sector.

For further information, visit www.govconnect.gov.uk.

3.4 The classification structure

Some of the standards relate to functions and services that are wholly within the sphere of influence of the Customer Services. Other standards require consensus and joint working with other parts of the Local Authority. Thus the standards have been classified as either:

- Customer focused
- Service - these relate to standards that the Customer Services will need to address and move towards;
- Corporate - these relate to standards that will need to be addressed as part of the wider Local Authority corporate agenda;
- Service / Corporate - these relate to standards that will need to be addressed through joint working between the Customer Services and the wider Local Authority.

3.5 The benefits of adopting the standards

Generally, the standards aim to establish a staged and outcome focused approach to the delivery of excellent services. Local Authorities who use the standards will be able to:

- identify clearly what 'excellent' services look like and how far they have to go in order to achieve the delivery of an 'excellent' service;
- prioritise the elements that are important, allowing them to focus their effort and resources on achieving realistic improvements within a time-bounded period;
- Ensure that a benefits realisation / service take-up monitoring process is in place - It is essential that Authorities regardless of how advanced they are in developing services, seek to implement processes for identifying, monitoring and communicating the potential benefits of investing time and effort in deploying technology to modernise their Customer Services services. This is a key lesson learnt from previous Local Authority e-Government service improvement programmes. Authorities who adopt the approach outlined in the Standards will be able to communicate to key decision makers that measuring customer take-up rates and realisation of service benefits are central to the effective development;
- measure and assess progress to date in comparison with other Local Authorities - Local Authorities will be able to use the Standards to establish and communicate the progress they have made in comparison with others;
- clearly identify the corporate areas in which Customer Services must integrate with the activities of the rest of the authority. The standards will enable key decision makers to identify particular areas where they would wish to collaborate with other parts of the organisation to bring about change;

Plan for the delivery of faster, more join-up and integrated services. Ultimately, the aim of this agenda is to enable modern customer focused services that:

- enable the Customer Services service, along with other service departments, to play a central role in driving and shaping their local authority's corporate modernisation programme.
- deliver services that put the needs of the Customer first.
- play a leading role in the development of service delivery based citizen, business, employee and property (Government Connect) accounts.
- deliver services through service channels that are accessible to all, when and where they want them.
- addresses equality and diversity issues in relation to customer contact.
- take advantage of opportunities for organisational savings in terms of time, money and effort.
- play a leading role in the development of 'one point of contact' integrated solutions for all appropriate Local Authority regulatory services.
- play a leading role in driving up service standards and in engaging people and communities in shaping future government activities and legislative frameworks.
- facilitate better use of the information available to determine and evaluate policies and actions.

4 The Standards

4.1 Summary Table

The following table provides a summary of each standard by theme for quick reference purposes.

Ref	Standard
Customer Experience	
1	The Customer finds it easy to contact the organisation through all channels:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1a Telephone • 1b Face to Face • 1c Self Service/Electronic (Email/Web Form/SMS) • 1d Post (including Fax)
2	A high percentage of customer interactions are resolved at the first point of contact.
3	Response times are managed across all channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3a Telephone • 3b Face to Face • 3c Self Service/Electronic (Email/Web Form/SMS) • 3d Post (including Fax)
4	The Customer is dealt with proactively.
5	All Customers have access to services; irrespective of language, disability, gender, religion, age or learning.
6	Customer can access service information and advice.

Ref	Standard
7	Customers can complain via a single point.
8	Face to Face customer access points have been designed with a customer-focus; providing ease of access, comfort, security and privacy.
9	The Customer Charter is displayed and clearly demonstrated across every customer service channel and through every interaction.
Strategy	
10	There is an agreed Customer Service Strategy.
Leadership and Governance	
11	The Local Authority's Members and Senior Management create a service culture with the focus on the Customer.
12	There is clear governance for Customer Services.
People	
13	All staff are provided with appropriate customer service training and development.
14	The Authority uses appropriate and rigorous selection and recruitment processes to recruit customer service staff.
15	The Local Authority measures the motivation and satisfaction of staff who delivery customer service.
16	Staff are empowered to deliver excellent customer service and help customers.

Ref	Standard
	Performance Management
17	Customer service satisfaction is measured and reported.
18	The volume of Customer Service activity is measured and reported.
19	The quality of Customer Service activity is measured and reported.
20	Customer comments and views are recorded and acted upon.
	Resource Management
21	Customer service resources are managed effectively and efficiently.
	Processes
22	The Authority manages customer interactions end to end.
23	The Local Authority has a single view of the customer (i.e. citizen, business and community group) which covers all service areas.
24	The hand-off to between initial contact channels and service professionals is automated.
25	Customers are authenticated and transactions are secure, inline with a clear security policy.

4.2 Customer Experience

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
1	<p>The Customer finds it easy to contact the authority through all channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1a Telephone • 1b Face to Face • 1c Self Service/Electronic (Email/Web Form/SMS) • 1d Post (including Fax) <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in published telephone numbers to avoid customer confusion. • Appropriate implementation of telephony solutions. • Hours of service beyond traditional hours e.g. Monday to Friday 9-5. • Planning of face to face locations appropriate to the need of customers and the geography of the authority. • Provision of self service covering all interaction types and services. • New media channels such as SMS, WAP, etc. <p>Excellent – Clear demonstration that customer requirements and needs have been used to establish the access policy of the authority. Demonstration that access hours are aligned with customer needs for contact following formal and informal consultation.</p>	<p>Decreased customer confusion and frustration with less reliance on customer knowledge.</p> <p>Self service must include all BVPI 157 interactions types including :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing information • Collecting revenue • Providing benefits and grants • Consultation comment • Applying for a service or licence, etc • Booking a venue/resources or course • Scheduling an appointment or meeting • Making a complaint <p>This is required for the following priority service outcomes : R1, R2, G1, R3, R5, G3, R7, R8, G5, R10, R11, G11, E8, R12, R13, R14, R15, G13, G14, R16, R17, R18, R19, R23, G20, R25, G23 and G25.</p>

4.2 Customer Experience cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
2	<p>A high percentage of customer interactions are resolved at the first point of contact.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – An average of 80% of customer interactions are resolved at first point of contact across all channels.</p> <p>Excellent – An average of 80% of interactions are resolved at first point of contact for all services and channels including partner services provided by a Local Authority.</p>	<p>The move of responsibilities from the service departments to Customer Services (such as eligibility checking for simple requests), will result in efficiency savings through increased utilisation of service expert resources for more detailed and sensitive processes.</p> <p>This can be achieved through implementation of Customer Relationship Management Systems, with middleware integration and case based reasoning tools.</p> <p>Increased fulfilment at first contact, in timely fashion, will also improve the quality of customer service. Customers will benefit from not having to make or receive repeat calls to have their request fulfilled.</p> <p>Achieving this Standard will deliver the benefits associated with Priority Outcome R27 providing a "first time fix" and also the delivery of Priority Outcome: E19 "Agreed baseline and improvement targets for the percentage of public enquiries about council services resolved at first point of contact and efficiency savings resulting from investment in customer relationship management and workflow technology"</p>

4.2 Customer Experience cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
3	<p>Response times are managed across all channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3a Telephone • 3b Face to Face • 3c Self Service/Electronic (Email/Web Form/SMS) • 3d Post (including Fax) <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – The Council manages interaction response times for each channel. Clear measurements and targets for responses should be agreed for each channel that represents quality service for the customer. Suggested Minimum channel targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone – 80% of calls answered within 20 seconds. Account should be taken of engaged/abandoned calls. • Face to Face – Customers wait an average of no more than 10 minutes. • Self Service – Email/online web forms/SMS – 100% of emails/web forms acknowledged within 1 working day. • Letters/Fax – 100% of letters acknowledged within 5 working days of receiving. <p>Progress – The Council proactively seeks to inform the customer of waiting times, and seeks to offer alternative times, dates or services to fulfil the expectations of the customer.</p> <p>Excellent – Ability to manage real-time Customer waiting times by allocating resources appropriately and offering customers alternatives to waiting for service. For example :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone – Customers offered phone back facilities with appropriate resources to follow through on phone back. A time of phone back is agreed between the customer and the council. • Face to Face – Customer queues combed at busy times and quick queries answered. 	<p>Overall reduction in Customer response times will lead to increased customer satisfaction and reduction in abandoned contact percentage.</p> <p>These can be supported by appropriate use of telephony and queue management solutions and integration of email in customer management solutions.</p> <p>Achieving this Standard will delivery Priority Service Outcomes R29 which requires all emails to be responded to in one working day.</p>

4.2 Customer Experience cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
4	<p>The Customer is dealt with proactively.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – A Customer is offered additional appropriate services e.g. single notification of change of address, customer applies for housing benefit and is also offered other appropriate benefits such as free school meals. The council has a holistic relationship with the Customer, integrating real life events rather than one-off individual service transactions.</p> <p>Progressing – The Customer is proactively provided with service updates and whether service fulfilment will meet expectations.</p> <p>Excellent – Customer is offered additional services from partners. e.g. Customer has debt problems and is referred to Citizen Advice Bureau services.</p>	<p>Increased customer satisfaction and quality of service is improved. Proactive communication to the customer will reduce incoming contacts via potentially expensive channels and will lead to increased customer satisfaction.</p> <p>Proactive service provision and customer service should deliver priority service outcome E14 - Pre-qualification of Council Tax and Housing Benefit claimants for other eligible entitlements (e.g. school uniform grants, free school meals), including pre-filling of relevant claim forms and G25 Facilities to support the single notification of a change of address.</p>
5	<p>All Customers have access to services; irrespective of language, disability, gender, religion, age or learning.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – Customers are able to access services within the council irrespective of languages, disability, age or literacy via appropriate channels. Demonstration that community needs have been used to plan access and the council seeks to understand the needs of its customers through consultations across its community.</p> <p>Full compliance with regulatory and legal disability acts.</p> <p>Progressing – Customers are able to access services which are tailored to meet their demands. Evidence that the service represents their needs rather than being council or service led.</p> <p>Excellent – Ability to measure minority group interactions with the council and drive change accordingly. Proactive demonstration to engage with the client, such as taking the council to the community - e.g. attending local community centres to improve access.</p>	<p>Increased customer accessibility leading to improved customer satisfaction across the demographic make-up of the location.</p> <p>By ensuring this Standard is followed, the establishment of policy for addressing social inclusion within corporate e-government strategy should be adhered to. Furthermore, its delivery may require the use of a change management policy.</p> <p>As part of delivering this standard Priority Service Outcomes G20 relating to website accessibility and G23 relating to website design should be considered and achieved.</p>

4.2 Customer Experience cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
6	<p>Customer can access service information and advice.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – Service Information is accurate, clear, concise and user friendly with and available for all services with links to partner information as appropriate. Information is available in appropriate formats for the customer including leaflets, booklets, posters, A-Zs, web pages etc. From web pages there are facilities to enable services to be completed online and deep links to partners web pages as appropriate.</p> <p>Excellent – Information is clear, concise and user friendly and has been tested with customers and they are involved in deciding appropriate media and contributing to the design of the content.</p>	<p>Increased quality information for customers will reduce number of calls and contacts. Content can also be made available to Customer Service Agents. By fulfilling this Standard a number of Priority Service Outcomes should be completed, including R2, R3, R14, and R18 to enhance partner information and knowledge access for the customer.</p>
7	<p>Customers can complain via a single point.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – Customer complaints are managed centrally as part a wider customer services function. This function has the ability to resolve complaints by mediating and negotiating with customer where appropriate. Where this is not possible the complaint will be escalated to the appropriate service following an agreed complaints procedure.</p> <p>Complaint statistics are published on a regular basis.</p> <p>There is an agreed definition of a complaint across the organisation.</p>	<p>By developing a single contact point for complaints, the organisation should be aspiring towards the Charter Mark criteria for complaints.</p>

4.2 Customer Experience cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
8	<p>Face to face customer access points have been designed with a customer-focus; providing ease of access, comfort, security and privacy.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – Face to Face customer access points have been designed to be welcoming to the customer whilst maintaining security for both staff and citizens alike and meet disability access regulations (Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice 'Rights of Access: Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises').</p> <p>Excellent – Face to Face customer access points have been designed to provide privacy areas/rooms for sensitive discussions. Facilities are provided for waiting customers for example, toilets, a child's play area, refreshments, etc</p>	<p>The design and appearance of face to face to face customer access points will have an impact on the overall customer service satisfaction and the ability of the Council to provide an effective and professional service.</p>
9	<p>The Customer Charter is displayed and clearly demonstrated across every customer service channel and through every interaction.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – Creation of a Customer Charter aligned with the Customer Service Strategy and displayed / communicated to customers throughout the locality.</p> <p>The Charter is recognised by staff and customers and was created following customer and staff consultation - it is clearly produced as a 'two way' partnership between Customer and organisation, protecting the needs of both parties.</p> <p>Excellent – Clear demonstration of buy-in of the charter policy through every dealing that a customer has with the council and the embodiment of that charter throughout the council. The Customer Charter incorporates Partners and there is agreement to align to a single customer service policy and standard of service. The document is a living document and is regularly reviewed and updated.</p>	<p>A clear charter will provide customers with a framework for dealing with the council and will set out what they should expect from their dealings with the authority.</p>

4.3 Strategy

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
10	<p>There is an agreed Customer Service Strategy.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – The Customer Services Strategy has been developed and agreed by the Council and covers all service areas. It includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline of the current position; • Consultation with all stakeholders including customers, staff and partners; • Promotion of a single point of contact and view of the customer; • Promotion of self service channels (website/email/kiosk etc); • Alignment with Government Targets; • 80% being the first point of resolution target; • Outline business case; and • Implementation plan. <p>There is evidence of input and buy-in across all service areas.</p> <p>Progressing – There is a full business case which focuses upon efficiencies created throughout the organisation to improve service to customers and the costs of different channels are understood. There is evidence of progress and delivery of the Strategy with an ongoing implementation plan, benefit realisation and continuous improvement.</p> <p>Excellent – The scope of the Customer Service Strategy includes partners and there are practical partner projects and initiatives.</p>	<p>This should provide the blueprint for improving customer satisfaction while at the same time identifying efficiency savings. A key emphasis of the Strategy should be about responding to customer needs, joining up customer service across service areas and driving change throughout the organisation.</p> <p>This Strategy should provide important input to the Corporate ICT Strategy as in most cases technology will provide the main tools needed to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>The Strategy must take into account all Government initiatives and targets. In particular, those defined in Gershon, BVPI 157, IEG and the Priority Services Outcomes 2005. It should recognise 50 priority outcomes requirements (see appendix B) and must address: Priority Outcomes Area 13 – “ ...the development of web based services as a major access channel for interaction between the Citizen and the Council”. It should also provide the targets and measures for take-up of e-channels as defined by Priority Service Outcome G22. It must also consider the implementation of Government Connect.</p>

4.4 Leadership and Governance

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
11	<p>The Local Authority's Members and Senior Management create a service culture with the focus on the customer.</p> <p>Classification: Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – The Members and Senior Management Team lead by example, encouraging staff to provide quality customer service to citizens and inspiring staff to demonstrate enthusiasm and eagerness in the delivery of customer services. They are responsible for raising the profile of customer services throughout the Authority.</p> <p>Progressing – The Members and Senior Management Team ensure staff are fully empowered to go the 'extra mile' for the Customer and recognise outstanding customer service. Staff must have the appropriate tools and structures in place to facilitate this.</p> <p>The Members and Senior Management Team must demonstrate the kind of commitment and sustained support that ensures customer service maintains its primacy in the council's priorities</p> <p>Excellent – Staff are continually inspired by all Members and Managers and will work on behalf of the customer in initiating service fulfilment. The entire Authority demonstrates a focus upon the customer, and there is evidence that this focus can be and has been sustained. The Authority has a mechanism for measuring leadership behaviour and performance from a customer perspective.</p>	<p>Customer satisfaction will improve if the customers believe that the council and staff are working on their behalf to provide quality service.</p> <p>Motivation and morale are continually boosted by supportive leadership, not just from the CEO but throughout all levels of management and members. Customer satisfaction improves accordingly.</p>

4.4 Leadership and Governance cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
12	<p>There is clear governance for Customer Services.</p> <p>Classification: Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – The governance structure for Customer Services includes members of the Senior Management Team and involves key Elected Member(s) as required. An Elected Member has portfolio responsibility for customer services.</p> <p>Decision-making roles and responsibilities (Including input into a decision and those making the decision) in relation to Customer Services are agreed and are consistently deployed.</p> <p>There are agreed principles and prioritisation criteria for Customer Service investment including risk management.</p> <p>There is central oversight and proactive management of Customer Service budgets.</p> <p>Inputs to the structure and principles will have been gained from relevant departments</p> <p>Excellent – The governance structure includes Partners. The governance framework promotes co-operation across the organisation and partners, including district/county partnerships, police, health and other, with clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities throughout the group.</p>	<p>Clear organised governance will ensure accountability for decisions and allow stakeholders to develop Customer Service capabilities within an agreed framework with success measured.</p> <p>The governance structure should include the relevant good practice organisation and management practices identified in IEG Change Management Section 2.</p>

4.5 People

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
13	<p>All Local Authority staff are provided with appropriate Customer Service training and development.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – All Local Authority staff receive appropriate customer service training and development for their role which is reviewed regularly and based on their need. This need is determined through consultation with staff and the development of an agreed training plan based on the gaps identified and linked to the Council's approach to customer service. This may be formalised through IIP.</p> <p>Progressing – Customer service training is aligned to achieving formal customer service qualifications and professionalising the service. For example using ICS and NVQ qualifications. Staff development, career progression and training are aligned with the Customer Service Strategy and the needs of the individual. Key Customer Service staff are trained across a number of service areas to be able to provide a wider range of services.</p> <p>Excellent – There is a shared and consistent approach to customer service training with partners.</p>	<p>By providing Customer Service training to the whole organisation and clear career development plans, councils should develop a more effective workforce. Over all Customer service delivery will be improved with more highly skilled and valued customer service professionals who are motivated to progress forward and offer quality services to citizens.</p> <p>The delivery of this standard at the Minimum level should address the Priority Service Outcome G18 which identifies the requirement for an e-skills programme.</p>

4.5 People cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
14	<p>The Authority uses appropriate and rigorous selection and recruitment processes to recruit customer service staff.</p> <p>Classification: Service</p>	<p>Minimum – Appropriate job specifications, interviews and selection tests are used to recruit Customer Service staff. Information collected is used to identify potential training and development needs.</p> <p>Excellent – Selection tests include "role play" situations which are used to test people reactions to various customer service scenarios.</p>	<p>The selection of appropriate staff that have the aptitude for Customer Service is a key building block to the delivery of Excellent customer service.</p>
15	<p>The Local Authority measures the motivation and satisfaction of staff who delivery customer service.</p> <p>Classification: Service</p>	<p>Minimum – The Local Authority measures the motivation and satisfaction of staff involved in providing customer service, using staff surveys and responds appropriately to the results.</p> <p>Excellent – Trends in measurements of motivation and satisfaction are analysed and data is bench marked with other authorities and organisations to identify areas for potential improvement and good practice, therefore driving continuous improvement.</p>	<p>There is a relationship between the motivation and satisfaction of staff and the delivery of excellent customer service.</p>

4.5 People cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
16	<p>Staff are empowered to deliver excellent customer service.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Customer service staff have the necessary systems, processes and management support/culture to deliver excellent Customer Service. Such supporting systems may include CRM, middleware integration, workflow, knowledge management and case based reasoning and should be reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Excellent – Customers feel that the staff “could not have reasonably done more for them”. Customer Service staff are empowered by appropriate tools, systems and processes to make decisions and to resolve or rapidly progress Customer Service requests including partner services (where applicable).</p>	<p>Empowering staff to deliver “Excellent” customer service removes one of the key barriers to improvement in a customer service.</p> <p>As part of delivering this standard Priority Service Outcomes G1, G12, R16, R23, R27, G24 and G25 should be considered and achieved.</p>

4.6 Performance Management

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
17	<p>Customer Service satisfaction is measured and reported¹.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Completion of regular and robust customer service satisfaction surveys. Surveys are transaction or event driven and do not relate to final service outcome or brand awareness. Survey results and findings are published on a regular basis and when satisfaction is low, there is clear demonstration of improvements.</p> <p>Progressing – Surveys are segmented across key customer groups.</p> <p>Excellent – Customer satisfaction trends are analysed and data is bench marked with other authorities and organisations to identify areas for potential improvement and good practice, therefore driving continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Knowing how satisfied the customer is with the Customer Service provided is a key part of planning future service enhancements and increasing customer satisfaction.</p> <p>As part of delivering this standard Priority Service Outcomes E2, E3, E4, E11, E12 and E15 should be considered and achieved.</p>
18	<p>The volume of Customer Service activity is measured and reported.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Including measurement across:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Channel; • Service type; • Interaction; • Customer type e.g. Demographic Information. <p>Data is checked and used for management / resourcing issues.</p> <p>Excellent – Procedures are in place to monitor the quality and accuracy of customer interaction data. This information is then used to inform the Customer Service Strategy moving forward.</p>	<p>This information is key to the management of Customer Service and strategy development. This is required to complete returns relating to IEG and BVPI 157 and directly for the following Priority Service Outcomes: E1, E2, E3, G7, G12, G22, E18 and E19.</p>

¹ This is a measurement of the customer service and not the service outcome or the overall council satisfaction.

4.6 Performance Management cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
19	<p>The quality of customer service activity is measured and reported.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Measurement and reporting across all service transactions types, channels and services. Robust capturing of information and ongoing monitoring of service quality from a customer perspective. This includes customer exit surveys and call monitoring and assessments.</p> <p>Progressing – Formal tools for measuring quality are in place and are constantly monitored for improvements.</p> <p>Excellent – Good practice quality methods are actively used to improve on service quality across all access point. This may include mystery shopping, call recording and assessment and similar type approaches.</p> <p>All information is used to drive continuous improvements throughout the authority. Examples of changes relative to the data capture are published internally to staff as a transparent demonstration of continuous improvement.</p>	<p>The measure and reporting of quality is key to the management of customer service and strategy development. It is no longer appropriate to answer, "We don't know what we don't know" about the quality of the service provided.</p>

4.6 Performance Management cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
20	<p>Customer comments and views are recorded and acted upon.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Capturing of Customer comments and views within a single repository for both formal and informal (“throw-away”) comments from customers.</p> <p>Progress – Capturing of Customer comments and views within a single repository with specific management reports produced and a clear demonstration of actions and plans aligned to customer requirements. Comments should be published and made available for all to see.</p> <p>Excellent – Customer Services actively uses customer comments and views to drive change across the whole organisation and to improve both council and partners services across the end to end process. At least 5% of users should be targeted for quality evaluation.</p>	<p>Capturing Customer comments and views to inform policy making will ensure that the organisation is developing inline with customer needs and driving change throughout the organisation.</p>

4.7 Resource Management

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
21	<p>Customer service resources are managed effectively and efficiently.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Ability to manage key resources effectively. By having an awareness of key customer demand periods, the organisation should have clear plans for managing and monitoring resources for telephony, Face to Face, email and other media and take into account customer satisfaction levels</p> <p>There is forward, internal planning between the service departments and Customer Services to plan for peaks and troughs, including an emergency planning model.</p> <p>Clear procedures are agreed between departments to handle emergency situations, which may result in an increase in customer contact.</p> <p>Progressing – Ability to manage resources and proactively address service peaks and troughs with an advanced understanding of demand. A demonstration of improvement through addressing key peak times across communication channels.</p> <p>Excellent – Ability to manage resources across channels and proactively address service peaks and troughs using a variety of best practice methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resource forecasting and planning • resource balancing • trend analysis <p>The organisation has a thorough understanding of the demands of its customers and through clear planning addresses their needs. Best practice methods are continuously undertaken, and the organisations resources are adjusted accordingly.</p> <p>The organisation has focused upon staffing and has enabled flexible working to meet demands of both customers and staff.</p>	<p>By managing Customer resources efficiently, the authority will be able to budget accordingly and re-direct spending where appropriate to manage the customer interface effectively.</p>

4.8 Processes

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
22	<p>The Authority manages customer interactions end to end.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Agreements are put in place to handle the integration between access channels and service departments. These agreements include level of expected quality and timeliness that can be communicated back to the customer. The agreements will be monitored through reporting and published back to the departments. This will include clear roles and responsibilities, agreed handover processes, escalation points and named contacts for every service.</p> <p>Progressing – The Organisation measures agreed performance and compares with other councils to ensure that performance is compatible. Best practice is used to improve processes.</p> <p>Excellent – Agreements are "health checked" on a regular basis to ensure that any regulatory, process or any other changes are updated. Service performance information is shared with service areas and used to inform service changes – with the focus upon establishing a "no-blame" culture.</p> <p>There are specific service agreements between the Council and Partner organisations (e.g. transactional level.)</p>	<p>Clear management of customer expectations will lead to increased customer satisfaction and reduction in the number of progress queries.</p>

4.8 Processes cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
23	<p>The Local Authority moves toward a providing a customer with a single view of their interactions with the Council which covers all service areas.</p> <p>Classification: Customer focused</p>	<p>Minimum – There is a single view provided using accounts (Citizen, business, etc) from within one system, such as CRM, which covers all customers, interaction types and channels. This will enable the Customer to have an overview of its interactions with the Council and, if instructed by the Customer, enable the Council to see this overview. Note that there are data protection constraints relating to how this information can be used by the Council.</p> <p>Progressing – There is a single view of the Customer from within one system (such as CRM) with data sourced/available from across service systems (Housing, Planning, Highways, etc) enabling a greater depth information to be available and a more complete view of a customer. Note that there are data protection constraints relating to how this information can be used by the Council.</p>	<p>A single view will lead to a complete customer transaction history and will facilitate process and information integration across services.</p> <p>It will enable a Council to achieve Priority Area 14 and that systems are in place that ensure effective customer relationship management and in particularly Priority Service Outcome R27 and also R16 which focuses on one-stop resolution of housing and council tax benefit enquiries.</p> <p>It is also required for business and Priority Service Outcome G8, for supporting joined up working on children at risk across multiple agencies G16;</p> <p>This single view should support the integration of customer relationship management systems with back office activity Priority Service Outcome G24 and enable customers to only have to tell the council they have moved on one occasion and the council should then be able to update all records relating to that person to include the new address and therefore meeting Priority Service Outcome G25.</p>

4.8 Processes cont.

Ref	Standard	Grades	Why this standard is important to the development of "e" Customer Services
24	<p>The hand-off between initial contact channels and service professionals is automated</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – Systems are in place, such that where a customer interaction/transaction needs to be handed over to a service area, details recorded at the initial contact do not have been be re-captured and are available to process the interaction/transaction.</p> <p>Excellent – As Minimum but includes hand-off to partners.</p>	<p>This will enable a Council to achieve Priority Area 14 and that systems are in place the ensure effective customer relationship management and in particularly Priority Outcome G24 which requires "integration between CRM systems and back office" systems. See also standard 2.</p>
25	<p>Customers are authenticated and transactions are secure, inline with a clear security policy.</p> <p>Classification: Service / Corporate</p>	<p>Minimum – There is a once-off initial gathering of details (registration), a checking process for evidence of identity (verification) and the joining up for access to specific service (Enrolment). Ability to authenticate Customer across all channels based on key facts and the level of authentication required (T levels) for the specific transaction. All transactions are secure with appropriate security for the transaction type.</p> <p>Progressing – Ability to authenticate customers once, to appropriate levels such that when a customers requires a similar service at a later stage they are able to authenticate themselves, across all channels.</p> <p>Excellent – As Progressing except that a customer is able to authenticate once with one public sector organisation and authenticate themselves when accessing similar services from different public sector organisations and partners.</p>	<p>Customers can be assured that their details are hidden and treated with due care and attention leading to increased satisfaction and trust. Minimum conformance to regulatory security standards and data protection issues.</p> <p>Government Connect and citizen accounts will provide an appropriate solution.</p>

Appendix A - List of Organisations Involved in Consultation

- Basingstoke & Deane Borough
- Bradford City
- Bridgnorth District
- Burnley Borough
- Cambridgeshire County
- Devon County Council
- Doncaster Metropolitan Borough
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough
- EMRLbGA
- Fenland District
- Great Yarmouth Borough Council
- Hackney London Borough
- Harborough District Council
- Lambeth London Borough
- Leicestershire County
- Lincolnshire County
- Luton Borough
- Mendip District Council
- Newham London Borough
- North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough
- North Yorkshire County
- Northamptonshire County
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Redbridge London Borough
- Rochdale MBC
- Salisbury District
- Sedgemoor District
- Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough
- SOCITM
- St Helens Metropolitan Borough
- Stevenage Borough
- Tewkesbury Borough
- Tynedale District
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough
- Waltham Forest London Borough
- West Lindsey District

Appendix B Links between the Standards and Priority Service Outcomes

The table below provides indicative links between the Standards and Priority Service Outcomes. The table highlights those standards where we believe direct links can be established between the standards and the PSO's. There will be other links that are less direct if the standards are realised.

The extent of the link between a particular Standard to a particular PSO will generally depend on the manner in which the Organisation chooses to deploy the Standard and the manner in which they have chosen to deliver the PSO.

Standard																									
Ref	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
R1	x									x															
R2	x					x				x															
G1	x									x						x									
E1										x								x							
R3	x					x				x															
R4																									
G2																									
E2										x							x	x							
R5	x									x															
R6																									
G3	x									x															
G4																									
E3										x							x	x							
R7	x									x															
R8	x									x															
G5	x									x															
G6																									
G7																									
E4										x							x	x							
R9																									
G8										x														x	
G9																									
E5																									
E6																									
E7																									
R10	x									x															x
R11	x									x															
G10																									

Appendix B cont.

Standard																									
Ref	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
G11	x									x															
E8	x									x															
E9																									
E10																									
R12	x									x															
R13	x									x															
G12										x						x									
E11										x							x	x							
R14	x					x				x															
R15	x									x															
G13	x									x															
G14	x									x															
E12										x							x								
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R23	x									x						x									
R24						x				x															
G19																									
G20	x				x					x															
G21																									
E17																									
R25	x									x															

Appendix B cont.

Standard																									
Ref	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
R26			x							x															
G22										x								x							
G23	x									x															
E18										x								x							
R27		x								x						x							x		
R28			x							x			x												
R29			x							x			x												
G24										x			x			x							x	x	
G25	x			x						x						x							x		
E19		x								x								x							

NeSDS

*raising e-standards
to improve delivery*

e-Service Delivery Standards v1.0
April 2006