

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Customer Service Performance Update
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny (Social Well-Being) - 2 nd June 2015
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Customer Services
Report by:	Head of Customer Service
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

This paper updates Members on the work of the Customer Service Team. This paper is submitted to Members on a six monthly basis. For the first time this report covers not only the Call Centre and Customer Service Centres (CSC) it also includes the Website.

Across Customer Services performance continues to be measured and, on the whole, performance remains good. Some staffing changes have created challenges in the period reported on, and these are being managed. The team continues to work hard to bring about improvement and a number of notable successes are presented in the report.

A new Council website is being built. This will feature information and services focussed on customer need, and it will work across many devices such as phones, tablets as well as traditional PCs and laptops. The new website will be easier to use, navigate and understand. It is thought this improvement will help to increase usage of the website and levels of satisfaction, which although still widely used, has seen a small decline in customer satisfaction in recent times.

The report concludes by noting that improvements have been made to corporate performance reporting and asks whether continuing to produce this paper and data, separately to a fuller organisational assessment of performance, is something that should continue.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that:

- O&S (Social Well-Being) note the contents of this report.
- O&S (Social Well-Being) consider, in the light of improved reporting of corporate performance, whether this report should continue to be produced.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This paper is intended to update Members on the work of the Customer Service Team. This paper is submitted to Members on a six monthly basis.
- 1.2 The paper also considers the value of this report alongside other management information changes that have been made in recent months.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Customer Service is the front line, and first contact, for many customers and it is important Members are informed on the performance of this service.

3. ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Appendix 1 contains the detailed report. Some key areas of performance are summarised below.
- 3.2 Work is underway to revisit the Council's Customer Service Strategy. Separate papers have been presented to Members on this subject. This will impact across the whole Council – but will of, course be, highly relevant to the Customer Service Team.
- 3.3 The Huntingdon CSC met its target to answer 75% of customers within 10 minutes on average over the last 6 months. The Call Centre missed its 80% of customers answered within 20 seconds achieving 73%.
- 3.4 A total of 3 trained FTE's left the Call Centre during this period which impacted service delivery. One of these FTEs have been replaced, but as it takes 6 months to fully train an advisor, becoming fully functional does take time. As a result, more of the senior advisors and team leader time has been spent on the phone, especially during peak periods, which has impacted normal management activities such as reporting, training reviews, lean continuous improvement work and staff 1-2-1's.
- 3.5 The Call Centre manager has been seconded for 2 days per week to manage the Website Redevelopment Project. Call Centre team leaders are partially acting up to cover for this, so this has been challenging given the staffing issues highlighted above.
- 3.6 Employee satisfaction remains high but some staff members are concerned about the potential future changes following the ZBB. Communication about these potential changes is occurring on a regular basis (see 5.1).
- 3.7 The website has maintained high levels of availability to customers with 98.96% availability. The 'downtime' is caused by planned maintenance activity.
- 3.8 A new Council website is being built. More information on this is provided in section (11). In the meantime work has occurred to make 75% of our most popular online forms work in a more mobile and tablet friendly format.
- 3.9 Website Usage is high with approximately 1800 customer visits* a day to [main website](#), 580 to our online applications and 1220 a day to our [leisure offering](#)**.

Our top application, [Modern.gov Committee Minutes](#), receives an average of 450 views a day and our [Bin Collection Calendar](#) receives 420 views a day

*A visit is defined as a period of activity on the website by a single customer not exceeding 20 minutes and will typically include a number of pages.

**This figure excludes customers using the phone application to book facilities.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

4.1 Comments to be sought from O&S (Social).

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

5.1 The coming year is likely to see changes to the way Customer Service is delivered. The Zero Based Budgeting process is underway with the Call Centre and CSC. It is likely these teams may merge and be located at Pathfinder House, and this may create a period of uncertainty for staff. This is being managed by ongoing communication with the teams involved and they will be fully involved in any changes that are made.

5.2 IMD is likely to become part of a single IT service involving partners from Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire – which may impact on the development of a new Website. Staff may become unsettled during this change, and other work pressures may be created. This is being managed by high levels of communication with Officers, and by running the Website Redevelopment Project in line with the Council's project management methodology. In addition to this rigour, the Project Board is chaired by the Corporate Director (Services) together with two Heads of Service – ensuring this project is driven from the top of the organisation.

6. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 Over the next six months a number of actions will be taken, including:

- July-15 – completion of ZBB on the Call Centre and CSC
- Oct-15 – launch of the new website

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

7.1 This paper directly supports the Council Objective 'Ensure we are a customer focussed and service led Council'.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 A key element of the Customer Service Strategy is to engage with our customers. As part of monitoring the Customer Satisfaction averaged 98% for the Call Centre and the Customer Service Centre.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Acting Legal Services Manager / Solicitor)

9.1 No Legal implications.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Head of Resources)

10.1 No resource implications

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

11.1 **IT implications** - the implementation of the new Website is a key project. It will need to remain customer focussed and fit for purpose. The new site:

- Will have less content – being focussed on the information and services customers need
- Works on mobile phone/tablets - more than 50% of customers access our website using these devices
- Can rapidly change/develop - there is a high degree of flexibility to alter the website
- Will be tested fully and developed using customer feedback – as part of the project customers will be invited to use the ‘new’ site alongside the ‘old’, and give feedback direct to the Project Team.
- Content for the new website is currently being written centrally and it is intended that once live, content will continue to be written in this way in liaison with services. This is to improve consistency, relevance and usability of the content and to prevent ‘sprawl’ of the new website.

11.2 **Improvements to reporting** - Since this report was commissioned by Members the Council has significantly improved its performance reporting. Each quarter a full reporting suite is shared with O&S and Cabinet, and Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers are held to account over performance.

11.3 The quarterly report covers the Council’s work towards its corporate objectives. One of these objectives is to ‘Ensure we are a customer focussed and service led Council’, and it details organisational performance against 8 actions and 15 performance measures.

11.4 Continuing to produce a Customer Service performance paper separately to a fuller organisational assessment of performance is something that merits debate.

12 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

12.1 This report is intended as an update for Members on performance of the Customer Service Team, and it fulfils that purpose.

12.2 Since the instigation of this report was commissioned significant improvements have been made to the reporting of organisational performance.

12.3 It is recommended:

- O&S (Social Well-Being) note the contents of this report.
- O&S (Social Well-Being) consider, in the light of improved reporting of corporate performance, whether this report should continue to be produced.

13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1. Availability of main website

Appendix 2. Customer Satisfaction

Appendix 3. Website and Eforms usage data

Appendix 4. Call Centre and CSC Report and graphs

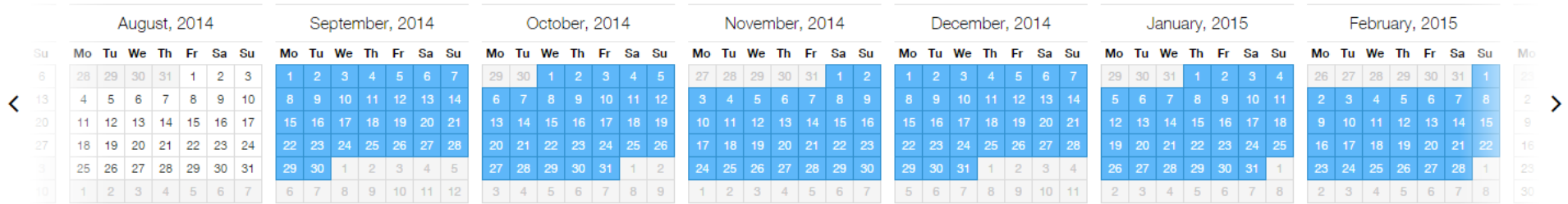
BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

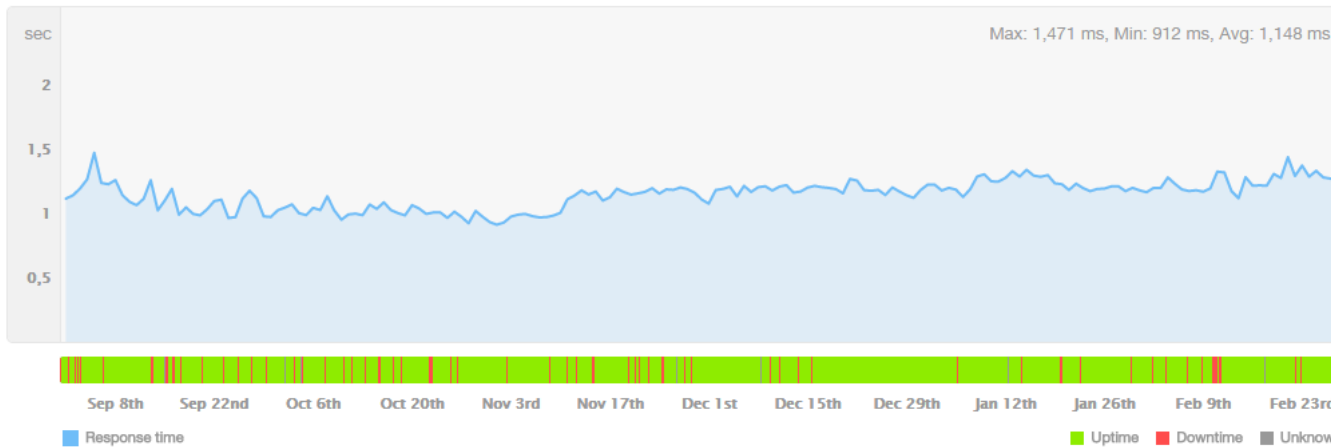
John Taylor, Head of Customer Service
01480 388119

Appendix 1 . Availability of main website.



Huntingdonshire.gov.uk
 type: HTTP, host: www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

EDIT CHECK



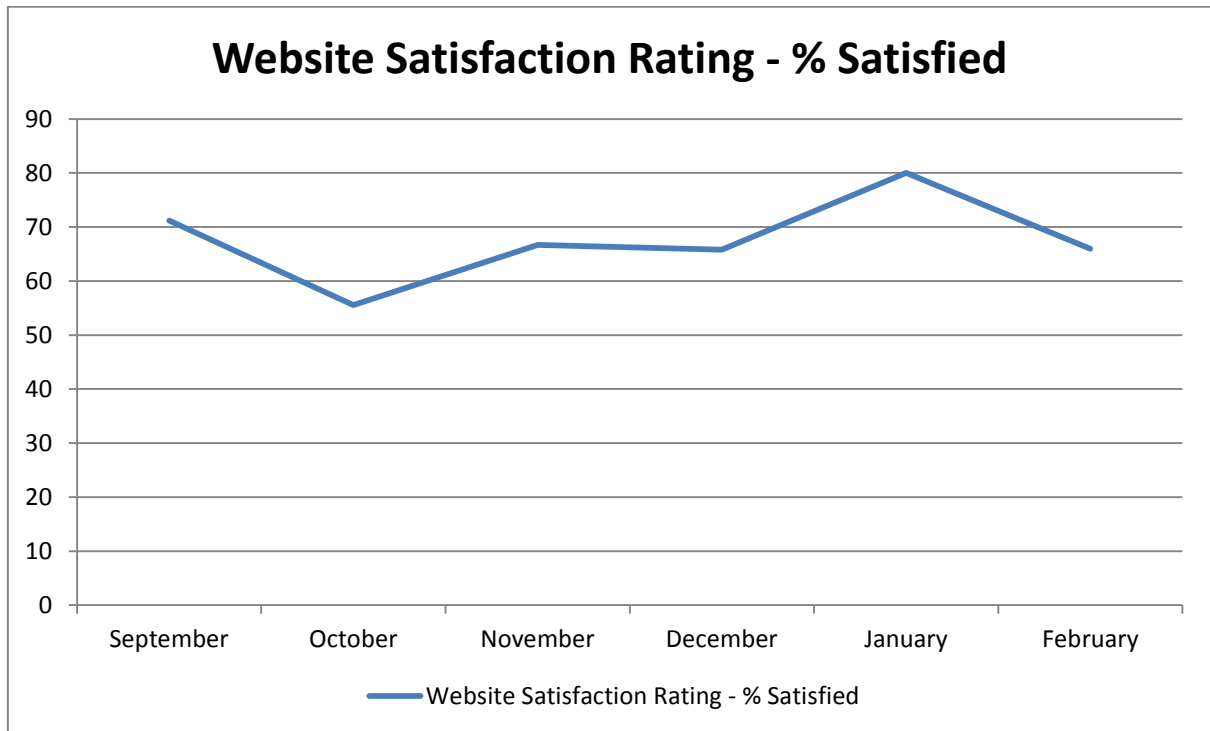
DOWNTIME
1d 21h 17m
 (80 outages)

UPTIME
98.96%

Appendix 2 - Customer Satisfaction

68%* of customers were satisfied with the website during the period.

Source – Socitm website visitor satisfaction survey on main website. Survey invites 1/3 visitors to complete.



Appendix 3 Website and Eforms usage data. (1st September 2014 – 28th February 2015)

E-forms:

No of e forms submitted: 11,025

No of e forms: 87 (56 of these have been updated to the new, easier to use, mobile style)

Websites: (Huntingdonshire, One Leisure, Applications)

Total Page views: 1,853,642

Desktop: 50%

Mobile: 30%

Tablet: 20%

Top 10 pages (page views):

1.	Main Homepage	164,326
2.	One Leisure Homepage	102,243
3.	Refuse Calendar	88,272
4.	Swimming	81,044
5.	Planning home	64,681
6.	One Leisure - Book and Pay Online	48,618
7.	Fitness Classes	40,093
8.	One Leisure - St Ives Indoor	38,893
9.	Council Tax Home	29,756
10.	Contact Us	28,707

Appendix4

Customer Service report for the period October 2014 to March 2015

Information about achieving our priorities

- Employee Satisfaction was 98% at the Call Centre and 88% at the Customer Service Centre. The Customer Service management team prioritises, even in busy periods, supporting and motivating staff to do a good job to ensure the welfare of our employees and to provide excellent customer service for our residents. Some staff members are concerned about the implications of the Customer Service teams being combined, but the management team is being open about the changes and communicating regularly.
- In December, staff visits were arranged between the Call Centre and CSCs in preparation for our teams coming together.
- The Call Centre handles the council's main social media accounts and we engaged with 1255 people during this period¹. We have over 1800 followers on Twitter and 600 likes on Facebook. This has increased from 1380 followers on Twitter and 427 likes on Facebook since the beginning of September.
- The Call Centre and Customer Service Centre have worked with IMD to make sure our payment handling processes are PCI compliant. HDC wants to obtain a compliance certificate.
- Customer Service has worked with the Planning department to help the admin team catch up with validation work, which has improved their team's capacity and customer service.
- Updated and revised all parking permit leaflets and forms and arranged for Web to be updated to allow customers to self-help more.
- Commenced working with Housing Services to provide 'Community Navigators' once a month in the CSC—designed for older people to assist in accessing services.
- All four of our team leaders have now had lean training and are working on a number of projects with other departments like In-cab technology with Operations.
- We are using lean to look at a process with Housing Services and are hoping to introduce a first contact form at the Call Centre (online form developed by IMD) to help triage customers and gather the right customer information at the first point of contact to prevent them having to come into the CSC numerous times unnecessarily. We are testing this concept at the moment.
- We also used lean to work with Planning to define customer journeys in greater detail and have created a substantial map which guides call centre advisors when taking calls about planning permission. Planning also worked with us and introduced a first contact officer which has is working well for customer services and our customers.
- Call Centre staff had a lean meeting with Operations about issues we all face working together and started looking at process improvement. We agreed on where some of the problem areas are and we started to work together to come to some solutions. Work has slowed on this due to staffing problems at the Call Centre and other priorities.
- Call Centre manager led project to improve the updating of the Phonebook using Lean processes.

¹ Social media 'engagement' is active participation of our members (i.e. friends, followers). From clicks on our links and posting and commenting, to re-tweeting your posts and viewings of our videos.

- CSC worked with Matthew Wynn and colleague from South Cambs DC to share the CS's Violent Incident localised procedures.
- All Call Centre staff have either completed their ITQ qualification or are working towards it.

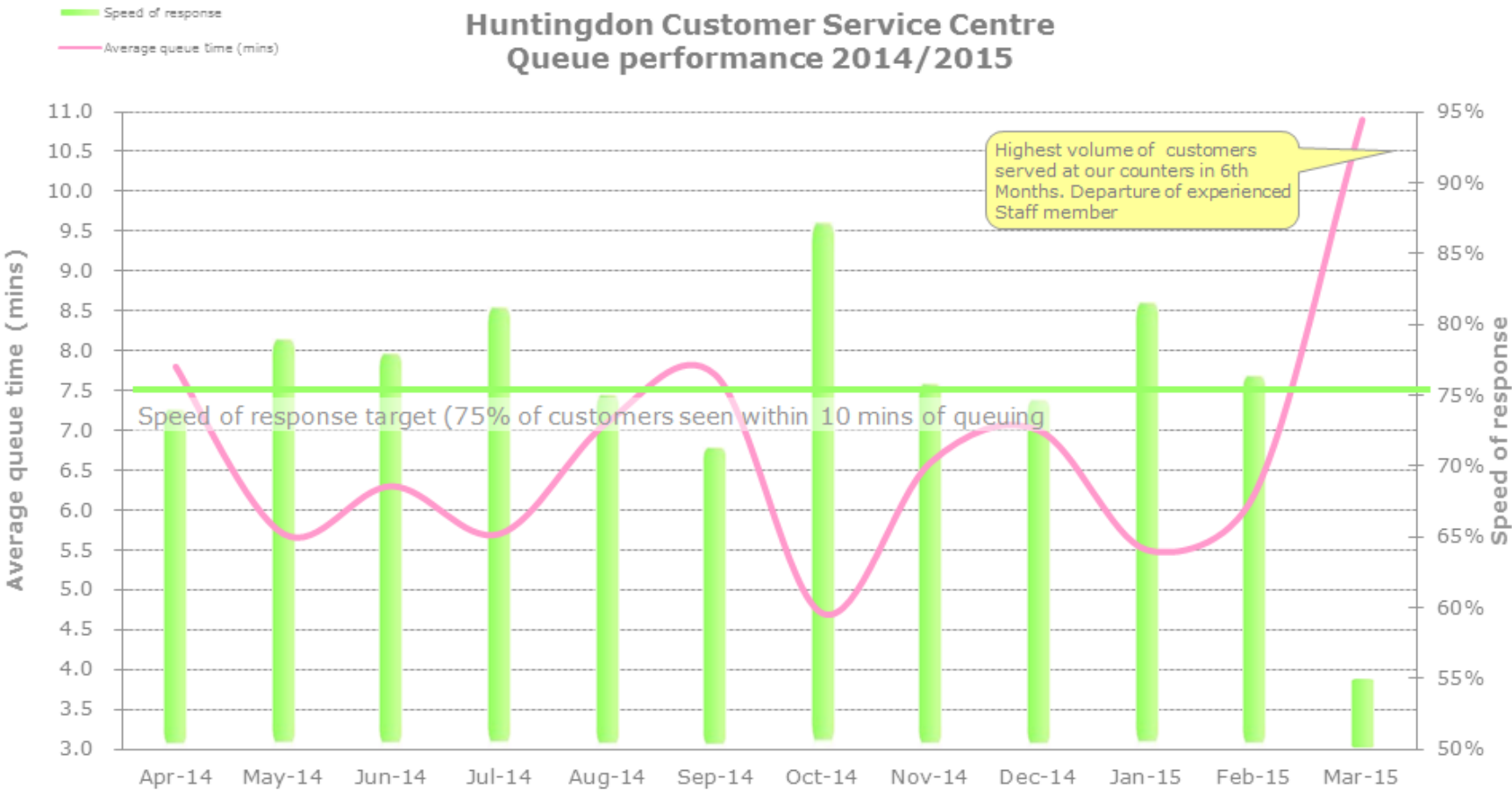
Information about Demand

- The Customer Service Centre met its speed of response target dealing with 75% of customers within 10 minutes. However, 884 customers waited longer than 20 minutes over 6 months with 51 waiting longer than 40. The longest wait was 56 minutes.
- The Call Centre missed its speed of answer target achieving 73% of calls answered within 20 seconds. 14,000 customers would have experienced a longer wait than 20 seconds, with the average wait time around 41 seconds. The longest wait was 14:45 minutes. 6% of customers abandoned, our target is 5%. This is largely due to short staffing and the pressure of training new staff, which can have an effect on service level. Furthermore, the Call Centre experienced very high volumes of Elections calls in March due to the Electoral registration letter that was sent to every household.
- Some bin collections moving forwards over the Christmas period affected us as many customers failed to realise this and didn't put their bins out. Due to this, many customers had excess waste over the Christmas period. Customers in this position did become angry because they had a high amount of waste during the festive period.
- PFH opening over Christmas really positively impacted Customer Services as back office staff were available to help customers. The Christmas opening period helped to reduce the spike in calls we usually get in early January.

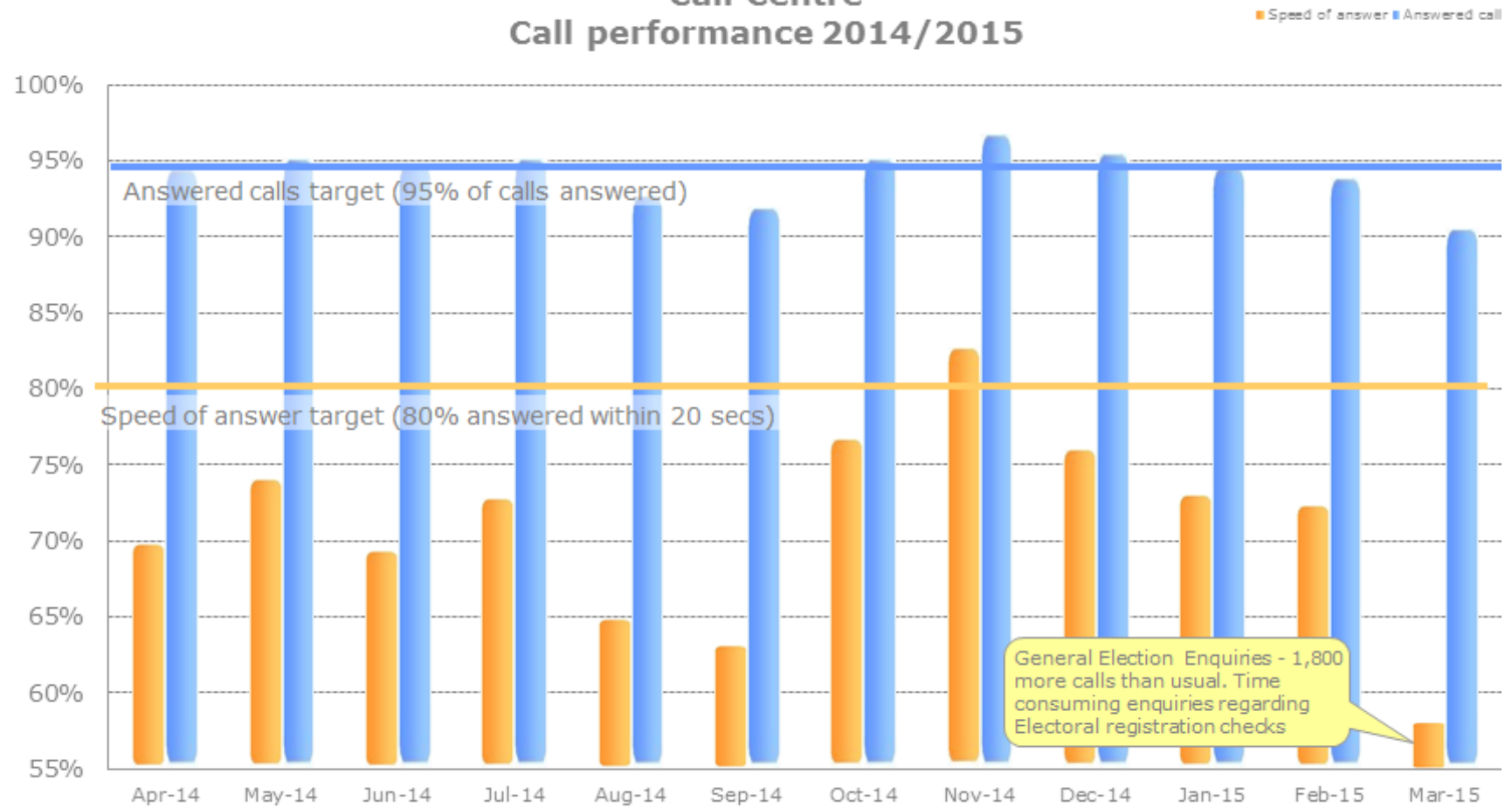
Risks

- Staff turnover has occurred in this period as people left to pursue other careers, maintaining a productive team requires effort and training replacements does take time,
- The Call Centre's likely move to PFH within the next 6 months will cause disruption and technical challenges in presenting CCC's phone system at PFH. Also a risk to morale with staff concerned about changes to the team. We plan to consult with the teams at the end of 2015.
- A highly skilled CSC advisor resigned, which created a risk to service provision as a result of being short staffed. We have appointed a temporary member of staff to cover reception.

Huntingdon Customer Service Centre Queue performance 2014/2015

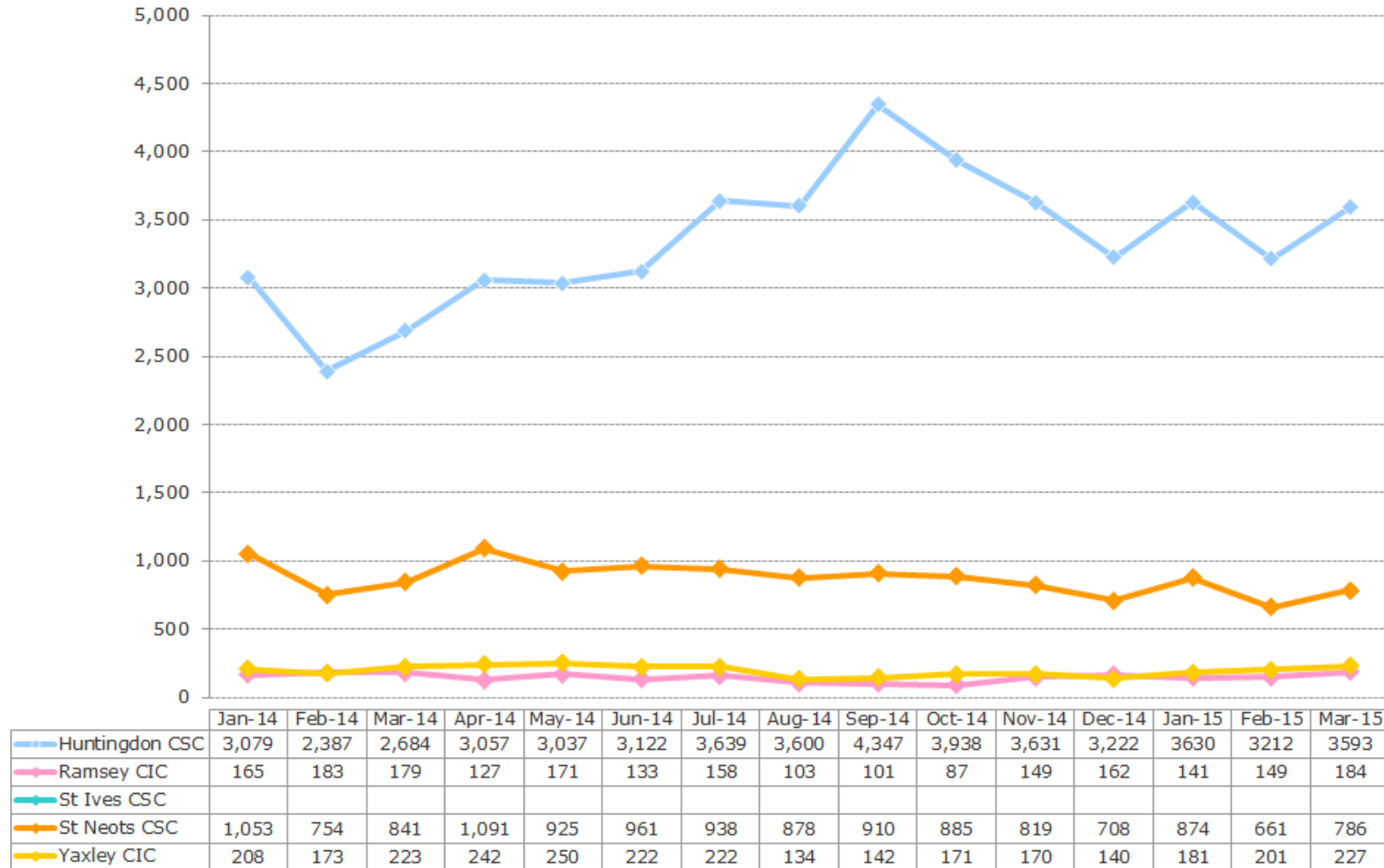


Call Centre Call performance 2014/2015

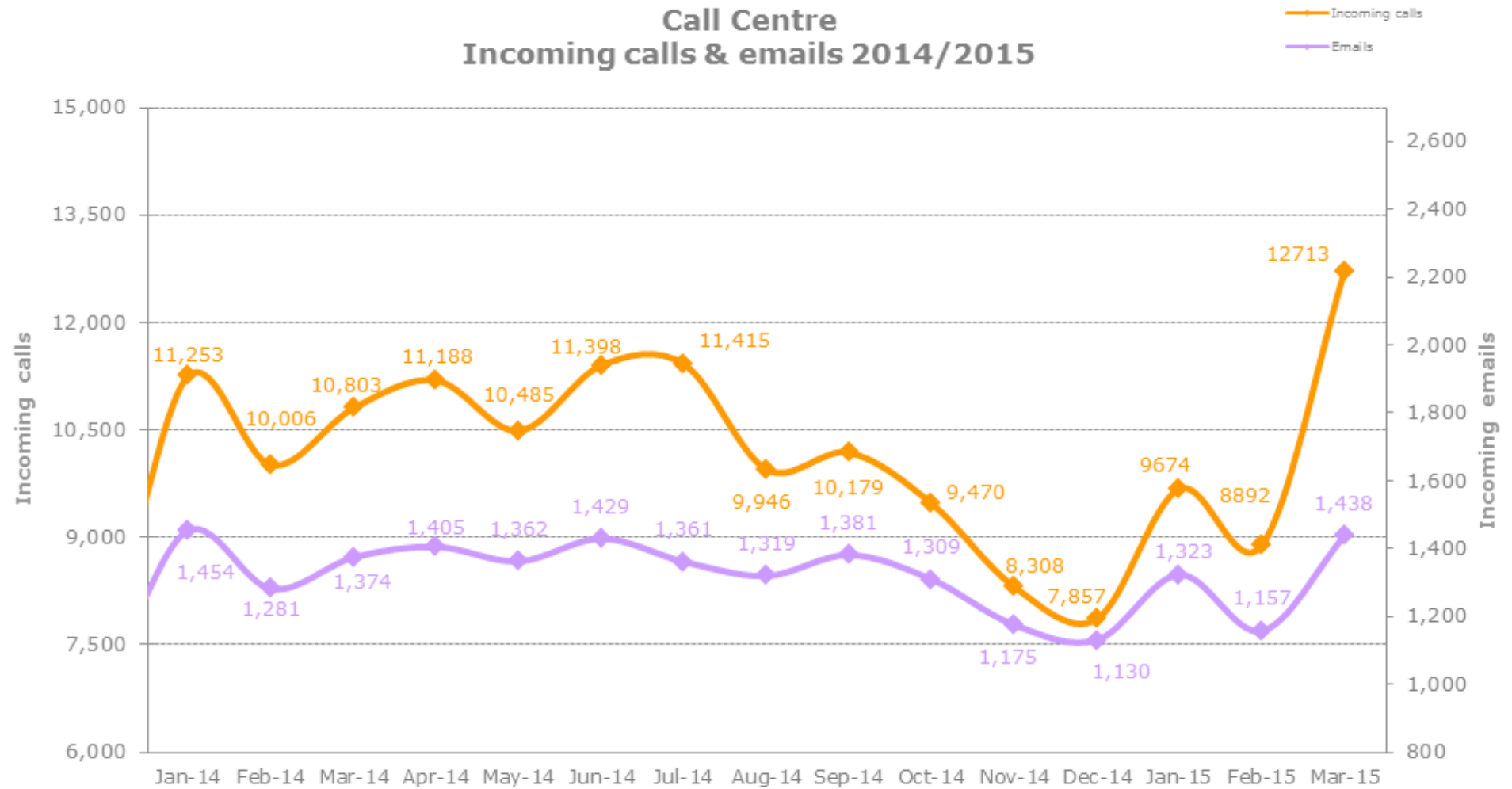


In the following page the term 'enquiry' refers to the information or service requested by the customer. Some customers may make more than one enquiry in a single visit.

Customer Service Centres' enquiries per month



Call Centre Incoming calls & emails 2014/2015



Call Centre - % of customer calls classed as avoidable and % resolved first time without transfers or support calls to the back office

