



**Mystery Shoppers**

customer service specialists

# Management Summary

of

**Calls, Emails and**

**Website Usability**

for

## Pitford Borough Council

April 2005

**SAMPLE – TEXT AND DATA HAVE BEEN  
ALTERED TO DISGUISE THE TRUE RESULTS**

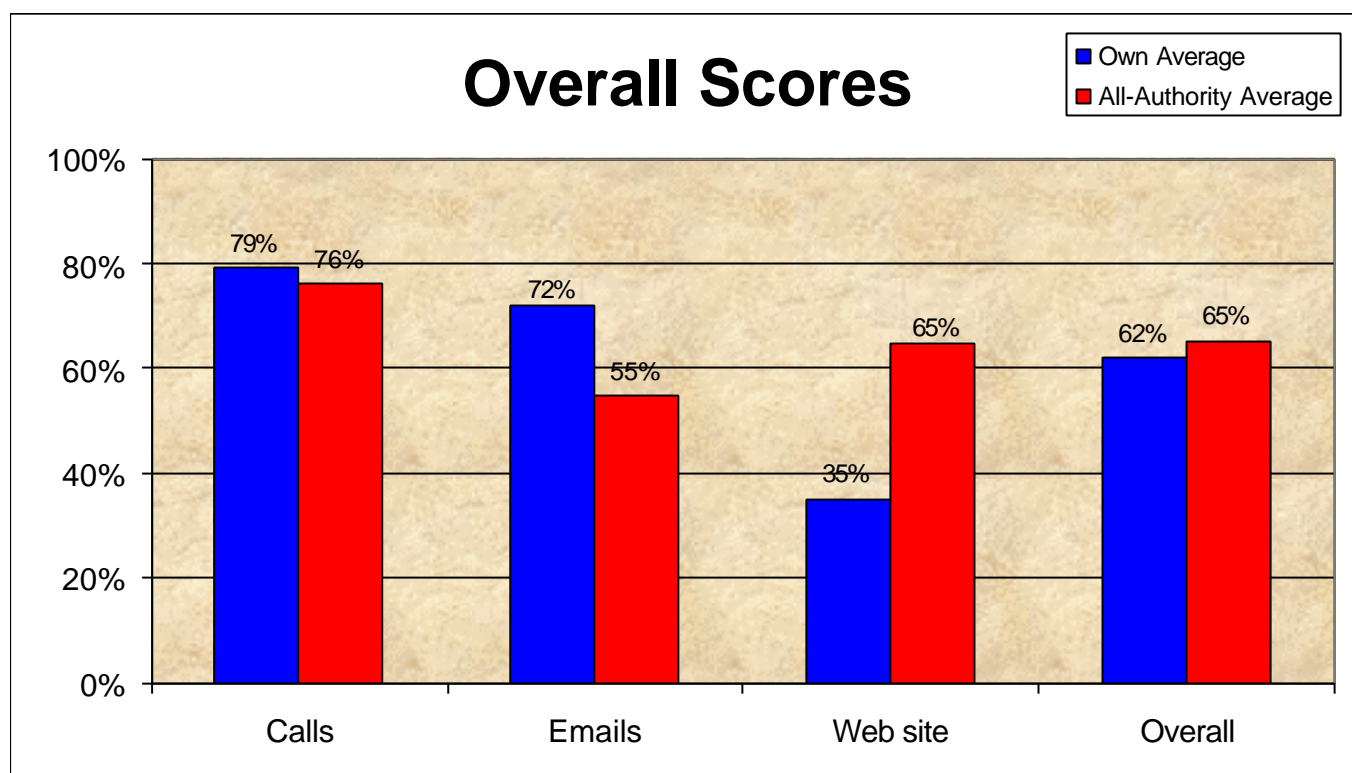
**Mystery Shoppers Ltd.** International House,  
Waldon Way, Holsworthy, Devon EX22 6HL  
Registered in England No. 2654347

---

**Phone:** 01409 255025 **Fax:** 01409 255026  
**E-mail:** [enquiries@mystery-shoppers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@mystery-shoppers.co.uk)

# Management Summary

## 1. Headline Scores



It must be emphasised that since the three communication channels were evaluated against different criteria and there is nothing which makes them directly comparable with each other. The 'Overall' score is a simple average of all three scores.

## 2 Telephone Calls

**2.1 Scores by measure:** Some measures were generally weaker than others across most Councils as shown in the table below:

Pitford Borough Council			
Measure	All-Authority Average	This Council	Difference
Aborted Call Score	75%	78%	3%
Secs To Answer Score	82%	68%	-14%
A2 Greeting	65%	100%	35%
A3 Salutation	88%	84%	-4%
A4 Gave Council Name	62%	88%	26%
A5 Gave Dept Name	45%	65%	20%
B1 Courteous	88%	77%	-11%
B2 Helpful	86%	93%	7%
B3 Fully Answered	71%	78%	7%
B4 Call Ended Politely	85%	84%	-1%
B5 Professionally Handled	91%	98%	7%
B6 Rate Enquiry	65%	66%	1%
<b>Total Score</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>5%</b>

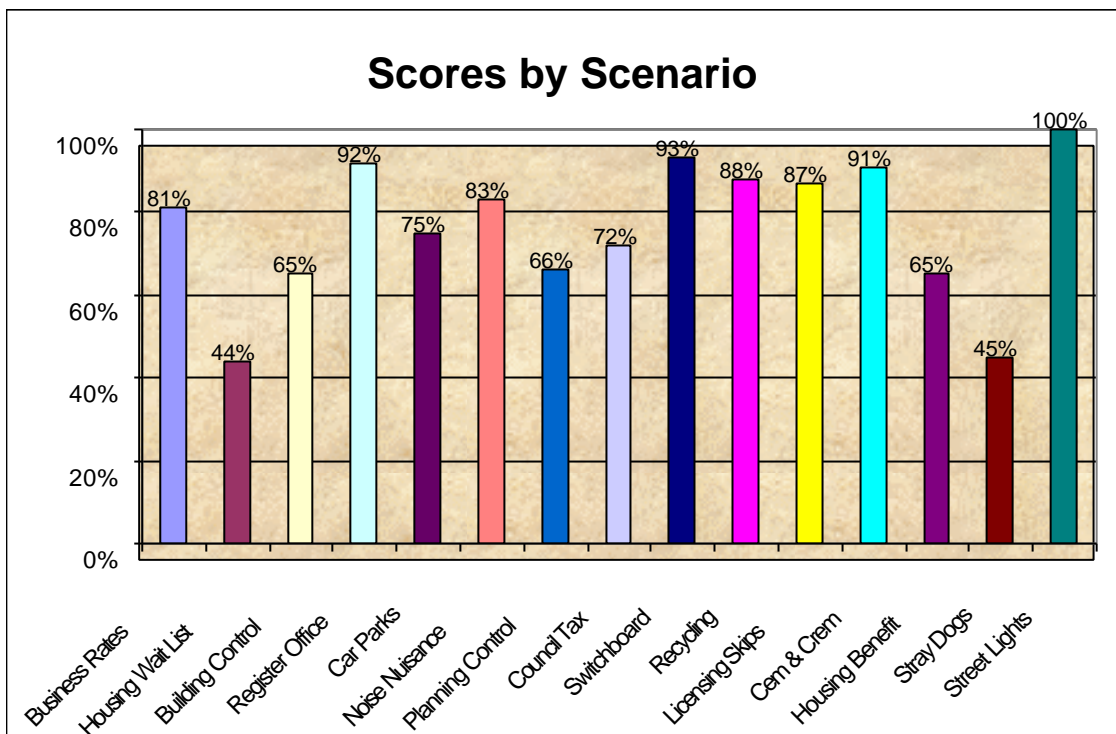
xxxxxxxxxxxxx clearly should make the call more xxxxxxxxx as well as more xxxxxxxxx - otherwise the caller is liable to ask “xxxxxxx...”. It may help a caller xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx when they don’t realise x xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx x the service, and where the xxxxx xxxxxxx is not one they immediately xxxxxxxxxx as being xxxxxxxxxx with their xxxxxx. In some cases a xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx of the xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx may be most appropriate. However, this issue is probably much-discussed and there will no doubt be several valid but different views.

The score for ‘xxxxxxx xxxxxxx’ was often lower than the other scores. This is a purely subjective measure but is important because an enquiry may have been handled by three or more different staff with two or more call transfers, and while every individual component may have been well handled the overall result can sometimes be a less than ideal experience. The scoring system means that if all enquiries were rated ‘Good’ the average score would be xx%.

The score for “xxxxxxx xxxxx” was sometimes affected by the fact that callers had been instructed not to give an address (we do have a large number of addresses we can use but didn’t want to create any spurious records). There were a number of calls where they were told that their enquiry would not be answered if they did not give their address. We understand that some Authorities are using CRM systems which demand address details for each enquiry. As one caller commented, “*Seemed more interested in logging details than answering the question. Finally got question answered but took over 5 minutes when could have dealt with call in 30 seconds.*”

The scores for each call really become meaningful when seen relative to the scores for other calls and to the all-council average.

**2.2 Scenario Scores:** There was only one call for each scenario to each Authority, so while the scores achieved by each council may be of interest, no significant conclusions can be drawn unless an individual authority knows that a number of the calls would have been handled by the same contact centre or contractor.



The Call Report Form used is at Annex C and the scenarios used are at Annex E. The scores shown are unweighted. A full table showing all scores is at Annex A.

**PLEASE REMEMBER ALL THE DATA SHOWN IS FICTITIOUS**

## 2.3 Emails / Webform Responses

**2.31 Scores by measure:** The following table shows those measures which were relatively strong and which were relatively weak, and how they compare with the all-authority average:

Pitford Borough Council			
Measure	All-Authority Average	This Council	Difference
Speed score	65%	68%	3%
Final reply recvd?	84%	100%	16%
Automated reply recvd?	9%	2%	-7%
Interim reply recvd?	12%	25%	13%
Name of sender given?	65%	85%	20%
Easy to understand?	88%	100%	12%
Answered fully?	72%	84%	12%
Job title /dept given?	58%	69%	11%
Tel no given?	35%	63%	28%
Address by name?	66%	72%	6%
Was name correct?	84%	98%	14%
Layout professional?	72%	58%	-14%
Language professional?	55%	89%	34%
Tone courteous?	87%	100%	13%
Quality overall?	72%	78%	6%
Efficiency overall?	78%	88%	10%
<b>Overall %</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>17%</b>

Note that the 'Overall' score shown is derived from the scoring system which weighted some measures more heavily than others, and is not a straight average of the scores shown. The Email Report Form used is at Annex D.

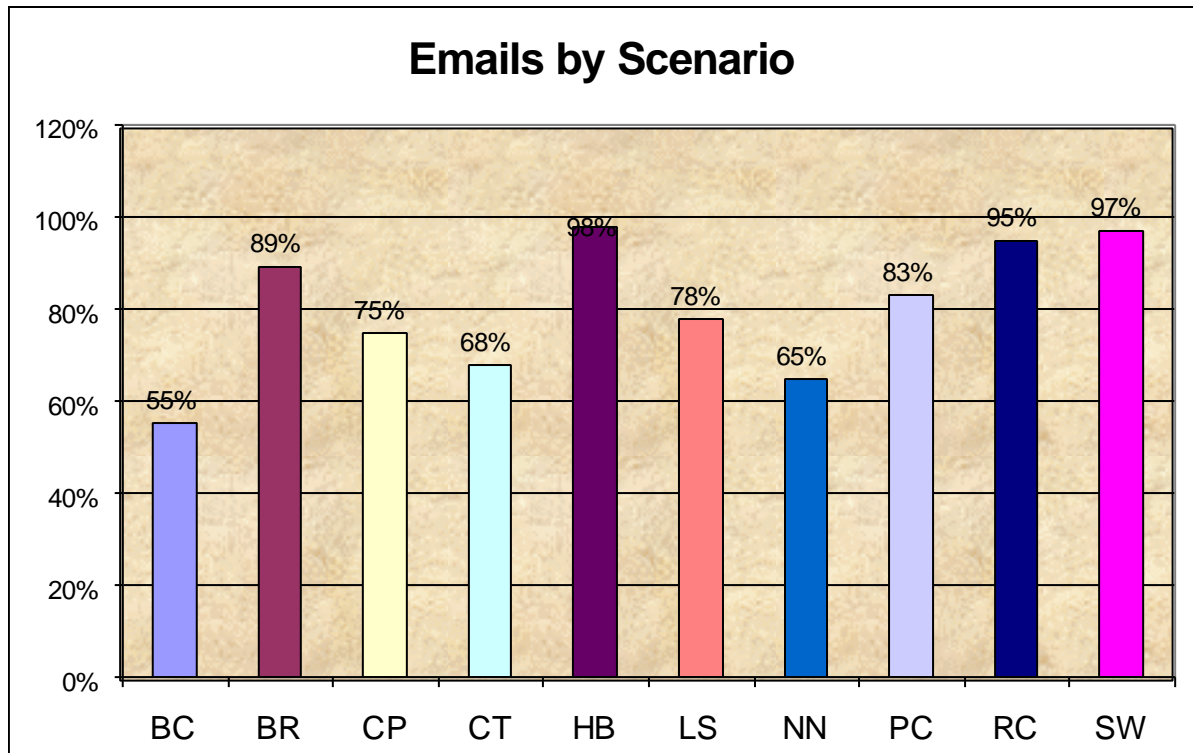
The 'xxxxxxxxxxxx' measure was included more to give credit to those authorities who have gone to the trouble of implementing such a system than because we saw it as an important feature. Likewise, 'xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx' was included to give credit for thoughtful customer service where the final response was scoring poorly due to the time taken and was counted as 'not applicable' where the final response took 5 days or less. Clearly, it is far preferable to receive a timely final response but we feel this is clearly is a feature which should be included in any customer service standards

The measure 'xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx' was defined as 'xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx'. This is a measure which may be worthy of debate and it can certainly be argued that the informality of the web allows much greater freedom than a letter for example, but we felt that these criteria were a reasonable minimum standard to expect from a local government office. The measure 'xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx' is part of the same issue.

The measure 'xxxxxxxx xxxxxxxx' did not always score well and while giving the xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx may seem xxxxxxx for an xxxxxxxxxx we felt quite strongly that (especially in view of the time some replies were taking) the ability to make any final clarification xxxxxxxxxx xxxxxxxxxx was important.

**PLEASE REMEMBER ALL THE DATA SHOWN IS FICTITIOUS**

**2.33 Scenario Scores:** There was only one email/webform enquiry for each scenario to each Authority, so while the scores achieved by each council may be of interest, no significant conclusions can be drawn unless an individual authority knows that a number of the enquiries would have been handled by the same contact centre or contractor. A full table showing all scores for this Authority is at Annex B.



(Scores shown are unweighted)

Scenarios: BC=Building Control, BR=Business Rates, CP=Car Parks, CT=Council Tax, HB=Housing Benefit, LS=Licensing Skips, NN=Noise Nuisance, PC=Planning Control, RC=Recycling, SW=Switchboard/general enquiries

## 2.4 Website Usability

Scores were as follows:

Measure	All-Authority Average	Pitford BC	Difference
A-Z or equiv	92%	98%	6%
Test A-Z	93%	98%	5%
Finding	89%	98%	9%
Retn to H/P	93%	98%	5%
Search	89%	98%	9%
Test Search	49%	15%	-34%
Search Leisure	79%	98%	19%
Tel Nos	90%	98%	8%
Search Tip	32%	98%	66%
Open times	78%	24%	-54%
Access standard	36%	98%	62%
Text only?	37%	0%	-37%
Contrast	8%	0%	-8%
Job vacs	91%	98%	7%
Fol	79%	98%	19%
Rate Search	65%	58%	-7%
Rate ease	65%	78%	13%
Rate speed	69%	78%	9%
<b>Weighted Overall</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>4%</b>

### **3. Summary**

The Benchmark Survey puts the scores in the context of the performance of all local authorities and of those of a similar type. By comparing scores with those for all authorities and also with authorities of the same type each council can judge how it compares with the best, the average and the weakest. The information in this Summary is focused on identifying strengths and weaknesses – what your Authority does well and what aspects of customer service may need some attention.

### **4. Recommendations**

**4.1 Validation:** The first step is to verify that all subscriber authorities feel the survey has been conducted in a fair way and that everything which is being measured is something they or their staff should be doing. Although we carry out mystery shopping for a number of local authorities this is the first survey we have carried out which uses criteria which are applied to all councils. It would be unlikely if we had got everything right first time. Any suggested changes should please be passed to us as soon as possible.

**4.2 Identifying strengths and weaknesses:** Then we suggest that subscriber authorities discuss their own report with their managers and staff. Congratulations might be given where evidence indicates it is deserved. Any weak areas which are identified can be addressed.

If more evidence is needed (for example, to justify investment in telephone systems, contact centres etc) we would obviously be pleased to help. A larger programme is not unduly expensive and is important if significant investment is being contemplated.

## Summary of Call Scores

Scenario	Service	Aborted Calls	A1 Secs To Answer	Aborted Calls	Secs To Answer	Greeting	Salutation	Council Name	Dept Name	Courteous	Helpful	Fully Answered	Ended Politely	Professional	Rate Enquiry	Total Score
	All-Authority Average			93%	68%	88%	75%	62%	74%	89%	91%	96%	82%	88%	76%	<b>79%</b>
<b>Pitford BC</b>																
4	Business Rates	0	43	100%	30%	100%	100%	0%	20%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	33%	<b>81%</b>
10	Housing Wait List	0	8	30%	80%	100%	20%	100%	N/A	100%	20%	0%	0%	20%	33%	<b>44%</b>
3	Building Control	0	12	100%	70%	100%	100%	20%	0%	0%	100%	20%	100%	100%	100%	<b>65%</b>
16	Register Office	1	19	30%	50%	20%	100%	100%	N/A	20%	100%	N/A	100%	100%	67%	<b>92%</b>
5	Car Parks	0	14	100%	70%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	20%	100%	67%	<b>75%</b>
12	Noise Nuisance	0	10	100%	20%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	67%	<b>83%</b>
13	Planning Control	0	6	100%	80%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	40%	100%	100%	67%	<b>66%</b>
8	Council Tax	0	5	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	<b>72%</b>
1	Switchboard	1	1	30%	100%	100%	100%	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>93%</b>
15	Recycling	0	12	100%	70%	100%	30%	0%	100%	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	<b>88%</b>
11	Licensing Skips	0	2	100%	100%	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	67%	<b>87%</b>
6	Cem & Crem	0	2	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>91%</b>
9	Housing Benefit	0	5	30%	90%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>65%</b>
18	Stray Dogs	0	1	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>45%</b>
19	Street Lights	0	3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	30%	100%	100%	100%	100%	<b>100%</b>
	<b>Average Score:</b>	<b>0.1333</b>	<b>9.53333</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>76%</b>

(Scores shown are unweighted)

**PLEASE REMEMBER ALL THE DATA SHOWN IS FICTITIOUS**

## Summary of Email / Webform Scores

Scenarios: BC=Building Control, BR=Business Rates, CP=Car Parks, CT=Council Tax, HB=Housing Benefit, LS=Licensing Skips, NN=Noise Nuisance, PC=Planning Control, RC=Recycling, SW=Switchboard/general enquiries

Scenario	Speed of final reply (days)	Speed score	Final reply recvd?	Automated reply recvd?	Interim reply recvd?	Name of sender given?	Easy to understand?	Answered fully?	Job title /dept given?	Tel no given?	Address by name ?	Was name correct?	Layout professional?	Language professional?	Tone courteous?	Quality overall ?	Efficiency overall ?	Overall %
		65%	84%	9%	15%	85%	89%	82%	66%	51%	63%	91%	45%	89%	78%	98%	92%	71%
<b>Pitford BC</b>																		
BC	15	0%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	55%
BR	0	70%	100%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	89%
CP	1	75%	0%	0%	N/A	100%	100%	0%	70%	100%	100%	100%	70%	100%	0%	100%	100%	75%
CT	0	100%	100%	0%	N/A	0%	70%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	70%	100%	68%
HB	2	50%	70%	0%	N/A	70%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	70%	0%	70%	100%	100%	70%	98%
LS	2	50%	100%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	78%
NN	0	100%	100%	0%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	100%	70%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	65%
PC	1	75%	0%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	83%
RC	0	100%	100%	0%	N/A	100%	100%	70%	0%	0%	70%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%
SW	0	100%	100%	0%	N/A	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	N/A	0%	100%	70%	0%	100%	97%
<b>Average score</b>		72%	77%	0%	0%	57%	87%	67%	47%	47%	57%	81%	47%	87%	87%	77%	77%	80%

(Scores shown are unweighted)

**PLEASE REMEMBER ALL THE DATA SHOWN IS FICTITIOUS**

## Local Authority Benchmark - Call Report

MS Ref No: <input type="text"/>	Date: <input type="text"/>	Scenario <input type="text"/>	Caller <input type="text"/>	QC <input type="text"/>
Start Time <input type="text"/>	End Time <input type="text"/>	D E Time <input type="text"/>	Aborted Calls <input type="text"/>	
Authority Code <input type="text"/>	Tel No called <input type="text"/>			

### Section A: Response (switchboard or direct dial)

A1 Seconds from finish dialing to answer by a person

*(Use watch or clock - 1 ring = 4 sec)*

A2 Was the greeting given in a professional tone?  Yes  No

*Clear, not rushed, not downbeat or unfriendly*

A3 Did the greeting include any salutation?  Yes  No

*i.e Good Morning/Afternoon, Hello, You are through to .....*

A4 Was the Council name given (recorded message  Yes  No  
or in person)?

A5 Was the Department name given?  Yes  No

*(If the call was answered completely by the switchboard without being transferred leave A5 blank)*

Max Score

Actual Score

Percentage %

### Section B: Customer Service Style

B1 Did the advisor sound courteous  Yes  No

B2 Was the advisor helpful  Yes  No

B3 Was your question answered fully?  Yes  No

B4 Was the call ended politely?  Yes  No

B5 Was your call handled professionally?  Yes  No

*(i.e no gaps, no background noise, didn't drop the phone or cut off the call)*

B6 Rate how your enquiry was dealt with

Excellent  Good  OK  Poor

*Any comments (please be as brief as possible e.g. "Great call", "Took a long time", "Long wait" etc)*

Max Score

Actual Score

Percentage %

Max Score

Actual Score

Percentage %

## Local Government Customer Service Benchmark E-mail Report

MS Ref No:	<input type="text"/>	Scenario:	<input type="text"/>	Scored by:	<input type="text"/>
Web address	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>				
Authority	<input style="width: 40%;" type="text"/>	Auth Code	<input type="text"/>	Type:	<input type="text"/>

1. Date enquiry sent	_ / _ / _
2. Was an automated response received?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
3. IF YES, date automatic response received	_ / _ / _
4. Date first of any interim responses received (excluding automated)	_ / _ / _
5. Was a final response received (one intended to answer the query, even if it did not in fact do so)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
6. IF YES, date final response received	_ / _ / _
7. Speed of final response (number of working days, excluding Bank Holidays. Same day or next working day - Mon if sent Fri - count as 1)	<input type="text"/>
8. Was the name of the sender given (surname plus initials or first name)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
9. Was the job title (or dept etc) of the sender given?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
10. Was the telephone number of the sender given?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
11. Was the response clear and easy to understand? (no jargon, no acronyms such as ODPM, written in plain English)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
12. Did the email address the enquirer by name? (e.g. Ms Watkins, Jane etc)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
13. IF YES, was the name correct? (spelled correctly - either first name or surname is acceptable but abbreviation only if enquiry was signed with an abbreviation)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
14. Was the layout professional? (proper case, structured in paragraphs, salutation and some form of ending)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
15. Was the language professional? (no abbreviations such as txtg, no serious grammatical or spelling errors. The odd incorrect punctuation or typo can be overlooked)	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
16. Was the tone of the response courteous?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
17. Was the query answered fully?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
18. Was the quality of the response good overall? (includes all responses where there was more than one) IF NO, COMMENT WHY	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
19. Was the efficiency of the response good overall? (includes all responses where there was more than one) IF NO, COMMENT WHY	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> No
<b><u>Enquiry Comments</u></b>	
<input style="width: 100%; height: 100%;" type="text"/>	

## Call Scenarios

	Department	Scenario
1	Switchboard	My mum wants to write in to make a complaint. Do you have a complaints department? Who should she write to? (don't say what the complaint is unless you are pressed, but if pressed, say it's about the state of the pavement outside her house)
2	Adult Education	Is there a website which gives information on evening classes in the area? I haven't been able to find anything. Or is there a published list I can pick up from you?
3	Building Control	Do I need permission to put double glazed windows in my flat and how would I go about sorting that out?
4	Business Rates	I am planning to take on a shop in the area but I wanted to know if I will have to pay business rates while it's being refitted?
5	Car Parks	We're going to be in the area next month on a touring holiday - can you tell me if you allow camper vans to park overnight in any of your car parks?
6	Cemetery/crematorium	Are there any rules concerning the size and the design of headstones and what the inscriptions can be in cemeteries? Do they vary according to the cemetery or are they standard everywhere? (If asked, your daughter is doing a project at school).
7	Child Welfare	We are/my daughter is interested in the idea of fostering - How can I find out more about it? If offered literature say you could pop in and collect (or use website if mentioned). You're phoning on her behalf as she can't make personal calls from work.
8	Council Tax	My son is self employed and often has long periods out of work. Can they apply for a reduction in Council Tax and how would they go about it?
9	Housing Benefits	My mum gets Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit. My sister is coming back from travelling in a month's time and wants to come and live with her for a while, will this affect her Housing Benefit?
10	Housing Waiting List	My daughter is moving into the area and wants to go on the Housing list. Can you tell me how long she might have to wait before she would be housed? She is a single mum with a little girl of two.
11	Licensing Skips	We are going to need some skips to take away the rubbish from our house after we rip the bathroom and kitchen out. What are the rules about having a skip outside your house? Does it have to be in your garden or can it go on the road?
12	Noise Nuisance	A neighbour's dog barks constantly during the day. What can I do about it? I have spoken to him and he was very nice about it but it hasn't stopped.
13	Planning Control	A neighbour has told my father he would need planning permission for removing the chimney breast and chimney stack from his house (he lives in a semi). If this is right, what sort of permission does he need and what should he do?
14	Potholes	My son's doing a project on roads and transportation - would you be able to tell me where he can find out about the building and repair of roads?
15	Recycling	Does the Council run a scheme for garden waste being collected and if so, is this a free service?
16	Registrars	Is there any cost involved in registering the birth of a baby? Can you get more than one copy of a birth certificate?
17	School Admissions	How can I find out about facilities for the disabled at schools in the area? (in particular for a child in a wheelchair)
18	Stray Dogs	I keep seeing a dog wandering around the area, it's been in the gardens behind us a couple of times. I think it's a stray - what should I do the next time I see it? Does the council pick up strays?
19	Street Lights	Can you tell me how it's decided how many street lights there are in a road? (Your boss wants to know, there are street lights in your boss's road but it's still quite dark to walk along - you don't actually know the name of the road because you're a temp).

## Email Scenarios

Scenario No	Service	Scenario
1	Switchboard (SW)	Dear Sir Can you give me the telephone number for the complaints department please? Richard Pottsworth
3	Building Control (BC)	Dear Sir Do I need consent to build a conservatory at the back of my house. If so what do I need to do? Thanking you for your help. Angela
4	Business Rates (BR)	My father runs a business in your area and is thinking of retiring but the lease still has a period to run. Can you advise me if there are any reductions or discounts that he could apply for? Susannah King
5	Car Parks (CP)	We are in the process of trying to start a Resident's Association. Who should we contact concerning the possibility of a Resident's Parking scheme? Regards Judith
8	Council Tax (CT)	Dear Sir Our youngest son is at Bath University, and rents a flat with three other students. He tells me that he has received a bill for Council Tax, but I thought he was exempt? Sincerely Howard Peterson
9	Housing Benefits (HB)	I'm making a general enquiry for my mother. She wants to try out a nursing home to see if she likes it, can you tell me how this will affect her housing benefit? Graham Huntsshaw
11	Licensing Skips (LS)	I'm just making enquiries about having a skip outside my house for a few days. Whose permission would I need for this? Philip Oxborough
12	Noise Nuisance (NN)	Dear Sir or Madam Could you tell me before what time is it considered anti-social to make excessive noise? Regards Tracey Longman
13	Planning Control (PC)	My dad wants to know more about a planning application notice he's recently seen. How can he find this info out and if he disagrees with the proposed Application, what options are open to him to air his views? Catherine
15	Recycling (RC)	Sir, I understand there's new ruling now on getting rid of fridges. What is it? Janet C