

REPORT TO: POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 22 APRIL 2013

REPORT ON: REVIEW OF OUT OF HOURS CALL HANDLING

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO: 174-2013

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report the findings and recommendations of the review of out of hours call handling within the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee approves the following:-

- 2.1 All Council telephone comfort messages for day time or out of hours services to promote channel shift by advising customers of the many online services available 24/7.
- 2.2 Customer comfort telephone messages to include short messages promoting future events such as Flower Show, Bonfire Night, Christmas Lights etc and advise customers of school closures in severe weather conditions or any major incidents, similar to the information that the Council web site provides. This will assist the Council to better inform/update our customers who do not have access to the internet.
- 2.3 Note the improvements already implemented in 4.5.
- 2.4 The Council 'Contact Us' internet page to be produced in poster form and displayed in our new customer transparent large desk mats at all enquiry desks at Dundee House, East and West Housing Offices. Highlighting to customers our out of hours emergency telephone numbers and promoting our new deaf/hard of hearing texting service and our many online services.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Savings may be made as efficiencies due to the implementation of the new telephone script and customer comfort telephone messages directing non emergency calls received out of hours, to our Council web site. This will be reviewed in April 2014.

4.0 Background

- 4.1 As part of Phase 2 of the Changing for the Future (CFTF) programme, it was agreed that a review of out of hours call handling would be undertaken. This review followed up on an earlier data gathering exercise facilitated by the Virtual Improvement Team (as a Tayside wide group). This earlier exercise was due to Tayside Police planning to provide Perth & Kinross Council with an out of hours call handling service and were exploring if Dundee and Angus Councils wished to be included.
- 4.2 Unlike Perth & Kinross Council, this Council already had a service being provided internally as well as a shared service for Social Work with Angus Council. With this in mind and the uncertainty due to the reform of Police services it was considered that the best option for Dundee was to review and improve its internal service.
- 4.3 A corporate working group was set up to review the current out of hours' call handling services to identify any areas for improvements and/or savings.

It was agreed that customers who have emergency situations out of hours, especially late at night, that their journey to our Council emergency telephone services should be as efficient and as stress free as possible and that non emergency calls should be diverted to allow genuine emergencies quick and easy access to our emergency telephone lines.

The working group agreed that the customer's main information sources to contact the Council's out of hours' services should be easily found in the following –

- Council 'Contact Us' internet page
- Dundee City Council listings in BT telephone book
- Customer information leaflets/cards/stickers for boilers/promotional items e.g 434343 key rings etc

4.4 The following telephone lines are staffed *out of hours, weekends and Public Holidays*

Social Work

a) Out of Hours Service 307964

- Shared service with Angus Council
- Hours of operation 5pm to 8.45am and all weekend and public holidays
- Also supports Dundee multi-agency protection lines:
 - Child Protection Line 01382 307999
 - Adult Protection Line 01382 434019
- Response to urgent new referrals and undertake specific planned work to support daytime services

b) Social Care Response Service (SCRS)

- Control room based at Clepington Road
- Community alarm service and interval night care service
- 24 hour service/7 days per week
- Responds to dispersed alarms (own home)/Sheltered Housing Call Systems
 - Daytime - personal alarm call outs
 - Evening – from 3.30pm onwards Sheltered Housing Call Systems transfer to SCRS (earlier at weekend for some housing providers)
- Night time – emergency responses and planned care visits
- 2 vehicles daytime/evening and 8 vehicles night
- Close working with the Social Work Out of Hours Service

Housing Department

a) Antisocial Behaviour Advice Line (24 hour) 0800 1693845 / 01382 307342

- Open to all residents within City
- Available 24/7, 365 days a year
- Callers speak to trained officers who provide specialist advice & assistance
- Advice line aims to give advice on :
 - What options are available
 - What the Antisocial Behaviour Team can do
 - Possible legal remedies
 - What other agencies e.g. Police, Mediation, other Council Departments can do

b) Homeless Advice Line (24 hour) 0800 6335843 / 01382 432001

- Open to all residents within City and beyond
- Available 24/7, 365 days a year
- Routed via the Lily Walker Centre, callers speak to trained officers who provide specialist advice and assistance
- Advice given on:
 - What options are available e.g. advice or provision of temporary accommodation
 - What Homeless Service can do
- What other agencies e.g. Police, other Council Departments can do

Environment Department

- a) Out of Hours Emergency Housing Repairs and all other Emergencies 434343
- Hours of operation 4.30pm to 8am and all weekend and public holidays
 - Action 'right to repair' qualifying repairs for our 13,000 Council tenants
 - Repair ironmongery/fittings (external doors)
 - Repair leak/burst
 - Renew toilet pan – unusable
 - No heat/hot water (gas)
 - Check electrics
 - Winter maintenance, dangerous buildings, Clarence and any other emergency
- b) Night Time Noise Team (NTNT) – Tayside Police 101 (new number from 21 Feb)
- Contact telephone number 101 Tayside Police
 - NTNT operate Thursday to Sunday 7pm to 4am
 - At times when NTNT not on duty Police deal with complaints
 - Out of hours' service dealing with complaints of domestic antisocial noise
 - Antisocial Behaviour Etc (Scotland) Act 2004, Part V
 - Issue written warnings and fixed penalty notices £100
 - NTNT share data base with Community Safety Hub
 - Persistent offenders referred to Community Safety Hub

City Development

The security and call out process for Council buildings is being addressed in the CFTF review of CCTV/Building security (including out of hours alarm call outs).

4.5 Improvements Implemented

a) Council 'Contact Us' internet page

An updated 'Contact Us' internet page (per Appendix 1) was designed to bring together and include Out of Hours Emergency contact details for after 5pm, weekends and Public Holidays as follows -

Child Protection (24 hour)	01382 307999
Adult Protection (24 hour)	01382 434019
Social Work Out of Hours	01382 307964
Antisocial Behaviour Advice (24 hour)	0800 1693845 / 01382 307342
Homeless Advice Line (24 hour)	0800 6335843 / 01382 432001
Housing Repairs/All Other Emergencies	01382 434343
Police Non-Emergency/Night Time Noise Team	101
Police Emergency	999
NHS 24	08454 242424

b) Dundee City Council listings in BT telephone book

The main Council BT listing was updated to highlight the above main emergency contact telephone numbers and highlight the Council web address, with it's services, information and advice available 24/7.

c) Switchboard 434000 and Customer Services 434800 Out of Hours Script

A summary (per Appendix 2) from the telephone system highlighted 901 calls had been received via switchboard 434000, out of hours between 17:00 Sunday 1st April 2012 to 08:30 Wednesday 18th April. 403 (45%) of the calls had been received between 8am to 8.30am and 5pm to 6pm.

Customer Services staff attended a telephone script writing training course, which has enabled the Council to produce a telephone script (per Appendix 3) for our 2 main Council telephone numbers, Switchboard 434000 and Customer Services 434800. The script message starts at 5pm when Switchboard and Customer Services sign off and in the event of

any customers requiring emergency assistance, the customer can choose for their call to be transferred to one of our 4 staffed emergency out of hours lines –

1. Child Protection / Adult Protection / Social Work Out of Hours
2. Antisocial Behaviour Advice (24 hour)
3. Homeless Advice Line (24 hour)
4. Emergency Housing Repairs / All Other Emergencies

Ensuring Dundee citizens can contact the Council in an emergency 24/7, 365 days a year.

In a Civil emergency or in the event of severe weather conditions; Customer Services staff can add to or record a new telephone message outwith the office, if required, to advise customers who do not have access to the internet, the latest advice/information on any major incident.

4.6 Civil Emergency

In the event of a Civil Emergency the Out of Hours Emergency Centre at Clepington Road can call on designated support staff to assist.

4.7 Switchboard 434000

Calls monitored to 434000 between 5pm to 8pm and on Saturdays over 3 periods –

1st period over 12 days, 459 out of hours 434000 calls received, 276 (60%) of these were cold calls.

The level of cold calls was unacceptable; therefore all Council telephone lines were registered with BT call preference service in an effort to remove cold calls.

The 2nd period of 12 day monitoring, recorded 184 calls and 43 (23%) were cold calls.

The new out of hours' telephone script was introduced and advised customers to press 9 for Emergencies and then choose one of our 4 emergency manned lines. If the call is not an emergency the message will advise many services are available on line 24/7 at www.dundee.gov.uk or advise our opening hours and for the customer to call back.

On the 3rd monitoring exercise over a 12 day period undertaken after the script had been introduced, only 3 callers came through, one was a cold caller and the other 2 calls were abandoned.

The introduction of the BT call preference service and the telephone script has greatly reduced the number of calls being received, from the 1st 12 day monitoring to the 3rd 12 day monitoring exercise the number of calls reduced from 459 to 3.

4.8 Out of Hours Emergency Centre, Clepington Road, telephone 434343

One member of staff, an Emergency Contact Officer (Environment dept) staffs the Emergency Out of Hours' line 434343 at Clepington Road. A mobile phone was purchased and fitted with a priority sim card to allow the Emergency Planning Officer (Corporate Services) to call the emergency mobile number, if the landline 434343 was busy or the Emergency Contact Officer was carrying out a property check at Clepington Road depot or collecting parts from the store. The new emergency mobile phone is essential to ensure that the Emergency Planning Officer can contact the Emergency Contact Officer in the event of an Emergency.

4.9 Communication to Customers of Council Emergency Out of Hours Telephone Service

The updated Council 'Contact Us' internet page, which now includes our Emergency Out of Hours contact telephone numbers was included in the Council Tax leaflet which was distributed to 70,000 properties in early March 2013.

4.10 Continuous Improvement and Savings

The Out of Hours Call Handling Service should be monitored to sure that arrangements are working satisfactorily and customers who have emergencies are helped as swiftly and professionally as possible. Channel shift should be actively promoted for non emergency customer out of hour requirements, to allow genuine emergencies to be fast tracked to the relevant Council emergency line.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no issues in this regard to report on.

6.0 **CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 The Council's Strategic Management team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None

Elaine Zwirlein
Director of Housing

11 April 2013

Contact Us 24/7 Online or by Email

Online - You can make a payment, report a problem, find your nearest services or have your say online at your convenience 24/7.

Email or Telephone - If you have a specific enquiry please use our [A to Z](#). If you cannot find the information you require please complete an [enquiry form](#) or email customerservices@dundeecity.gov.uk or call **switchboard** on **01382 434000**.

Emergency out of hours telephone numbers are listed below.

24 Hours Automated Payment Line (using debit/credit card) - Call 0845 6026943 (calls charged at local rates) to pay rent, council tax, consolidated debt, non domestic rates, housing benefit overpayment, council invoices and parking penalty charge notices.

In Writing - Customer Services Team, Dundee House, 50 North Lindsay Street, Dundee, DD1 1QE

Deaf / Hard of Hearing - Text 078600 22 8 99

Fax - 01382 434666

Visit Us - Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 8.30am - 5pm and Wed 9.30am - 5pm		
All Enquiries	Housing & Council Tax Enquiries	Housing & Council Tax Enquiries
Dundee House 50 North Lindsay St Dundee DD1 1QE Map Tel 01382 434000	West Housing Office 3 Sinclair Street Dundee DD2 3DA Map Housing: Tel 307301 Council Tax/Reduction/ Hsg Benefit: Tel 431205	East Housing Office 169 Pitkerro Road Dundee DD4 8ES Map Housing: Tel 307401 Council Tax/Reduction/ Hsg Benefit: Tel 431205
Out-of-Hours Emergencies after 5pm, Weekends and Public Holidays		
Child Protection (24 Hour)	01382 307999	
Adult Protection (24 Hour)	01382 434019	
Social Work Out of Hours Emergencies	01382 307964	
Antisocial Behaviour Advice (24 Hour)	0800 1693845 / 01382 307342	
Homeless Advice Line (24 Hour)	0800 6335843 / 01382 432001	
Housing Repairs / All Other Emergencies	01382 434343	
Police Non-Emergency / Night Time Noise Team	101	
Police Emergency	999	
NHS 24	08454 242424	

Severe Weather and Emergencies - Essential advice will be available from this website and local radio.

Wave 102 (102 FM)	BBC Radio Scotland (92-95 FM and 810 MW)
Radio Tay FM (96.4 and 102.8)	Radio Tay AM (1161 and 1584)

[Preparing your family for an emergency](#)

This information is provided by the [Corporate Services Department](#)

Review of Out of Hours Call Handling

Appendix 2

434000 STATS - CALLS REC'D - SUN 1ST APRIL 17:00 TO WED 18TH APRIL 2012 8:30

		Sun 1,8,15 (3 nights)	Mon 2,9,16 (3 nights)	Tue 3,10,17 (3 nights)	Wed 4,11 (2 nights)	Thu 5,12 (2 nights)	Fri 6,13 (2 nights)	Sat 7,14 (2 nights)	Total Calls			
Time	Time									Time	Time	
00:00	00:30	2	2	1		1		1	7	00:00	00:30	
00:30	01:00	2	1	4	1			5	14	00:30	01:00	
01:00	01:30		2	1				1	5	01:00	01:30	
01:30	02:00		2	1		1		1	7	01:30	02:00	
02:00	02:30								0	02:00	02:30	
02:30	03:00		3	2	2	1			8	02:30	03:00	
03:00	03:30			1	1				2	03:00	03:30	
03:30	04:00			1	1	1			3	03:30	04:00	
04:00	04:30		2	1		1			4	04:00	04:30	
04:30	05:00				3	1	3		7	04:30	05:00	
05:00	05:30			1		2			3	05:00	05:30	
05:30	06:00	1		2	2	1			6	05:30	06:00	
06:00	06:30		1	2	3	2	3	2	13	06:00	06:30	
06:30	07:00		1	6	2	4	1	1	15	06:30	07:00	
07:00	07:30	2	10	7	8	2	4	1	34	07:00	07:30	
07:30	08:00		3	4	2	4	3	3	19	07:30	08:00	
08:00	08:30		29	26	24	19	14		112	08:00	08:30	
17:00	17:30	8	43	70	38	21	24	1	205	17:00	17:30	
17:30	18:00	1	14	26	18	12	13	2	86	17:30	18:00	
18:00	18:30	6	17	15	12	9	6	4	69	18:00	18:30	
18:30	19:00	3	18	10	9	8	5	4	57	18:30	19:00	
19:00	19:30	6	16	15	7	6	2	5	57	19:00	19:30	
19:30	20:00	2	13	8	6	5	5	2	41	19:30	20:00	
20:00	20:30	1	7	5	9	3	1	2	28	20:00	20:30	
20:30	21:00	4	3	4	3	5			19	20:30	21:00	
21:00	21:30	3	4	1	1	1	1	3	14	21:00	21:30	
21:30	22:00	4	2	2	6	1	1		16	21:30	22:00	
22:00	22:30	5	4	3	1	4			17	22:00	22:30	
22:30	23:00	1		1	1	1	3		7	22:30	23:00	
23:00	23:30	1	3	4	3	1		3	15	23:00	23:30	
23:30	00:00	1	1	5	2			2	11	23:30	00:00	
									901	TOTAL CALLS		
		Divided by 17 nights = aver calls per night between 17:00 and 8:30								53		

Out of Hours Telephone Script Message

434000 Switchboard and 434800 Customer Services

Appendix 3

Welcome to Dundee City Council OUT OF HOUR'S SERVICE, we offer a limited out of hours' service; FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY, PRESS 9 or to use our 24 hour automated telephone payment service press 1.

Many services are available online 24/7, please visit www.dundeeccity.gov.uk to make a payment, report a problem, find your nearest services or have your say.

Customer Services is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm except Wednesday, when it is open 9.30am to 5pm.

Please call back during opening hours or visit www.dundeeccity.gov.uk. Thank you for calling Dundee City Council

(If customer still on line, repeat the above 4 paragraphs again)

[Message if customer chooses option 9]

We have 4 emergency services, if you know the option number; please press it now, or at any time during the call

Press 1 for Child Protection, Adult Protection or Social Work Out of Hours' Emergencies

[Message if customer chooses option 1]

Press 1 for Dundee's Child Protection Line

Press 2 for Dundee's Adult Protection Line

Press 3 for any other social work emergency

Press 2 for Antisocial Behaviour 24 Hour Advice Line

Press 3 for Homeless 24 Hour Advice Line

Press 4 for Housing Repair Emergencies and All Other Emergencies

REPEAT OPTIONS 1 TO 4

Customer Services is open Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm except Wednesday, when it is open 9.30am to 5pm. Alternatively, please visit our web site www.dundeeccity.gov.uk to make a payment, report a problem, find your nearest services or have your say online at your convenience 24/7.

Please call back during opening hours or visit www.dundeeccity.gov.uk. Thank you for calling Dundee City Council

(If customer is still on the line repeat first 4 paragraphs in black, at top of page)

IF CUSTOMER DOES NOT HANG UP OR CHOOSE AN OPTION, DIVERT CALL TO OUT OF HOURS PROVIDER (WELLGATE LIBRARY/434343)