

Scottish Consumer Council

Call for Improvement: the experience of members of the public in contacting their local NHS

1. All NHS boards should have a policy and strategy about how they handle enquiries from members of the public

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
1.1	Policy on NHS Lanarkshire's approach to improving the enquirer experience to be developed	<p>Outline draft prepared reflecting interface with organisational values, development of customer care standards, monitoring arrangements.</p> <p>To be further developed to include Customer Care Standards (see section 4). First draft to be based on identified good practice. Newly published British Institute Standards ordered and NHSL Standards to be further developed once these have been received.</p> <p>Final draft to go to the Area Partnership Forum for endorsement and be linked with an implementation plan which includes training needs.</p>	<p>Completed August 07</p> <p>First draft September 07</p> <p>tbc</p>	<p>Shona Welton</p> <p>Shona Welton/ Christine McNeill</p>

2. NHS boards must ensure that they have clear contact information in the phone book, on the board website and in any other publicity

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
2.1	NHSL Communications Department to take over responsibility for maintaining external phone directories	NHSL Communications Department to liaise closely with Property and Support Services to ensure internal and external directories match	Completed August 07	Calvin Brown

2.2	<p>BT Phonebook/Yellow Pages & Online Versions</p> <p><u>Phase 1:</u> Provide updated information for free listing on online version (this will automatically update free listing in next version of printed phone book)</p> <p><u>Phase 2:</u> Develop display advertising for print telephone directories in line with good practice. Cost attached and will require to be resourced.</p> <p>Website</p>	<p>BT Classified listing updated – from supplied info & partially from website. BT A-Z, yell.com and Thomson online to be updated –contact information has been collated from NHSL website and is currently being checked. It will appear online within approx 5 days of submission.</p> <p>Recommended half page display adverts in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BT Clyde Valley and Central Scotland/Trossachs (for Cumbernauld) versions (costs approx £1,000 per version) • Yellow Pages Glasgow South and Glasgow North (for Cumbernauld) versions (costs approx £4,000 per version) <p>Publication dates for each of these Directories varies between January and June 08. Bookings required by end September 07 for BT Clyde Valley version. Recurring resource implications need to be addressed.</p>	<p>Completed July 07 September 07</p> <p>September 07</p>	<p>Calvin Brown Calvin Brown</p> <p>Calvin Brown</p>
2.3	<p><u>Phase 1:</u> Undertake initial update of contact information on website</p>	<p>Added additional telephone and address contact information under the ‘Contact Us’ section of the NHS Lanarkshire website</p>	<p>Completed July 07</p>	<p>Calvin Brown</p>
	<p><u>Phase 2:</u> Develop website “Contact Us” to provide additional information on who, where and how to make enquiries.</p>	<p>Reviewing good practice sites and developing ‘Contact Us’ section on this basis. Contact details on website to match phone book inserts. (Linked with Section 6 on developing enquiry service)</p>	<p>September 07</p>	<p>Calvin Brown</p>
2.4	<p>NHSL Stationery</p> <p>Ensure DDI numbers appropriately displayed on NHS letterheads.</p>	<p>To form part of customer care standards in section 1. NHSL stationery to be amended to reflect Section 6 on developing enquiry service (removing reference to Linkline)</p>	<p>October</p>	<p>Shona Welton/ Karon Hamilton</p>

3. NHS boards must ensure that they have a clear *contact us* link on the website home page

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
3.1	'Contact Us' link to be added to website homepage	Phase 1 completed. See section 2 for further development of website.	September 07	Calvin Brown

4. All NHS boards should have clear customer care standards

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
4.1	Identify good practice in customer care standards	Examples sourced.	Completed Aug 07	Shona Welton/ Christine McNeill
4.2	Develop model standards for NHSL	First draft for NHSL being developed. Newly published British Standards Institute Customer standards are being sourced and will be used to modify first draft. Standards to be approved through APF/CMT	1 st draft September 2 nd draft Sept/Oct	Shona Welton/ Christine McNeill
4.3	Develop implementation plan	Implementation plan to be drafted on basis of piloting draft standards at Beckford Street and Strathclyde with front line staff (registry/reception/secretarial). Will require to include training and performance management arrangements. Following evaluation plan will be amended to roll out to all NHSL staff with appropriate performance management arrangements in place.	Date to be confirmed	Karon Hamilton Shona Welton/ Susan Dunne

5. NHS boards should ensure that all staff whose primary responsibility is answering phone calls are properly trained in the skills necessary to meet callers' needs

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
5.1	Customer care training to be provided to identified front-line staff	Part of implementation plan (linked to section 4) Share training pack with PFI providers	tbc	Susan Dunne Bob Brown

6. All NHS boards should consider whether their current arrangements for dealing with enquiries from the general public could be handled more effectively, by changing their structures and processes for advertising their services and responding effectively to calls

	Local Action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
6.1	Review existing switchboard arrangements and provide recommendations for improvements.	<p>Review completed. Recommendation to consolidate call handling as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> External calls to Beckford Street and Strathclyde Hospital to be handled by switchboard at Monklands Hospital. (Further work required to identify any resource implications based on the level of external calls received at both sites.) Internal calls at Beckford Street and Strathclyde to be serviced by Firstport Telephone Directory which will be updated for all staff at Strathclyde & Beckford St prior to switchboard change. 	<p>August 07 Tbc</p> <p>October</p>	<p>NHSL SCC Group Bob Brown/Robin Wright</p> <p>K Hamilton/B McAlister</p>
6.2	Switchboard call response standards to be confirmed	<p>Will form part of Customer Care Standards (section 2). Ensure that PFI switchboards and NHSL switchboard operating to similar standards.</p>		Bob Brown
6.3	Improve and update internal staff directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IM&T with HR developing a central self-service directory on Firsport (intranet) which will include telephone numbers, locations, job titles of staff and departments. It will be available on FirstPort intranet and the Outlook e-mail address book. Communications plan to be developed around staff use and updating responsibilities of the new staff directory. Identify potential for NHSL switchboard operators, including the PFI hospitals, to have access to Firsport PFI providers currently update the internal staff directories every six months. Identify arrangements in Monklands. Identify overall NHSL responsibility for maintaining the staff directory. 	<p>October</p> <p>Tbc</p> <p>Tbc</p> <p>tbc</p>	<p>Barry McAlister</p> <p>Karon Hamilton</p> <p>Bob Brown</p> <p>Bob Brown</p>

6.4	<p>Consider the costs and future role of the Linkline service and provide recommendations</p>	<p>Undertake review of Linkline Service.</p> <p>Recommendation based on need to differentiate call handling from general call enquiries is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NHSL to establish general enquiry line using Linkline staff and funding. • Single number to be posted on website and in external directories. (This could be 281313 Beckford St general number). Call would be routed through Monklands switchboard and if call for named person it would be appropriately transferred. General enquiries would be passed to Linkline staff who would work to an agreed protocol in line with the Customer Care Standards. • Management of the enquiry line would require further exploration. It should sit with departments with relevant expertise in handling calls to ensure appropriate supervision such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complaints Department Monklands ○ Communications Department, Strathclyde • The enquiry line would respond to email general enquiries and further communication methods such as texting as these develop. • Opportunity exists for general service to accommodate call handling for other services that NHSL currently outsources. <p>Resource issues require to be resolved.</p>	<p>Completed Aug 07</p> <p>tbc</p> <p>Tbc</p> <p>Tbc</p>	<p>Karon Hamilton</p>
6.5	<p>Review role of Reception Staff</p>	<p>Recommendation is that reception staff not involved in call handling for enquiries and should be focussed on providing front-of-house services in line with the customer care standards.</p>		

7. The handling of enquiries from members of the public by email or by using web-based forms should be included as an integral part of each board's strategy. Boards should have a mechanism for reviewing the effectiveness of communications from members of the public by email or using web-based forms, particularly to check that these channels are working properly

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
7.1	Performance Management arrangements to be developed as part of implementation plan of Customer Care Policy and Standards.	Linked to section 1 & 4		
7.2	Improve effectiveness of web-based forms and monitoring of responses.	Resolved technical issue with web-based forms, which were being directed to faulty e-mail address.	Completed	Calvin Brown
		Put in place tighter monitoring of responses to web-based forms by Communications Department	Completed	Calvin Brown
		Phase 1 - additional web-based forms and guidance in 'Contact Us' section of NHSL website to categorise enquiries – General, Freedom of Information, Careers and Vacancies and medical advice enquiries – so they are directed appropriately.	Completed	Calvin Brown
		Phase 2 – further development as per Section 2. Added additional guidance in Contact Us section to direct people seeking medical advice to the appropriate source	September 07	Calvin Brown

8. Boards should ensure that email addresses for general enquiries look appropriate for that type of contact

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
8.1	Review web-based enquiry form and provide recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per section 2 and 7 – additional sections added via web-based forms. Recommendation that general enquiry email address established and publicised as part of General Enquiry (Linkline) service (section 6) 	Completed tbc	Calvin Brown Subject to CMT approval of Section 6

9. NHS Boards should ensure that the appropriate staff are effectively informed about new policy developments or topics of current interest, and about who can most effectively respond to enquiries in these areas.

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
9.1	Proposals to deliver this recommendation to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policies/current interest items reported by Communications Department through Pulse and/or weekly briefing Staff to be directed to Firstport (intranet) site 	Continuous Launch of Firstport tbc	Karon Hamilton Karon Hamilton (as part of comms plan for launch)

10. Staff working on switchboards, as well as all staff who are likely to be in direct contact with members of the public in handling enquiries, should receive equality and diversity training

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
10.1	Staff training on Customer Care Standards to include equality and diversity	Linked to Sections 5 and 4.	tbc	Susan Dunne

11. Boards should ensure that there are alternative ways for people to contact the board when they are looking for information or advice, for example by textphone, or texting an SMS message

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
11.1	Review good practice sources and identify proposals for implementation in NHSL	Review underway and recommendations to be developed	tbc	Calvin Brown

12. Boards should ensure that front-line staff are aware of the information resources which exist which may be useful in answering queries from members of the public, particularly the information produced for the NHS by Health Rights Information Scotland

	Local action	Progress/Next Steps	Time-scale	Lead
12.1	Proposal to deliver this recommendation to be developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal that information packs be developed for switchboard operators and General Enquiry line (subject to approval). General Enquiry Line would take responsibility for maintaining information sources. • Switchboard operators to have access to Firsport (intranet) site. 	tbc	Tbc Bob Brown/Robin Wright