

KLOEs represent sets of questions and statements around either service or judgement specific issues which provide consistent criteria for assessing and measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of services. These KLOEs are designed to provide inspectors, inspected bodies and others with a framework through which to view and assess services. In inspections, service specific KLOEs are used as a basis for assessing Judgement One on ‘How good is the service?’.

Each KLOE contains overarching themes on access, diversity and value for money. The rest of the KLOE is concerned with the detail of the specific service area being assessed or inspected.

There is a separate KLOE for Judgement Two of inspections on ‘What are the prospects for improvement?’ This KLOE covers the assessments made on visions and ambitions, track record, ability to learn, quality and effectiveness of plans, prioritisation, capacity to deliver improvements and performance management.

The customer access KLOE covers the following areas;

- ◆ *How easy is it to access services?***
- ◆ *Is the council using e-government to support access to services?***
- ◆ *How is the service using customers’ feedback and complaints to improve service quality?***
- ◆ *How is the council improving customer access through partnership working?***

KEY LINE OF ENQUIRY (KLOE)	AN ORGANISATION DELIVERING AN EXCELLENT SERVICE/Excellent prospect for improvement	AN ORGANISATION DELIVERING A FAIR SERVICE/Uncertain prospects for improvement
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- 3 -Customer Access Key Lines of Enquiry

07 July 2004

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<p>How easy is it to access services?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How easy is it for customers to contact the council? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of customer satisfaction with access to council services from all parts of the community. • Customers can contact the council easily in person, via the internet, e-mail or by telephone for example using a single number or freephone. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average level of customer satisfaction with access to council services. Lower level of satisfaction among some parts of the community. • Customer contact by telephone, in person or via the internet is inconsistent. Opening hours are confusing
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<p>Is the council using e-government to support access to services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council uses customer needs and aspirations and anticipated customer access improvements to prioritise its investment in e-government. • The council is effectively using e-government to improve consultation with local people and obtain feedback from users. • The council is meeting or exceeding e-government targets. • The council's approach to customer access addresses risks of social exclusion arising from its approach to e-government. • The council is actively promoting its website as a community resource. It is well-signposted on council literature and the website itself signposts further information sources. • The council's website is of good quality, is easy to use and enables local people to access a range of council services. • Information on the website is up to date, is responsive to community needs or concerns and is clearly presented using plain language with information accessible in alternative formats. • Customer access points are well located in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council's investment in e-government does not systematically reflect intelligence about customer needs and aspirations and an understanding of customer access improvements. • The council is not using e-government effectively to improve consultation with local people and obtain feedback from users. • The council is making good progress on most e-government targets and there are robust plans in place to meet remaining targets. • The council's approach to customer access and e-government does not demonstrate a clear awareness of the potential risks of social exclusion. • The council's website provides a basic level of information and does not allow local people to access the full range of council services. • The council does not publicise the website well and it does not always signpost further information sources. • Information on the website is often out of date or does not reflect current community needs or concerns and does not always use plain language. • There are insufficient or poorly located customer access points in the area.

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<p>How is the council using customers' feedback and complaints to improve service quality?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council is actively monitoring the quality of experience of people who access the service including those of target groups or communities of interest. • The council is using feedback and complaints in a systematic way to improve the accessibility and quality of the service • The council is sharing learning from feedback and complaints between services. • The council has a clear complaints procedure and complaints are dealt with in a timely and appropriate way. • A variety of methods and opportunities are available to consult and obtain feedback from users. • Councillors are actively involved in monitoring complaints and are using learning to drive improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council is not actively monitoring the quality of experience of people who access the service or the level of information gathered is very basic and does not allow the council to identify or respond to community needs. • The council is using feedback and complaints in a limited way. There are some examples of the council using information to improve the accessibility and quality of the service at a service level. • The council does not have a systematic approach to sharing learning from feedback and complaints between services. • The council has a complaints procedure. Complaints are generally dealt with satisfactorily. • Protocols for complaints from councillors are not well-developed or are inconsistently applied. • The service is obtaining feedback from users on an ad hoc basis but it is not proactively consulting or obtaining views of non-users. • Councillors are not routinely involved in monitoring complaints.

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How is the council improving customer access through partnership working?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is working across traditional service boundaries to deliver a more accessible and customer-focussed service The council is sharing information and consultation with internal and external partners to help improve services and reduce duplication for example through the local strategic partnership The council is improving customer access by collaborative working with partners in both the public and private sector for example to share knowledge and skills, identify best practice or make best use of joint assets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council is not consistently working across traditional service boundaries. The council is sharing information with internal partners but does so only to a limited extent with external partners. The council is rarely working collaboratively with partners in both the public and private sector to share knowledge and skills, identify best practice or make best use of joint assets
Criteria for judgement	Prospects for improvement – Ownership of problems and willingness to change?	
1.1 Members and top managers committed to continuous improvement	<p>Council has clear access to service aims in its corporate/community strategy. Meeting these through a range of cross-cutting initiatives across all service areas.</p> <p>A strong commitment to raising access to services awareness is evident in all the Council's activities. Users and partners confirm that programmes for improving access to services are highly effective</p>	<p>Council is developing access to service aims in its corporate/community strategy. A range of access to services initiatives underway, but few links between service areas. May react slowly to changing legislation, with no formal system in place to stay abreast of changes.</p>
1.2 Willing to take (and stick to) tough decisions and tackle difficult problems	<p>Several significant examples of recent major decisions where policies have been applied robustly and consistently in difficult circumstances. Users & partners confirm the robust framework for sustainable development within the council.</p>	<p>Recent major decisions show a mixed picture – with some robust application of policies in difficult circumstances Framework for sustainable development in access to services may be unclear.</p>

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1.3 Welcome external and internal challenge and open about performance and problems	Well-communicated monitoring data shows strong progress against published standards and indicators. Users and partners confirm that decision-making processes are open and transparent – and respond positively to external challenge. Rigorous and challenging use of benchmarking (e.g. against the best, against private sector). Council can demonstrate that it is rapidly improving access to services.	Published standards in place for some access to service areas, with some published performance figures against those standards. Decision-making processes unresponsive to user demands in some areas – can be difficult to access and challenge effectively. Sporadic and partial use of benchmarking, largely against very ‘similar’ councils. Council is in the process of identifying its own access to service improvements and areas of risk.
	Proven capacity?	.
2.1 Clear and consistent priorities to drive performance	Partners agree that corporate plans, relevant service plans and strategies are highly integrated and share a strong vision for the improvement of quality of life, with full development of relevant cross-cutting themes and in particular across all council services. Service plans identify improvements to access to services	The corporate plans, service plans and strategies are largely in place – but some need updating or replacing. Some evidence that the various plans and strategies are not fully integrated and do not fully consider access to services...
2.2 Know what matters most to local people	Users and partners confirm that key strategies closely reflect their priorities in improving access to public services. Clearly address problems in a user-focused way. Customer feedback is used to drive continuous improvement in dialogue with users & partners. Users confirm that staff are readily accessible and consistently provide high quality advice which meets their needs.	Inconsistent support from users and partners for the approved key strategies in improving access to services. Some integration of service silos to improve user focus/access – but further work required. Service and committee/ public meeting arrangements are reasonable/accessible, with few complaints, but may not always be well communicated and may be inconsistently applied. Customer feedback may be encouraged but inconsistent use of its findings to improve customer access and ensure service delivery is user focused.. Interested parties may sometimes find it difficult to secure timely information.
2.3 Concentrate efforts in proportion to priorities	Ongoing and programmed action plans are already delivering against most key priorities to improve access to services. These action plans are effectively managed and proceeding according to programme.	Several major priorities can be linked to ongoing and programmed action plans. There may have been some delays in implementation, but some benefits are still being achieved.

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2.4 Focus on achieving impact in priority areas	Action plans are fully funded and are already starting to deliver significant impacts against most key priorities. Recent strong track record of improvement against most customer satisfaction BVPI's. A package of local indicators is also in place and these confirm improvements in accessing services.	Some relevant action plans are adequately funded – others remain uncertain. Inconsistent track record showing partial or sporadic improvement against some customer satisfaction BVPI's – with little or no improvement against others. The available local indicators fail to provide convincing evidence of consistent improvement in recent years.
	The capacity and systems to deliver performance and improvement	
3.1 Sound performance management systems at the heart of access to service planning	Stretching published access to service standards are in place and well-communicated. Local targets and PI's are comprehensive in their coverage of access priorities. Comprehensive monitoring systems in place to review effectiveness of resource allocations and modify as appropriate.	Some published access to service standards/service standards are in place, supplemented by a partial range of local targets and PI's. Not all access service priority areas are covered by appropriate targets and indicators e.g. coverage of hard to reach groups. Limited application of monitoring systems to review effectiveness of resource allocations and service performance..
3.2 Clear lines of accountability for action	Clear, formally defined inter-departmental relationships. Management teams are highly effective and respected by staff within service functions. Action plans cascade through to individual performance targets which reflect access to services priorities.	Inter-departmental relationships are generally positive. Management teams are broadly effective and respected by staff within service functions. Action plans to improve access may not be effectively linked to individual performance targets.
3.3 Able to move people and money to tackle the most important problems facing the Council and local people	Evidence that corporate/ Service Plans and programmes are adequately resourced to achieve stretching targets. Recent evidence of investment leading to marked service improvements with a very significant impact on access to services.	Unclear how some aspects of the Corporate/ Service Plans and programmes are to be adequately resourced. Mixed evidence of the impact of recent investment in access to service improvements.

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3.4 The skills to build effective partnerships with other organisations to meet shared objectives	Highly effective joint working between councils and other partners to deliver shared goals – confirmed by partner authorities and other public sector organisations. Where appropriate private sector partners also confirm highly effective council approach. Where appropriate a flexible approach to joint contracts/working.	Some effective joint working between councils and other partners to deliver shared goals – but further development required. Public/Private sector partners offer mixed opinions on council approach. The council is considering a flexible approach to deliver services in partnership.
	The integration of Best Value principles into day-to-day management	
4.1 Improvement is seen as the day job	Recent track record of strong and sustained improvement in customer accessible services (e.g. one stop shops –joint working with other public/private sector organisation/ accessible leisure facilities etc with clear links to continuing service review processes (including BV).	Mixed track record of recent performance in customer-facing services accessible services (e.g. Social care. Leisure. Evidence of some patchy improvement – but possibly some areas of failure too.
4.2 Best value is integrated with other council performance management processes – not treated as an add-on	Strong performance management systems are used consistently to drive continuing improvement – with clear evidence of extensive and marked benefits to service users	. Performance management systems are used to drive improvement in some areas – but not consistently over time and in all customer access areas.