



the first choice
for organisational improvement

Case Study: **LACORS**



LACORS Executive Director Derek Allen and the LACORS Customer Service Excellence working group.

About the organisation

Name: LACORS (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services)
Size: 38 employees
Industry Sector: Local government

LACORS is a local government central body working with, and on behalf of, the UK's 468 local authorities. It facilitates good practice and consistency in the delivery of regulatory services to local communities. The organisation lobbies central government on behalf of local authorities to ensure that legislation and government policy works 'on the ground' when put into practice.

Policy areas covered include alcohol and public entertainment licensing; animal welfare; civil partnerships and citizenship; environment protection; food safety; gambling reform; health and safety at work; private sector housing; and trading standards.

Its customers include local authority heads of regulatory services, front-line officers, councillors and advisory groups which include a broad range of stakeholders.

Why choose the Customer Service Excellence Standard?

Team leader Charlotte Meller said LACORS looked to Customer Service Excellence (CSE) to help deliver improvements in their customer care and build on staff development through Investor in People (IIP) which they achieved in 2006.

They were already working towards excellence in customer care through their development of a Customer Charter as part of the IIP. They had also begun a rolling programme of customer surveys in 2004 to test their customer focus and seek feedback. As a separate exercise over the past year, LACORS had started a review of its policy areas to ensure the evolving needs of existing customers were being met as well as identifying potential and future customers.

Charlotte commented: "With all these various strands of work going on which demonstrated our commitment to our customers, it therefore seemed sensible to commit LACORS to achieving the nationally recognised Customer Service Excellence."

**CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE**



Implementation

In preparing for the Standard, LACORS set up a working group of staff to look at the criterion and identify any changes or improvements needed within existing practices and systems.

Charlotte, who led this working group, said the assessment and report identified a few partial compliances in areas where they already knew there was room for improvement, at the same time suggesting ways to make the necessary changes to meet the Standard in full. "The assessor made suggestions which would not be too burdensome on staff or distract them from supporting our customers," she said.

After receiving the CSE plaque and certificate in July 2008, they began sharing their success with customers via their website and newsletter as well as in the local government media.

What benefits have been gained?

"Achieving the Standard was confirmation and recognition that we are doing what we should be doing," Executive Director Derek Allen commented. "It reflected - through proper, independent and robust assessment - that we are quite simply an extremely good small organisation that delivers excellence to our customers and stakeholders.

"This was effectively tested with staff, a wide range of key stakeholders and, most importantly, our local authority colleagues." He added: "Our own in depth customer satisfaction surveys, along with projects such as 'leading by listening,' show we not only ask the right questions but we listen, respond and adapt to meet our customers' needs."

Derek commented "This very thorough, in depth and challenging assessment has concluded that we are able to clearly demonstrate that we have a customer-focused approach in all parts of our delivery and we are placing customer satisfaction at the centre of our operation."

Assessor Leon Winston highlighted:

"There is a definite 'can do' corporate culture with an emphasis on segmentation of customer groups within this organisation. Great care is taken to ensure both staff and customers, together, shape future planning and policy development."

