



the first choice
for organisational improvement

Case Study:

University of Huddersfield Library Services



About the organisation

Name: The University of Huddersfield
Library Services
Size: 100 employees
Industry Sector: Higher Education

The Library Services, including Student IT Support and the University Archives, are based within the University's new Student Centre on the Huddersfield campus. There are also modern, well equipped Learning Resource Centres at the two University Centres in Barnsley and Oldham. The University – grown out of the Young Men's Mental Improvement Society of 1841 – now has more than 22,000 students.

Why choose the Customer Service Excellence Standard?

After achieving the Charter Mark award in 2005 followed in 2007 by a successful assessment of the two Learning Resource Centres and also of the Archives and Special Collections at Huddersfield, the Library Services wanted to further advance its good customer service. When the details of the new CSE Award were launched, they recognised and welcomed the challenges offered by the new Standard and decided to work towards early achievement. They gained certification in May 2008.

Implementation

Academic Librarian Lynn Barrett said the Standard had helped the Library Services focus on identifying their different groups of customers and the ways in which they are consulted and involved.

"Our aim is to ensure that we can offer all customers – including the disadvantaged and hard-to-reach – excellent levels of service," she explained. "We value the new award as the external recognition for our policy of continuous improvement."

Sue White, Head of Library Services, said the Standard had helped them to change the focus of the service to one that is "truly customer driven." She commented: "Through consultation we have significantly increased our knowledge of the needs of our customer groups, and we have developed our service provision accordingly."

Since achieving the CSE award, the Library Services have been approached by many other University libraries for advice, leading to the organisation of a one-day workshop to share good practice.

CUSTOMER
SERVICE
EXCELLENCE



The Government Standard

What benefits have been gained?

An immediate and ongoing benefit has been the 'segmentation' of the Library Services' customers and the corresponding development of a consultation strategy. "A flow chart identifying our various customer groups, coupled with a schedule of consultation, has now enabled us to look closely at any gaps in the consultation process," Lynn explained.

"Further measurable benefits come from looking at usage statistics and investigating those groups who are reluctant library users. This helps is to find out whether there is anything we could do to make a difference."

The service has also developed new qualitative standards including a more holistic approach to monitoring rather than being data-driven, allowing them to concentrate on consultation and feedback.

Customer "journey" mapping through flowcharts is now also being used extensively to determine the customer experience – for example, the process a customer takes to renew a book. "If the flowchart is complicated, then we will assume the journey is too, and take steps to rectify it," Lynn pointed out.

Sue Frost, Pro Vice Chancellor of the University, said the achievement of the Standard was "absolutely brilliant. It is well deserved, and while I know that the service is very customer focused this reinforces it as the Standard is not easy to achieve."

Assessor Peter Oldridge highlighted:

"The service has wholeheartedly embraced the concepts of Customer Service Excellence to improve understanding of the characteristics and needs of different customer groups, including some that are traditionally hard to engage. There is an enthusiasm to ensure CSE is used as a vehicle for continuous improvement with services being customer focused and driven. The service is a worthy holder of the CSE and is already sharing expertise and experiences with other universities interested in being assessed for the Standard."

