

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CORPORATE STRATEGY AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – K.JONES

(27th November 2014)

SECTION C – MATTER FOR MONITORING

WARD(S) AFFECTED: All

CUSTOMER SERVICES, CONTACT CENTRE PERFORMANCE

Purpose of Report

To provide Members of the Scrutiny Committee with information to assist them to scrutinise the performance of the Council's Corporate Contact Centre which acts as the first point of telephone contact for the Council during its official opening hours.

Background

Customer Services has developed a balanced scorecard approach to allow managers to look at the service from the perspective of customers, staff, internal processes and finance. This helps to provide a picture of overall performance and highlights activities that need to be improved by combining both qualitative and quantitative measures. It is a means for the service to translate its vision and strategies into action which is particularly important at a time when resources are diminishing to ensure a culture of continuous improvement aligned to our service and individual standards and performance measures. This business tool has been increasingly important in recent months as workloads at the Contact Centre have increased and performance has deteriorated.

This approach has helped us to identify what factors have influenced our performance and determine the greater flexibility needed in the deployment of staff to better focus on continuous improvement and achieve efficiency savings opportunities across the service. We cannot do this alone as many factors both internal and external influence our performance. We need to secure the support of other colleagues across the Council where necessary, to improve and implement changes

envisaged effectively and efficiently. The following report card will serve to highlight the journey that the service has followed over recent months, what steps we took to help mitigate influencing factors and what is required to help stabilise performance going forward.

Appendices

None

List of Background Papers

None

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CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT CENTRE - THE QUAYS

REPORT CARD 2014/2015

Brief description of the service

The Contact Centre is the first point of contact for the Authority; dealing with telephone and email enquiries. There are 5 telephone lines covering.

1. General number (686868)
2. Sickness line(686834)
3. Welsh Line(686869)
4. Building Maintenance Repair reporting line.(686847)
5. Out of Hours Emergency Service. From 5pm to 8.30am Monday to Thursday, 4.30 to 8.30 am Friday (686868)

The former switchboard (763333) was discontinued in September 2014. This number had been replaced by the 686868 number several years ago; however callers still relied on this number to get through to the council.

Telephone calls fall in to 2 main categories

Service requests.

I.T. systems are used to log job requests which are electronically passed to the relevant service area to action.

Switchboard Calls

We operate as the main telephone transfer facility (See appendix A for Sample demand) for the Council, named individuals, services, and departments.

From April 2013 to March 2014 the Contact Centre received 241,693 calls. This demand varies due to seasonal peaks and troughs, weather conditions and service promotions. For example, during the Summer months, Recycling and Refuse calls increase due to an increase in garden waste being generated and during the winter months calls relating to severe weather issues such as flooding, drainage and gritting are prominent. (Please see appendices A-K for data relating to the number of calls, waiting times, and number of abandoned calls.)

CCTV Out of Hours

In June 2014 the Customer Services team acquired responsibility for the CCTV /Out of Hours service from the Environment directorate. Since then the members of staff who have transferred have undergone significant training and support to enable them to deliver day time Contact Centre enquiries to help maintain operational business continuity needs.

Key priorities for 2014/2015 as per Business Plan

- Employee Development Reviews were completed for all Contact Centre staff before 31/3/2014 and identified training needs have been progressed.
- Further integration of the CCTV service to the Contact Centre remit is an ongoing process and CCTV staff are continuing to receive experience and training on systems and new processes to enable them to deliver a service at the first point of contact.
- Performance Management/Competency Framework/Business Scorecard implementation. Continue to embed and maintain a culture of continuous improvement across the service.
- Utilise data capture system to provide management information to underpin decisions based on accurate and sufficient data to allow us to identify areas for improvement and also to allow in dealing with other services.
- Review demand analysis at the Contact Centre to maintain Contact Centre business continuity and to ensure delivery of an efficient service, this allows us to identify areas of improvement and to focus on these.
- Introduce additional performance measures/standards e.g. average wait times, one stop transaction end to end times.
- Call recording/coaching system for Contact Centre telephone related enquiries. To provide high quality, customer focused service and continuously improved service performance.

How are we performing?

Measure	13/14 Actual	13/14 Q1	13/14 Q2	14/15 Q1	14/15Q2	Target14/15 RAG
Financial						
% FFP savings at risk	0	0	0	0	0	0
% revenue expenditure within budget	100	100	100	100	100	100%
% preventable / value demand	Not available	Not available	Not available	Bulk collections 24% Refuse and recycle equipment ordering 42%	Bulk collections 23% Refuse and recycle equipment ordering 38% Van permits 26.%	Data capture information to be reviewed to determine reduction in preventable demand.
% savings solutions identified for future year targets	Not available	Not available	Not available	Ongoing as per ICE work plan	Ongoing as per ICE work plan	As part of council cost savings - To be determined
Customer:						
Average customer satisfaction score	90.75%	90.75%	90.75%	95.93%	95.93%	↑ +
No of complaints received	8	0	2	3	3	↓ -
No of compliments received	30	6	4	4	3	↑ +
% complaints upheld at stage 1	0	0	0	0	0	0
% complaints upheld at stage 2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Average days taken to respond – S1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Average days taken to respond -S2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Internal:						
Calls Abandoned after 5 Second wait %	12.87	11.67	15.10	22.19	18.22	↓ -
Average wait time to answer.	30	29	36	46	47	↓ -
Calls received	241963	59949	66185	60798	66630	↓ -
% callers dealt with one stop - Currently being revisited to ensure sufficient information is used to provide a precise figure in callers dealt with one stop.	24.69	23.1	26.58	25.25	19.65	↑ +
Employees:						
% staff satisfied or very satisfied with their job	–	–	–	62%	62%	↑ +
Average days lost due to sickness / FTE	1.33	0.88	0.78	0.54	1.77	2.02 ↑ +
No of staff ideas generated	5	2	0	0	0	↑ +
% of staff ideas implemented	2	1	0	0	0	↑ +
% of staff who have received a PDR in the last 12 months	100%	N/A	N/A	100%	100%	100%
% identified learning and development needs met	100%	N/A	N/A	Training started for CCTV section	Training ongoing for CCTV section	100%
Employee turnover rate due to unplanned departures	2	0	0	0	0	0

Story behind the performance

The Customer Services Contact Centre based at The Quays provides a first point of contact telephony service for the Council dealing with the switchboard function, Environment queries, sickness reporting and service related emails. There are 9.8 FTE Customer Services Officers and a Team Leader. The service was restructured in June 2014 as it acquired responsibility for the CCTV and Out Of Hours service and 8 staff from the Environment Directorate transferring across. Their training and development needs have been a priority over the Summer months to enable them to also deal with Contact Centre enquiries during official Council opening times.

First point of contact queries are inevitably wide ranging whether providing a signposting function both in and outside the organisation, providing advice and guidance, or dealing with more in depth transactions. This demand is heavily influenced by peaks and troughs experienced by sections such as Housing Benefit, Council Tax and more particularly enquiries regarding refuse and recycling changes.

Neath Port Talbot Homes has been a different organisation to the Council for over 3 years, but we continue to have calls meant for them. Consequently managers have continually worked with NPT Homes to reduce this demand to ensure we are able to give council related enquiries priority.

In the current financial climate of significant budget constraints, where demand increases as a consequence of changes in the council this will be mitigated by early and ongoing dialogue with colleagues to identify and agree where support should be prioritised to manage the customer journey and expectations.

FACTORS INFLUENCING PERFORMANCE AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO DATE

Service demand and response in the Contact Centre change on a regular and also seasonal basis being influenced by internal and external factors. We constantly monitor trends and performance to be aware of unexpected peaks and troughs and react accordingly to minimise impact and provide an effective service delivery.

1. CCTV staff/service changes

As part of the Environment Forward Financial Plan cost saving measure, In June 2014 the CCTV department closed during daytime operations and CCTV staff work their daytime shifts in the Contact Centre. As these staff operate under a somewhat erratic shift pattern their training plan was determined by this. The consequence of training 8 persons created additional time and resource from supervisors and also other team members.

2. Staff Holidays/Absences

During early Summer, Temporary agency staff were employed to ensure better business continuity as permanent staff tend to take extended leave at this time. This increased resilience and the ability to maintain performance; however, this was subsequently influenced by the introduction of the Recycle plus scheme (See point 4 below).

3.National strike 10th July 2014

A major influence on performance this quarter was particularly evident following the strike day on 10th July 2014 when a policy decision was made not to have a mop up refuse/recycling service which resulted in significant extra enquiries to the service for several weeks. (Please see appendix B.)

4. Recycle Plus Scheme

In July 2014 the Council launched its Recycle+ scheme which had a significant additional impact at a time when customers already traditionally contact the Council about refuse and recycling services and particularly regarding garden waste. Changes to routines, customer expectations and understanding resulted in unprecedented telephone demand to the Contact Centre at a time when staffing was at a minimum creating significant delays. Contact Centre staff dealt with very upset and angry customers which had an impact on morale and sickness levels.

This demand was unsustainable and unhealthy therefore the following actions were implemented in agreement with all Customer Service staff, Unison and GMB:

- An IVR(interactive voice recognition) call handling system was utilised to provide a targeted response to specific Recycle+ queries
- Weekly liaison meetings with Environment staff to promote joined up working and understanding to improve customer dealings.
- One Stop Shop staff redeployed to assist in managing the demand for an 8 week period.
- Call reporting procedures for refuse and recycling were updated to reduce time spent dealing with the initial calls.

This approach resulted in improved outcomes, reducing abandoned calls and reduced customer wait time. There is a continuing emphasis on sustaining and improving this approach where possible on an ongoing basis.

5.IT issues

To assist business continuity requirements, computer hardware and operating systems were updated over a period of weeks during July and August. Due to a number of problems experienced this created unexpected difficulties resulting in computer interruptions and downtime which affected our ability to handle the same volume of calls. These issues have since been resolved to provide more effective I.T systems therefore our ability to manage our call handling volumes increased.

6. Improved staff working practices.

Areas of improvement were identified and acted on to reduce staff time spent in dealing with complex refuse and recycling enquiries. We have regular liaison meetings with service areas to enable better joint working.

7. Review staffing Model

We are currently reviewing Contact Centre and CCTV staffing model to identify working routines needed to provide the greater flexibility required to better deploy and manage the demands placed on the service.

KEY RISKS FACING THE SERVICE

- Organisational change that impacts on demand at the first point of contact e.g. cuts or reduction in Council service provision with resulting queries and/or complaints.
- Organisational appetite/resistance to adopt alternative methods of dealing with customer enquiries e.g. Voice Recognition service.
- Staff flexibility to better resource service peaks and troughs not realised.
- Increased online service requests take up not realised.
- Lack of development of and/or interruption in IT systems provision on which improved service delivery depends.

Next key actions for 2014/2015

What	Who	By When
Review staffing model to identify working routines needed to provide the flexibility required to manage the demands placed on the service.	CS Manager and Team Leader	End of November 2014
Commence Call Coaching tool to improve Contact Centre performance and ensure consistent quality standards of service delivery.	TL's and SDO	Commencing November 2014
Monitor performance management data and demand and identify how this increases as a consequence of service changes across the Council. Ensure early and ongoing dialogue with colleagues to identify and agree where support needs to be prioritised. Promote and review impact of online transaction take up.	CS Manager, TL's	Ongoing
Explore Virtual Agent /voice recognition system and complete business case proposal to automate the first point of contact telephone response for frequently requested services.	HOS/CS Manager and I.T. HOS	End of November 2014
Revised Access to Services Strategy completed and endorsed.	HOS/CS Manager	January 2015 onwards

Appendices

Appendix A

Top call demand to the Contact Centre Quarter 2 2014.

SERVICE	July	August	September	Total
Switchboard	7269	6353	8769	22391
Recycling & van permits	5628	4849	4830	15307
Refuse & Trade Waste	1918	1376	1368	4662
Blue Badges/Bus passes	1558	1355	1538	4451
Bulks	1283	1131	1199	3613
Internal / external caller	890	727	927	2544
Waste Enforcement/ Dog Query	658	534	659	1851
Building Maintenance	464	405	679	1548
Pest Control/ EHTS	563	418	482	1463
Absence line	457	376	589	1422

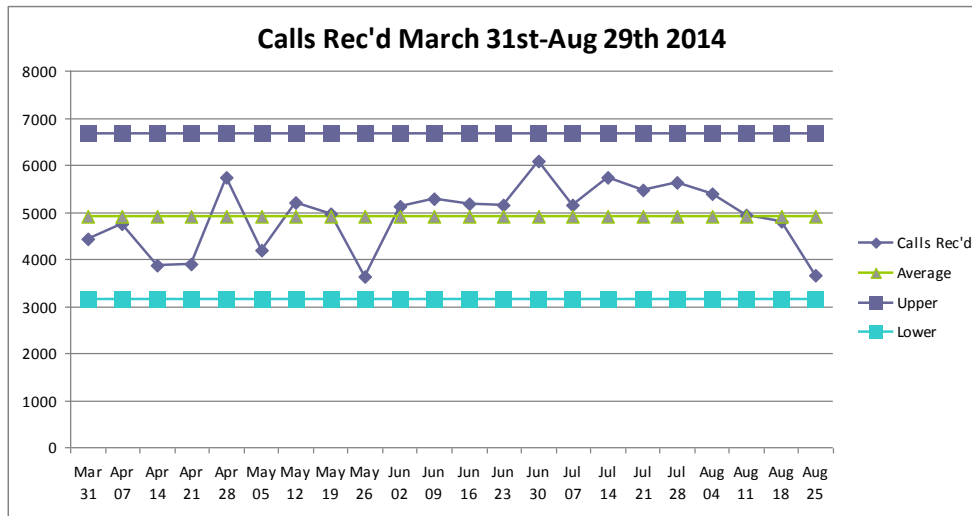
Appendix B

Impact of the 10th July National Strike 2014

	30/06/2014	07/07/2014	14/07/2014	21/07/2014	28/07/2014	04/08/2014	11/8/20104	18/08/2014
Recycling & van permits	795	1008	1382	1361	1411	1182	1218	1211
Refuse & Trade Waste	200	543	540	346	362	315	399	330

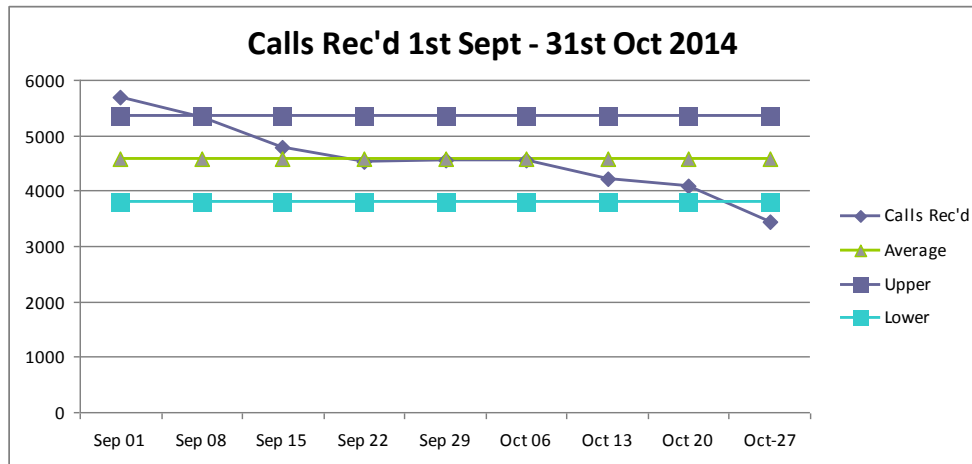
Appendix C

Calls received at the Contact Centre from w/c 31st March to 31st August 2014



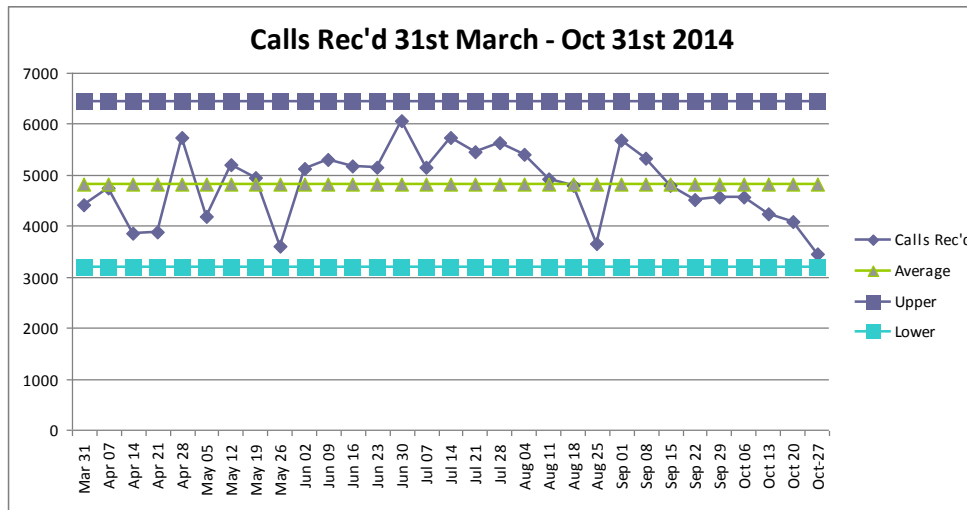
Appendix D

Calls received at the Contact Centre from 1st September to 31st October 2014



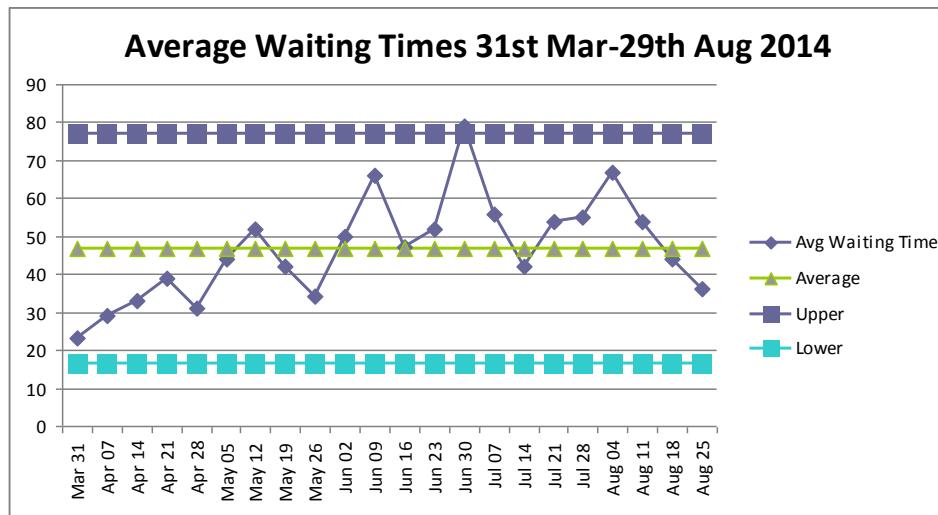
Appendix E

Calls received at the Contact Centre from w/c 31st March to October 2014



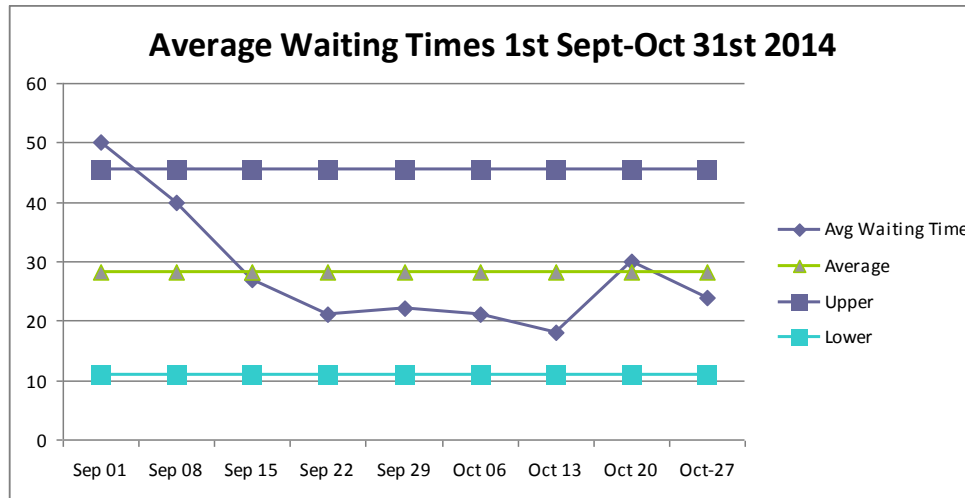
Appendix F

Average waiting times w/c 31st March to 29th August 2014



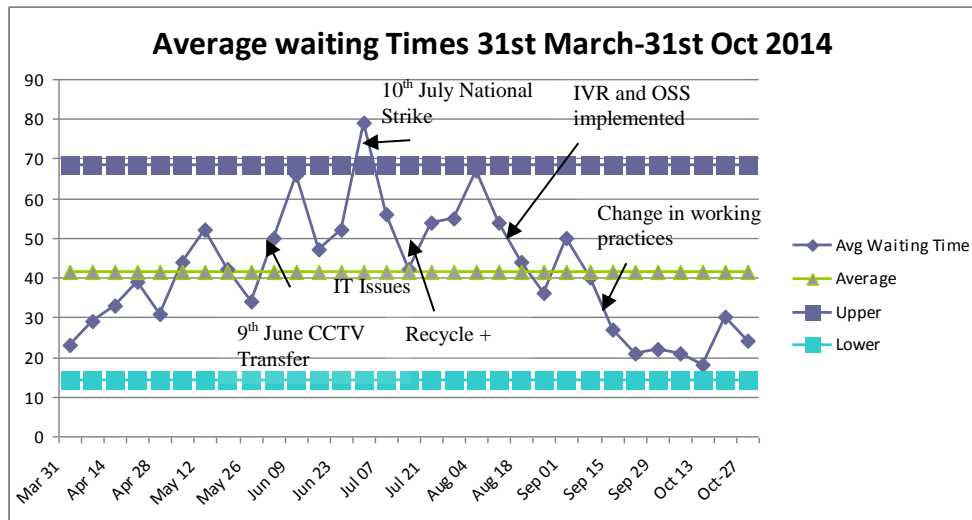
Appendix G

Average waiting times from 1st Sept – October 31st 2014



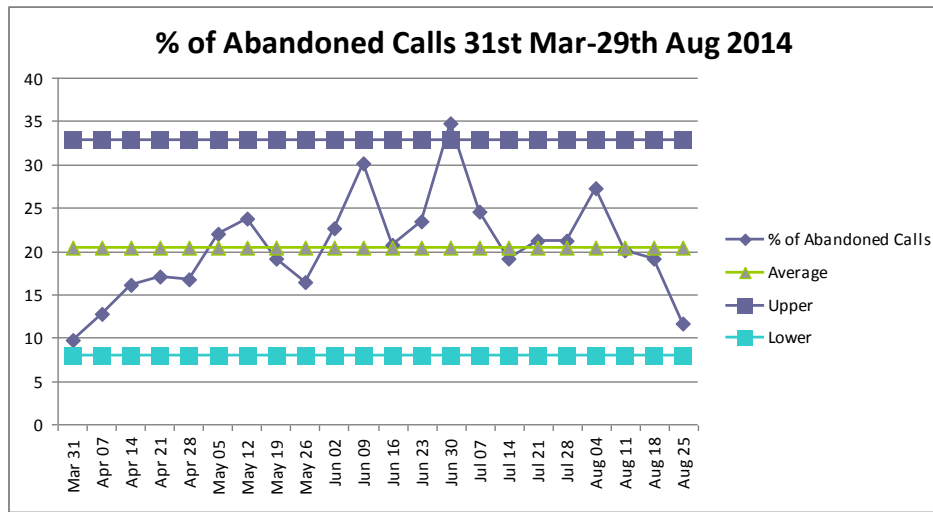
Appendix H

Average waiting times from w/c 31st March – October 31st 2014



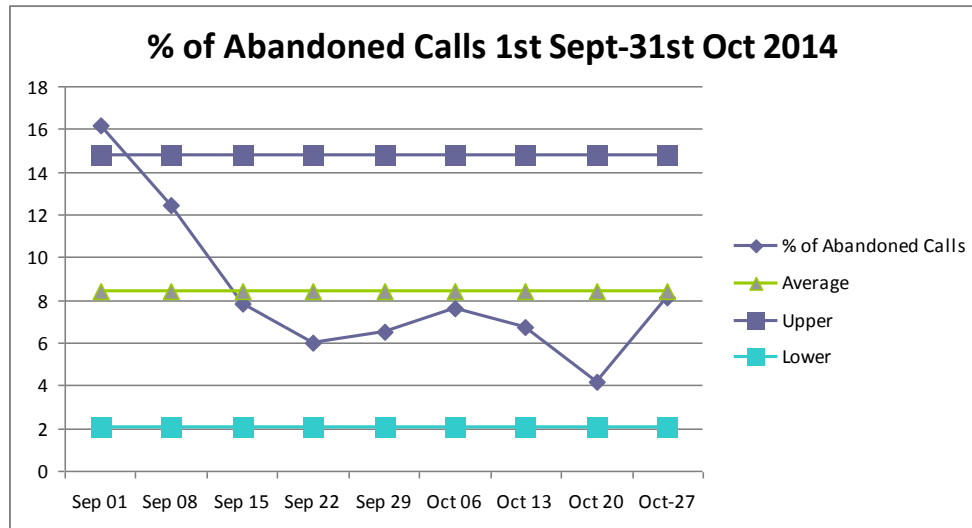
Appendix I

Percentage of abandoned calls w/c /31st March to 29th August 2014



Appendix J

Percentage of abandoned calls 1st September to 31st October 2014



Appendix K

Percentage of abandoned calls w/c 31st March to 31st October 2014

