

# **Customer Survey Results December 2010 – Feedback on updated benefit proof request letters**

## **Background**

Following the results of a Council Tax and Benefits calls analysis in Nov 2009 it was identified that the majority of avoidable calls for benefit enquires were:

The customer didn't understand the letter **41%**

Unnecessary clarification **34%**

Advisers also identified that we were getting a lot of calls from customers who didn't understand the benefit proof request letters.

To reduce the number of repeat calls coming through, Customer Service improved and simplified the three most common proof request letters:

- 1. Child's Change of Circumstance**
- 2. Change of Income**
- 3. Change of Address**

The improved proof request letters were sent to customers from 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010. We contacted over 50 customers who received one of these improved letters and **21** customers agreed to complete the survey.

## **The survey measured the following improvements made to the letters:**

- Satisfaction with the types of proofs they were asked to provide
- Understanding of why the proofs were needed
- Ability to gather the required information and complete the process without the need to call the council

Customers were asked to rate their satisfaction using a scale of 1 to 5.

**1** being poor, **2** being below average, **3** being average, **4** being good and **5** being excellent

## **Key Highlights**

- Overall **86%** of customers said the proof letters were very easy to understand
- Overall **76%** of customers were very satisfied with the types of proof requests asked for in the letters

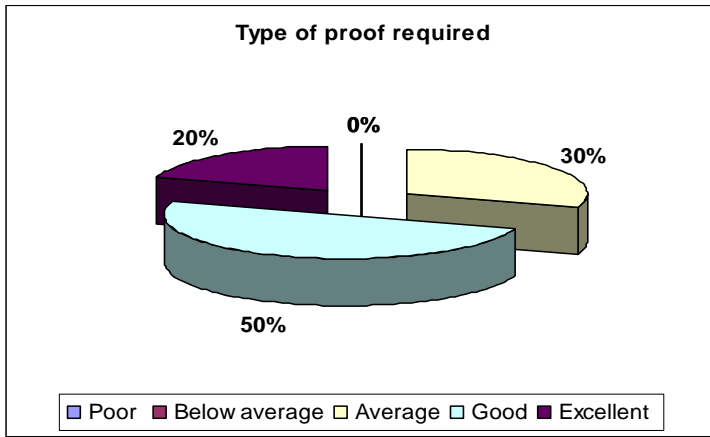
## **Survey results**

### **1. Child's Change of Circumstances**

10 customers were successfully surveyed

#### **How satisfied were you with the types of proofs required in the letter?**

**70%** of customers were very satisfied with the types of proofs they were asked for in the letter rating this either excellent (**20%**) or good (**50%**). The remaining **30%** rated this as Average

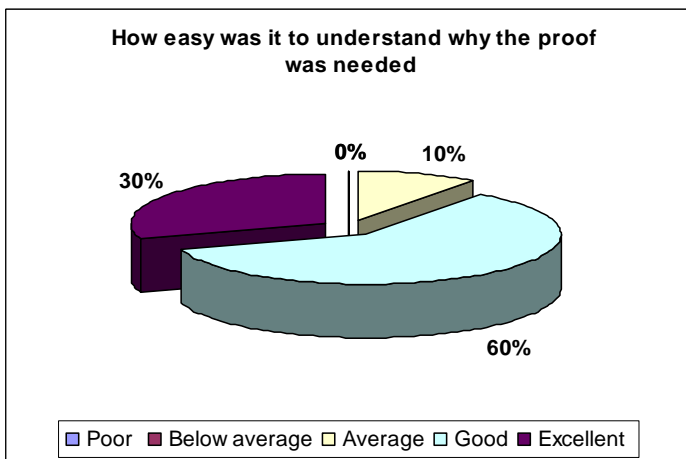


Reason for Average rating included:

- There was no mention of an up-to-date bank statement being acceptable proof for a child's change of circumstance on the letter, but it is.

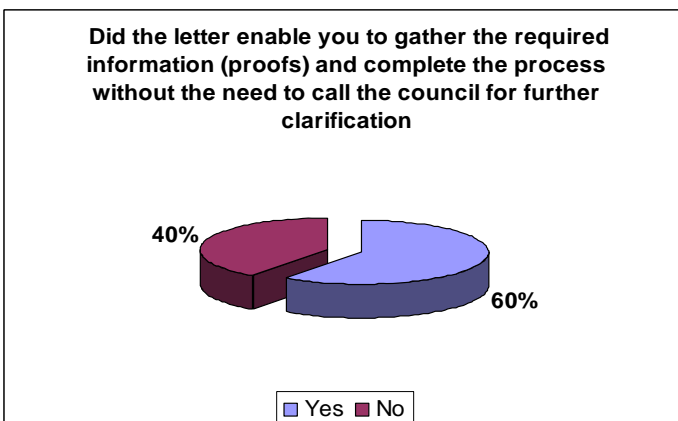
**How easy was it to understand why the proofs were needed?**

**90%** of customers said that it was easy to understand why the proofs were required rating the letter as excellent (**30%**) or good (**60%**). The remaining **10%** said it was average



**Did the letter enable you to gather the required information and complete the process without the need to call the council?**

**60%** of our customers said that they did not need to contact the council again for further clarification. However, nearly half (**40%**) did contact the council for further clarification.



Reasons given for having to contact the council for further clarification included:

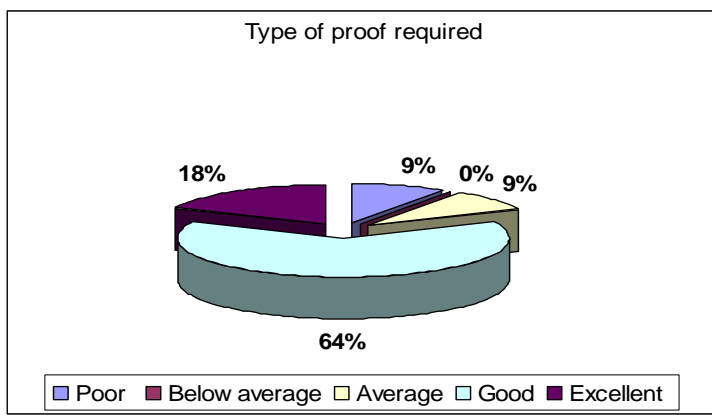
- Incorrect name of child on letter
- Customer had recently completed a form received by the Child Benefit Agency and wanted to check if she had to respond to the child's change of circumstance form as well
- Customer had recently received a Benefits Review Form and wanted to check if she had to respond to the child's change of circumstance letter as well.

## 2. Change of Income

11 customers were successfully surveyed

### How satisfied were you with the types of proof required to provide?

**82%** of customers were very satisfied with the types of proofs they were asked for in the letter rating this either excellent (**18%**) or good (**64%**). **9%** said average and a further **9%** rated it as poor.

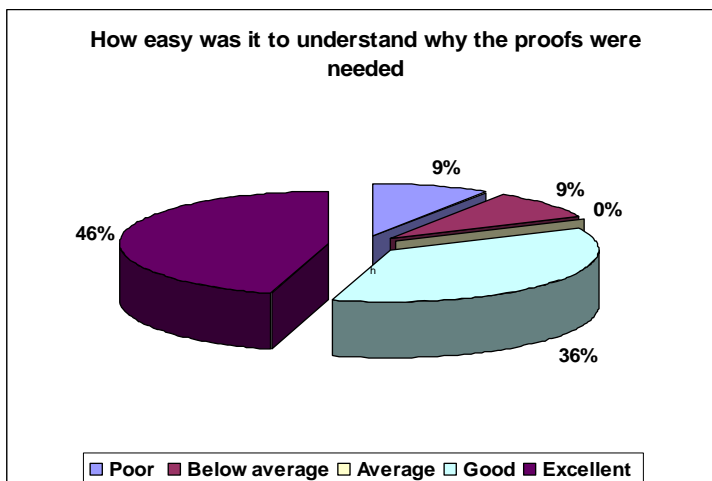


Reason for average or poor rating included:

- Wrong letter being sent out
- Customer said the letter was unnecessary as they had changed benefits (from JSA To ESA) and there were no changes to their circumstances

### How easy was it to understand why the proofs were needed?

**81%** of customers said that it was easy to understand why the proofs were required rating the letter as excellent (**46%**) or good (**36%**). **18%** said it was below average (**9%**) or poor (**9%**)

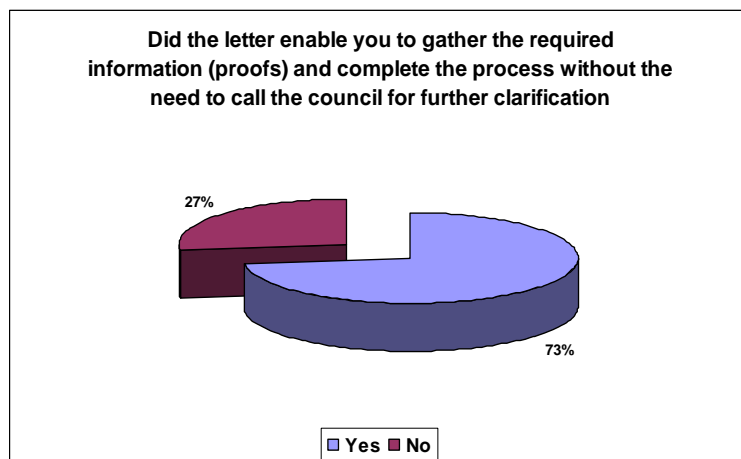


Reason for below average or poor rating included:

- Didn't think the proof letter was correct as wife was returning to work after maternity leave
- DWP had not informed the customer of a change in her income support and therefore wasn't expecting this letter

### **Did the letter enable you to gather the required information and complete the process without the need to call the council?**

**73%** of customers said they did not need to contact the council again for further clarification. However **27%** of customers said they did need to contact the council for further clarification



### **3. Change of Address**

No customers wanted to be surveyed

#### **Recommendations for improvements:**

- Ensure correct names and spelling of names are on the letters
- Ensure the correct proof request letters are sent to the customer or adapt current letters to make them less generic.
- Add bank statements as an option on the child's change of circumstances proof request letter, with a brief explanation of what it can be used for

#### **Equalities data**

Out of the 21 customer who took part in the survey, 16 completed equalities monitoring data and 5 declined overall. Detailed results are listed below.

The majority of customers surveyed were female **69%** and in the middle age range between 31 and 49 (**75%**) The majority were White British (**56%**) and Christian (**63%**)

#### **Gender**

Gender	Percentage
Female	69%
Male	31%

## Age

Age	Percentage
Under 16	0%
16-30	6%
31-49	75%
50-64	19%
Over 65	0%

## Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Percentage

<b>White</b>	
British	56%
Irish	0%
Eastern European	6%
Other	0%
<b>Mixed</b>	
White and Black Caribbean	0%
White and Black African	6%
White and Asian	0%
Other	0%
<b>Asian / Asian British</b>	
Indian	0%
Pakistani	0%
Bangladeshi	6%
Afghan	0%
Other	6%
<b>Black / Black British</b>	
Caribbean	0%
African	6%
Other	0%
<b>Other Ethnic Background</b>	
Chinese	0%
Vietnamese	0%
Middle Eastern	0%
Gypsy/Traveller/Romany	0%
Other	13%

## Disability

Disability	Percentage
None	88%
Physical	6%
Sensory	0%
Mental health	0%

Learning disability/difficulty	0%
Long standing illness or health condition	0%
Other	6%

### **Religion**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Christian	56%
Buddhist	0%
Hindu	0%
Jewish	0%
Muslim	25%
Sikh	0%
No Faith	13%
Other	0%

### **English First Language**

<b>English first language</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	56%
No	44%