

Major Customer Services Initiative at City Hall.

Galway City Council has launched a new Customer Services Centre significantly improving response times and services provided to our customers, while at the same time driving internal efficiencies in how those services are provided.

Galway City Council serves 72,000 people and has in the region of 450 staff. A dedicated project team carried out a review of customer driven processes in City Hall and this showed 80% of our customers prefer to engage with the City Council by telephone rather than in person or via online services. This prompted Galway City Council to launch a Customer Service Centre to improve its customer service by taking a centralised approach to the delivery of services via Call Centre, Customer Service Desk and Website.

One of the key elements for managing interaction with Customers was the establishment of a new Call Centre which provides a single point of contact for all customers calling Galway City Council. The Call Centre currently handles in the region of **7,000** calls a month from 9am to 5pm, Monday through to Friday. **99% of all calls are answered within 6 seconds and the average call handling time is 1 minute 5 seconds.**

Galway City Council **has also established an ‘Out of Hours’ service** which ensures that all calls outside of office hours, including weekends, are dealt with by a customer service representative.

Members of the public calling City Hall can now be confident that a member of the Customer Service Team will be on hand to provide improved access to a wide range of Council Services. These include Household Bulky Goods Collection Service, National Spring Clean, Bin Collection, Recycling Queries, Pay & Display, Parking Fines, Clamping & Towing & Resident, Carer & Visitor Parking Permits. The Customer Service Team will also have up to date information for callers on water supply disruptions, traffic diversions and planned road closures.

Commenting on the customer service centre, City Manager Joe MacGrath said

“ We face challenging times in the delivery of our services. We must now continue to deliver our essential services with less resources. The Customer Service Centre takes a further step in this direction and aims to eventually become the central point for all council enquiries, providing residents and visitors with quick and easy access to council services. The Customer Service desk will assist you in your visit, the centre will deal with your enquiries, and our Customer Services Representatives will be happy to direct you to the area you want.”

The reception area in City Hall has been renovated to facilitate the extra services that will be provided at the Customer Service Desk, which is open to the public from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday and includes a new cashiers service, a new general reception area, a comfortable waiting area, an information and advice centre and an improved queuing system that will cut waiting times.

Customers can also pay Refuse Charges and Parking Fines online by logging on to Galway City Council Website, www.galwaycity.ie, and the Customer Service Team can be contacted on **customerservice@galwaycity.ie** or **091 536400**

The following are examples of recent significant customer service achievements:

- Extended opening hours to include lunchtime opening hours.
- 24-hour cover in our Water Treatment Plant and introduction of flexible working hours in certain areas of the Environment Department to commence work from 5am in order to ensure that the least inconvenience is caused to our customers.
- Direct debit facilities for ratepayers opting to pay on a monthly basis.
- A free Preplanning consultation service is available for both applicants and agents on an ongoing basis.
- Introduction of Credit Card on-line payment facility for the Refuse Collection and Parking Fines Systems.