

**Committee:       AUDIT AND REVIEW**

**Date:               8 NOVEMBER 2022**

**Report:            CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD**

### **Purpose of the report**

1. To update Members on the recent Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessment.

### **Recommendation**

2. That the report, and the Authority's ongoing retention of the CSE Award, be noted.

### **Strategic Planning Framework**

3. The information and recommendation contained in this report are consistent with the Authority's statutory purposes and its approved strategic planning framework, and specifically Corporate Action Plan Objective 35, to "Provide high quality, efficient and effective services and communications to the public and other stakeholders, and maintain the Customer Service Excellence standard every year".

### **Background**

4. The Customer Service Excellence standard provides recognition for organisations that are successfully assessed against the criteria. The five criteria of CSE are:

- i. Customer Insight
- ii. The Culture of the Organisation
- iii. Information and Access
- iv. Delivery
- v. Timeliness and Quality of Service

5. Within the 5 criteria are 57 separate elements that are assessed on a 3-yearly rolling programme, with 19 elements assessed each year.

6. Since 2010 the Authority has undergone an annual assessment against the standard. The assessment involves several pieces of evidence being uploaded to the CSE portal prior to the assessment. During the visit the assessment involves an examination of the evidence uploaded and a range of meetings with staff, managers, visitors, partners and other service users.

## **Assessment Report**

7. Attached is an extract of the **2022 Assessment Report** confirming the successful outcome with a summary of the five criteria. The full 79 page report can be viewed [here](#).

8. For the 2022 assessment, 20 elements were reviewed (the rolling 19, plus 1 previously partially compliant):

9. The Authority was assessed as being fully compliant on 18 elements. Further, the assessor gave the highest rating of 'Compliance Plus' (outstanding) to 3 of the assessed elements (customer insight, improved customer journeys, staff understand customer needs) bringing the Authority's Compliance Plus current total to 8, which is a great result and an improvement in our performance since the last assessment of the same elements. The **Compliance Plus Report** (which is an extract from the relevant parts of the main Assessment Report, but focusing on the 'Compliance Plus' aspects) can be viewed [here](#).

10. The assessor considered the evidence submitted for the previously assessed partial compliance element (5.3.1), however this remains partially compliant, along with a second element (5.3.2).

11. Certificates confirming the achievement of retaining the award are displayed at both Yoredale and Colvend and at the Visitor Centres.

## **Conclusion**

12. The overall result of the assessment was positive and the assessor was keen to pass on her very high praise, during the feedback session, to the staff she'd met during her visit, which is verified in her final report.

**Vikki Thomas**  
**Head of HR**

5 October 2022

**CUSTOMER  
SERVICE  
EXCELLENCE**



Assessment Report  
Customer Service Excellence

## **Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority**

Successful  
10 July 2022

## Assessment Summary

### Overview

Overall Self-assessment	Satisfactory
Overall outcome	Successful

Rolling Programme 2 (RP2) 2022.

The Yorkshire Dales became a National Park (the Park) in 1954 in recognition of its outstanding natural scenery, diversity of wildlife habitats, cultural heritage and opportunities for outdoor recreation. An extension of the Park boundary in 2016 means it now covers 2,179 square kilometres in North Yorkshire and Cumbria, and a small area within Lancashire. The Park is a working environment and home to over 20,000 people. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (the Authority) has its objectives set by Parliament and its customers have diverse and often conflicting needs and preferences. Some services are similar to those provided elsewhere, for example, providing the function of local planning authority, but most services are specific to National Park Authorities.

The role of the Authority is defined to conserve the Park's natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage and to promote opportunities for the enjoyment of its special qualities by the public, of whom over 8 million visit each year. There is also a requirement to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities, and the retention and attraction to the area of young people.

The Authority has a Board of 25 Members and employs approximately 128 full time equivalent staff, supported by approximately 250 volunteers.

Staff are hardworking and knowledgeable, and are a credit to the Authority, demonstrating commitment and genuinely caring attitudes that are greatly appreciated by the many different customer groups and partners. Great efforts are made to forge effective and transparent working relationships with customers and create an atmosphere of trust between all. This is particularly important as the Authority often has to provide balance and resolve situations where there may be potential conflicts of interest. The approach to, and delivery of services continues to evolve and the Authority strives to move forward positively and collaboratively.

This year's application was well prepared with a good proportion of new evidence to support the assessment visit. The Authority is a long standing applicant and they are to be congratulated on achieving three additional Compliance Plus elements at 1.1.2, 1.3.5, and 2.2.2 bringing the total to eight. The existing two partial compliances at elements 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 remain.

The assessor is delighted to recommend that the Authority continues to be accredited to the CSE Standard.

### 1: Customer Insight

Criterion 1 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 1 outcome	Successful

RP2 2022. This Criterion is fully compliant.

Criterion 1 is about customer insight, consultation and engagement, satisfaction levels and improving the customer experience.

The Authority shows an impressive commitment to understanding the needs and preferences of its customer groups. Insight is garnered from many different sources and a great number of service improvements have been made as a result of this understanding and tailoring to customer needs. This thorough and comprehensive approach justifies Compliance Plus at element 1.1.2.

Consultation and engagement with customers remains a priority and is integral to service improvement. Satisfaction levels are closely monitored and analysed in a variety of ways, and are published accordingly. It was well demonstrated that data is used to feed into service improvements and many examples were provided here. The Authority continues to commit to the measurement of the customer experience and analyses a variety of customer interaction touchpoints across the service. It is clear that they take heed of not just the ease, quality, and accessibility of service provision but also as to how customers feel about the service at each stage. Compliance Plus is justified at element 1.3.5.

### 2: The Culture of the Organisation

Criterion 2 self-assessment	Satisfactory
Criterion 2 outcome	Successful

RP2 2022. This Criterion is fully compliant.

Criterion 2 is about the Culture of the Service and staff commitment to the customer focus.

It is clear that customer insight feeds into decision making and strategic planning, and this is obtained through the survey feedback, consultation, and staff's insight from their own knowledge of customers. There is a high level of care afforded to the handling and storage of customer information and data, and privacy is provided to those who require it during face to face interactions.

It was clear from the visit, and strongly supported by customer and partner testimony, that staff are polite and friendly and that their high level of knowledge and professionalism enables a quick and clear understanding of customer needs. Compliance Plus is merited at element 2.2.2.

There is a strong corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and senior leaders support staff in providing an excellent service for customers. It is clear that staff are appreciated and that the strong contribution they make to delivering a service that meets the needs and preferences of all service users is valued.

### 3: Information and Access

Criterion 3 self-assessment Satisfactory

Criterion 3 outcome Successful

RP2 2022. This Criterion is fully compliant.

Criterion 3 is about information and access, partnership working and working in the wider community.

Any charges for services are clearly set out via the appropriate channel, whether online, on social media or by hard copy publication. The Authority makes every effort to ensure that customers receive all relevant information and a high level of care is shown in ensuring that customers have understood the information they have been given. The evaluation of customer interaction through the various access channels is rigorously and comprehensively undertaken. Service improvements are continually sought and delivered as a result, extending the range of available channels and offering better choices to customers who interact with the Authority.

Effective working arrangements have been developed with a range of partners to provide a 'seamless' service to customers in practice and considerable work has been undertaken to ensure customers have clear lines of accountability.

### 4: Delivery

Criterion 4 self-assessment Satisfactory

Criterion 4 outcome Successful

RP2 2022. This Criterion is fully compliant.

Criterion 4 is about core business standards, performance, benchmarking and best practice, and complaints handling.

Key business delivery performance standards and targets are comprehensively monitored and compliance measures are well embedded. Service delivery targets are shown to be consistently met or exceeded and customers are informed of performance against these targets. Performance data, supported by customer feedback, shows that promised services are delivered to the majority of customers.

The complaints process is clear and easy to use, and is subject to regular review. It fully sets out its commitment to dealing with complaints quickly, thoroughly, and effectively.

### 5: Timeliness and Quality of Service

Criterion 5 self-assessment Satisfactory

Criterion 5 outcome Successful

RP2 2022.

Criterion 5 is about customer service standards for timeliness and quality of customer service, and performance against these standards.

There are clear standards in place in relation to the timeliness and quality of customer service and these are well set out within the Standards of Service. The Standards are published online on the website. It is clear that staff make every effort to ensure that enquiries are dealt with quickly and fully at the first point of contact but procedures are in place to keep the customer updated and well informed if that is not possible.

Data confirming that the Authority is monitoring its performance against standards for timeliness of customer service remains very limited and therefore element 5.3.1 continues to be partially compliant.

Although presented evidence could be more robust, the Authority demonstrates that it is meeting its standards for quality of customer service. However, there remains limited evidence to demonstrate that it is meeting its targets on timeliness. There is also little evidence in relation to the publicising of customer service performance outcomes and therefore element 5.3.2 remains partially compliant.