

Case Study

WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Overview

Wear Valley District Council, based in Crook, is one of Durham County's seven local councils, with the district spanning over 30 miles. Listening to the communities and developing a capacity to improve are two reasons why the council is now among the top performers in the area. The annual best value performance plan contains strategies and objectives to enable Wear Valley to become the best district council in England and public consultations form a vital element of this.

Problem

Wear Valley Council had a number of channels for community engagement, including interviewers and paper questionnaires. The response rates with paper-based surveys were extremely poor, and the interviewers inadvertently biased the results because the customers felt they hadn't got total anonymity. Being a small authority, with limited resources, an innovative approach was required to meet the challenge of monitoring service delivery and ascertaining customer profiles, while promoting Equality and Diversity in the community.

The Solution – STANDpoint

A STANDpoint unit was installed next to the general enquiries desk of the council's HQ at the Civic Centre in Crook. A significant difference in response rates was immediately noticeable as it generated over 200 responses per month. Wear Valley concluded this was improved because of the anonymity the customer now had.

Wear Valley is also now effectively attracting a younger audience to participate in feedback, previously a problematic sector to target. The council was able to identify the most significant complaints, e.g. dissatisfaction about the length of waiting times, and take action to improve the service. Having the ability to quickly identify any issues and monthly monitoring has enabled Wear Valley to deal with problems far more effectively.

The mobile independent STANDpoint unit is now doing the rounds in various libraries, leisure centres, community centres and shopping centres throughout Wear Valley providing the community with a vital channel of communication with local government.

Specific Benefits

- Time effective
- Cost-effective
- Hassle free
- Anonymous
- Paper free

Feedback

“STANDpoint is a great tool; there are so many benefits of using it! It's such a simple way of getting the results we need, and can be run all the time without anybody needing to look after it. STANDpoint saves us considerable time when it comes to compiling the information which means we have more time to deal with the complaints and get to the root of the problem. Best of all, it's highly cost effective. We plan to put STANDpoint to even greater use in the future, and take it to major events such as agricultural shows.”

Dorothy Emerson – Corporate Customer Care Officer.



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Wear Valley District Council

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County Durham. DL15 9ES



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